Attitude Towards the Torah and Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20:
End-Time Proselytes, Righteous Gentiles or New People?

by

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Abstract

Matthew 28:18-20 with its reference to making disciples of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is ambiguous in its attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah. The text can be read such that the new Gentile believers in Jesus might be incorporated into the blessings of the God of Israel by affirming the Torah in full force, or such that the Gentiles might become associated with the blessings of God as Gentiles by affirming the law that pertains to them. Given the Jewish orientation of Matthew’s Gospel and its Jewish influence, I suggest that the various attitudes towards the Torah and Gentiles within Second-Temple Judaism provide the basic framework for understanding Matthew’s view on the law and Gentiles.

A comparative study of how Matthew lines up with the contemporary Jewish literature—which also wrestles with the terms of Gentile inclusion—will help us get a better sense of his unique view on the Torah and Gentiles. Since Matthew 28:18-20 deals with the law, Gentiles, and eschatology, this dissertation will focus on eschatological redemption texts from Second-Temple Judaism for comparison with Matthew. I will compare and contrast Matthew with the Book of Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3 with regard to three issues: (1) attitudes towards Gentiles, (2) the
contents and nature of the Torah, and (3) the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the eschatological age.

My thesis will demonstrate how a comparative study helps us uncover Matthew’s unique understanding of the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the eschatological age (Mt 28:18-20). The outcomes of the comparison locate Matthew somewhere between Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3. While the Jews may be assumed to keep the ethnic-specific laws, the larger community of Jews and Gentiles are obliged to practice the ethical and monotheistic aspects of the Torah.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

The question of “Matthew’s view of the Law” has been a perennial issue in Matthean scholarship. As it has often been formulated, the question is whether the nature of the law is “Jewish specific” or “ethical”; the answers have been highly controversial and have reached a kind of impasse.¹ One aspect of the traditional discussions around Matthew’s view on the law is that Matthew is addressing an undifferentiated group of disciples or church members, so that any distinction within the group tends to be disregarded. In the past and until recently, the discussion about “Matthew’s attitude toward the law” has tended to assume that Matthew makes no fundamental distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers as far as “the law” is concerned.

However, Matthew’s Jewish orientation—for example, the emphasis on keeping the law (cf. 5:17-20), Jesus’ ministry to the Jews first and foremost (cf. 10:5-6), an interest in Gentiles that is most clearly addressed after the resurrection (28:16-20)—seems to imply that Matthew’s community contains both Jews and Gentiles. To move beyond the impasse in the law discussion, then, I suggest that we should take this claim seriously.

Matthew’s community is not merely an ethnically undifferentiated group of church members but an entity composed of both Jews and Gentiles. More specifically, I propose to look at the old question of “Matthew’s view of the Law” by narrowing down the question to one about “Matthew’s attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah.” Given the Jewish character of the Gospel, this then leads us to the topic of “Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah.” The various options regarding Gentiles’ relationship to the Torah within Second Temple Judaism provide a basic framework for Matthew’s view on the law and Gentiles.

1.1.1 Discussion about the Law

The more general discussion on Matthew and the law cannot be ignored, since it is central to the question regarding the Gentiles’ relationship to the Torah. In this introduction, I will identify the various positions that have been taken in the scholarly discussions about Matthew’s attitude toward the law. In general, Matthean scholars agree that Gentiles are to be instructed in and required to keep the Jewish law, as it is interpreted by Jesus. In Matthew 28:18-20, the risen Jesus gives his disciples a final commission to undertake a great mission to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. One of the tasks Jesus’ disciples must fulfill is to teach the new Gentile disciples to obey πάντα ὅσα ἐνετελήμην ὑμῖν (“everything that I have commanded you”). Jesus’ commands are reminiscent of his teaching of the law, so the new Gentile believers are expected to observe the law as it is interpreted by Jesus.³

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Before we examine the attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah, I will discuss Matthew’s attitude toward the law. Even among scholars who share the assumption that Matthew made no fundamental distinction between Jewish and Gentile disciples, it is well known that the issue of Matthew’s view of the law is a difficult one. This is not the place I deal with this issue in detail, but I will identify various scholarly views on the question of Jesus’ interpretation of the law. Does Matthew expect full observance of the Jewish-specific laws that separate Jews from Gentiles (the Sabbath Law, food laws, and circumcision)? Or does Jesus permit the degree of law-observance to weaken, thus making possible a partial abrogation or relativization of the law? The issue of “Matthew and the Law”—whether the nature of the law is “Jewish specific” or “ethical”—has been debated vigorously and has reached a kind of impasse.

This rigorous debate among Matthean scholars stems from the fact that the Gospel of Matthew is ambiguous in its presentation of Torah observance. In Matthew’s Gospel, there are tensions over the observance of the law. On the one hand, Matthew strongly supports the validity of the law, including, apparently, its ethnic-specific injunctions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew seems to maintain the details of Jewish law (5:17-19). Jesus warns, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (5:17). It is also true that heaven and earth will disappear before the smallest letter (ἰῶτα) and even the smallest pen stroke (κεραία) disappear from the law (5:18). Not the smallest detail of the law should be changed and anyone who teaches the modification of the least command is warned (5:19). Further, Jesus teaches that almsgiving (6:2-4), prayer (6:5-15), and fasting (6:16-18) are to be observed. Jesus keeps the purity laws by sending the leper to the temple (8:4). In chapter 23, he also supports Torah observance, remarking that “the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they
preach, but do not practice” (23:2-3). And later in the same chapter Jesus says, “observe weightier matters of the law” (justice, mercy, and faithfulness) but “without neglecting the others” (tithing) (23:23). Jewish leaders should put more emphasis on a higher demand for justice, mercy, and faith without neglecting legal minutiae. Jesus is also aware of purification (23:25-26) and the honor of the dead (23:27, 29). Even further, Jesus is cautious in speaking of flight on the Sabbath, thus saying, “Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath” (24:20; cf. 27:62-66). He is also portrayed as keeping the Passover (26:17-19).

There are radical approaches, on the other hand, to Torah observance. Matthew supports the view that the disciples should live according to Jesus’ teaching, such that their life should go beyond the literal observance of the Jewish-specific law. Frequently the literal requirements of the Torah are disregarded in instances where “mercy” and “doing good” are required. Joseph does not want to put Mary to shame as a supposed adulteress which could lead her to public disgrace according to the Mosaic law (1:19). In the antitheses (5:21-48), there is no mention of the food laws or circumcision, and at least some of the literal precepts of the Torah are set aside.

4 As the Gospel’s narrative unfolds, some passages suggest that Matthew’s Jesus partially abrogates or relativizes the Jewish regulations. These passages focus on his use of “mercy” and “doing good.” Matthew uses “mercy” in three forms (adjective, verb, and noun): “merciful” (ἐλεήμον, 5:7), “to have mercy” (ἐλεόο, 5:7; 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 18:33 [two times]; 20:30, 31), and “mercy” (ἐλεος, 9:13; 12:7; 23:23). An examination of how Matthew uses the word “mercy,” not only in his story as a whole but also in Jesus’ speech and ministry, might lead readers to think that in Matthew’s Gospel Jesus sets aside part of the Torah at several points in the narrative.

5 In the antitheses (5:21-48), Matthew implicitly shows that some portion of the Torah gives way to the teaching of Jesus. Jesus mercifully defends women’s inferior position which the strong should be concerned about. Jesus is critical of the certificate of divorce given in Deut 24:1-4 and teaches that such a certificate is unnecessary (5:31-32; 19:3-9). The law of retaliation (5:38) also is set aside when the disciples follow the requirements of merciful deeds (5:39-42). See Barth, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 94; Paul Foster, Community Law and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 94-143. For the opposite view that the abrogation of the law is less clear in the antitheses, see William R. G. Loader, Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 165-82. Cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew (International Critical Commentary, 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1:491-94, 504-66. Davies and Allison maintain that “Unlike many modern scholars, our author would never have affirmed that Jesus’ words ‘overthrow’ or ‘contradict’ the Torah” (1:542, n. 52). Still, they also argue that keeping all the norms would not automatically produce the genuine spirit that is required for the disciples: “purely legal norms, such as those cited in Mt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, and 43, can never convey how life is to be lived by those who are genuinely poor in spirit, pure in heart, and full of mercy” (1:509).
Jesus touches a leper to cure him (8:3; cf. 8:15; 9:20), intends to go into a Gentile’s house (8:7), and touches a corpse (9:25). Jesus breaks Sabbath regulations (12:1-14) and disregards certain legislations such as ritual hand washings (15:1-20) and some parts of divorce law (19:3-9).

Though he teaches his disciples not to neglect the small particular laws (23:23), it seems that the scribes and Pharisees ought to observe weightier matters of the law (justice, mercy and faithfulness). And though they should do so without despising the others (tithing mint, dill, and cumin), that does not automatically mean that all of Matthew’s church members (both Jews and Gentiles) should keep tithing mint, dill and cumin. Further, when Jesus gives the final commission regarding the Gentiles (28:18-20), Jesus does not mention food law and

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6 Entering into a Gentile’s house causes ritual defilement, which Jews try to avoid. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:22; and Ulrich Luz, Matthew 8-20 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 10. Both of them offer examples, such as Acts 10:28 and 11:12.

7 There is a debate on whether Matthew advocates keeping the Sabbath law rigorously or whether the command for mercy (Mt 12:7, cf. Hos 6:6) overrides the Sabbath law. It seems that Matthew is very strict in keeping the Sabbath law (Mt 25:20). But at the same time he justifies the praxis of the disciples in not observing the Sabbath, and Jesus himself heals the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day (Mt 12:1-14). Many Matthean scholars assume that the Sabbath controversy reflects the fact that the Sabbath law was still practiced by Matthew’s community as it was interpreted by Jesus. See Mohrlang, Matthew and Paul, 11; J. Andrew Overman, Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 334; and David C. Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 138-39; Anders Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict,” Journal of Biblical Literature 127/1 (2008): 103. This reading, however, has not gone uncontested. Other scholars argue that keeping the Sabbath faithfully is not entirely justified, and that Matthew’s Gospel leaves doubts for the following reasons. First, if Matthew advocates rigorous observation of the Sabbath law (Mt 24:20), he is much stricter than his contemporary Jews, who accepted flight during time of war as a legitimate breach of the Sabbath law. See Graham N. Stanton, A Gospel For A New People: Studies in Matthew (Edinburgh; T&T Clark, 1992), 192-206. Second, Jesus and his disciples in Mt 12:1-14 do not obey the Sabbath command not to “work” because Jesus has final authority over the law, and he himself justifies his disciples’ not obeying the Sabbath law about not working. See Loader, Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law, 205. Third, the phrase “their synagogues” (4:23) and “church” (16:18; 18:17) suggest that Matthean Christians may have had their own gathering place different from Jewish synagogues. Thus, “in terms of participating in Jewish habitual Sabbath activity (attending synagouge), they may not have participated in such activity.” See C. M. Tuckett, “Matthew: The Social and Historical Context—Jewish Christian and/or Gentile?” in The Gospel of Matthew At the Crossroads of Early Christianity (ed. Donald Senior; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CCXLIII; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 99-129 (p. 122).

8 It seems that Mark 7:1-23 focuses on Jewish food laws, but whether Matthew deals with Jewish food laws in Mt 15:1-20 is uncertain. The real defilement is not caused by unwashed hands but by what comes out of one’s mouth. Some scholars argue that Matthew’s Christian community practiced food laws, yet Matthew softens Mark’s case (Mk 7:19) and focuses on hand washing rather than on food laws. See Sim, Matthew and Christian Judaism, 132; Anthony J. Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 141. Others argue that even though Matthew could not completely be free from the issue of food impurity, he limited it to
circumcision. Those Jewish-specific laws appear virtually nowhere in the Gospel, yet those laws are very important in distinguishing Jews from Gentiles. Therefore, it also seems that the validity of the Torah is not definitive in Matthew’s Gospel, and that some portion of the Jewish-specific laws could either be abrogated or relativized.

The tension over the observance of the Torah leads Matthean scholars to various positions. With respect to the question about the validity of the Torah and its observance, Matthew 5:17-20 and 23:23 are crucial. Yet scholars disagree in their interpretations, and three approaches are possible. Some scholars advocate that Jesus does not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it by emphasizing strict observance of the Jewish law, even the least of its commandments.

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9 There is debate on whether circumcision was the entry requirement in Matthew’s community for male Gentiles who believe in Jesus. Matthew’s silence regarding circumcision could imply that it was not a controversial issue. On the one hand, it is natural to take the Gentile disciples’ circumcision for granted. On the other hand, it is possibly uncontroversial that new Gentile believers were not circumcised. It is also possible that the text omits circumcision since it was a highly controversial issue that Matthew wanted to avoid. See Tuckett, “Matthew: The Social and Historical Context,” 126. Even though circumcision is not directly mentioned in Matthew, some scholars argue its necessity to new Gentile disciples. See Mohrlang, Matthew and Paul, 44-45; A.-J. Levine, The Social And Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Social History: “Go Nowhere Among the Gentiles ...” (Matt 10.5b) (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 14; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 183-85; Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 251-55; Runesson, “Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations,”103-4. Others argue that Matthew does not require circumcision for the new Gentile disciples of Jesus. The normal rite of Gentile inclusion into the messianic community is baptism (not circumcision), so adult males can be part of the Christian church as Gentiles. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:493, 3:685; John P. Meier, The Vision of Matthew (New York: Paulist, 1979), 61, 64; Tuckett, “Matthew: The Social and Historical Context,” 126-27. Saldarini is unclear when he mentions circumcision as an entry rite for Gentile disciples. He on the one hand suggests that Gentiles would be circumcised, but on the other hand he admits that some Gentiles might not be circumcised as the terms of inclusion within the messianic community. See Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 157-60.


11 Mohrlang, Matthew and Paul, 7-26; Overman, Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism, 72-90; and Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 123-139.
According to David C. Sim, Matthew’s Jesus strongly supports the strict observance of the Torah, including the necessity of circumcision (Mt 5:17-19). Jesus’ statement about the law is very plain and clear; thus it should be interpreted literally. The validity of the Torah will remain until the Parousia (“heaven and earth pass away,” v. 18). Even if Matthew does not mention circumcision directly, various statements in Matthew (e.g., the order to teach the Gentiles to observe all Jesus’ commands [28:19-20] and to observe the weightier commandments “without neglecting the others” [23:23]) imply that the Gentiles should observe the commandment to be circumcised. Therefore, new Gentile believers, like Jews, are expected to observe all the ritual and cultic requirements of the Torah that distinguish Jews from Gentiles.¹²

Not all scholars, however, agree that Matthew’s Jesus advocates a strict observance of the whole Jewish law, extending to literal detail. Some scholars argue that the continuing validity of the law is effective only when Jesus permits it.¹³ Even though Matthew 5:17-19 sounds as if Jesus sustains strict observance of all the injunctions of the Torah, Jesus’ teaching of the Torah permits a partial abrogation, disallowance, or at least a modification of it.¹⁴ W. D. Davies contends that


¹³ In this group, Matthean scholars do not agree that the law was totally valid, and their views on Jesus’ attitude toward the law are varied. Among them, scholars argue that several or all of the stipulations of the law are set aside because Jesus brought a new Torah. See R. Hammerton-Kelly, “Attitudes to the Law in Matthew’s Gospel: A Discussion of Matthew 5:18” *Biblical Research* 17 (1972): 31-32; Banks “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 226-42; *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 204-206; Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*, 112-17. Barth sees that some of the six antitheses are abrogated. Matthew’s Jesus declares the continuity of the Jewish law but stands opposed to Pharisaic interpretations of the law. While rabbinic tradition sustains strict observance of all the injunctions of Torah, Matthew values the fact that the law has a hierarchy which sets priorities within Torah praxis. Matthew displays a different attitude for each individual stipulation in the Torah, but the rabbis did not. See Barth, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 102. Paul Foster, in his consideration of the six antitheses (Mt 5:21-48), argues that specific Torah injunctions are intentionally revoked in dealing with the antitheses of divorce, oaths, retribution, and love of one’s enemy. The first and second antitheses on murder and adultery are intensified on the basis of greater righteousness. See Foster, *Community Law and Mission*, 94-143.

¹⁴ Many Matthean scholars are convinced that, even though Matthew’s Jesus fulfills the law by revealing its intended meaning, Jesus relativizes significant stipulations of Jewish law that may include ceremonial laws, the Sabbath law, food laws, and circumcision. For example, those who argue that circumcision is not practiced by the new Gentile believers include Terence L. Donaldson, “The Law That Hangs (Matthew 22:40): Rabbinic
Jesus is the Messiah and in 5:17-20 Jesus does not destroy the Law of Moses but rather creates a new law, namely a Messianic Law. The continuing validity of the law is understood in light of Jesus’ fulfillment, so that the old legislation is not annulled or replaced by the Messianic Law. But Jesus’ teaching is revelatory and even surpasses the tradition (5:21-48; 13:54). Thus, some modifications of regulations are possible.\(^\text{15}\) John P. Meier argues that the Mosaic law was totally valid only until Jesus’ death and resurrection (5:18). In Matthew’s understanding, the law has temporal validity because Jesus fulfilled the law through his life, death, and resurrection. Therefore, he “sharpens, radicalises, internalizes the Torah, going beyond the letter to the ultimate intention of the Torah.”\(^\text{16}\) Graham N. Stanton suggests moreover that 5:17-20 was Matthew’s response against the accusations of Jewish interlocutors. They accuse Jesus and his followers of abandoning the law. Matthew places emphasis on keeping the whole law even for Gentiles when they join the messianic community. But it is not clear in Matthew whether the community should keep any individual Jewish-specific law (i.e., Sabbath and purity regulations), while the ethical law is emphasized by Jesus as he brings “a new perspective on the law.”\(^\text{17}\) Paul Foster contends that disciples should subordinate themselves to Jesus, the ultimate source of

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\(^\text{16}\) Meier, *Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel*, 73-82. For similar position, see Cuvillier, “Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel,” 144-159.

\(^\text{17}\) Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 246. For Matthew, the law and prophets continue to be authoritative to Christians as far as “they are interpreted in light of the teachings of Jesus, especially the love command” (p. 49).
authority, not to the Torah, since Jesus’ teaching includes an abrogation of some part of the Jewish halakhic requirements.\(^\text{18}\) The notion of fulfillment in Mt 5:17 must be understood in light of the following six antitheses of Mt 5:21-48, where “the Matthean Jesus does not uphold the law according to the contemporary traditional understanding, but modifies, redefines or even overturns its stipulations at a number of points.”\(^\text{19}\) Therefore, new Gentile believers should uphold the law as Jesus has taught (Mt 5:17-20), yet go beyond its literal observance.

Still others suggest a moderate view. The weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith (23:23)—convey the notion that Matthew has in mind a hierarchy of the law that focuses on ethical things (cf. 22:33-44; 7:12; 5:43-48). Loving one’s neighbour takes priority over the Jewish-specific laws, and thus the love commandment relativizes them. Yet, this means that the law is not abrogated. Ulrich Luz maintains that Jesus’ teaching of the law (5:17-19) preserves a continuity with the Torah, and he neither rejects nor corrects it. As the Son of God and Messiah, Jesus through his authority teaches the true meaning of the law. The love commandment “does not cancel the ‘smallest commandments’ (5:18-19) but relativizes them case by case,” and in this respect, “the law and prophets ‘hang’ on the love commandment (22:40).”\(^\text{20}\) When it comes to the Gentile mission, however, some adaptations have been made for the law, and therefore new Gentile believers are not required to practice circumcision.\(^\text{21}\) Anthony J. Saldarini also argues that Matthew’s Christian-Jewish community was law-observant and still understood itself as faithful to the Torah as interpreted by Jesus. Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah is neither an

\(^{18}\) Foster, *Community Law and Mission*, 94-143.

\(^{19}\) Foster, *Community Law and Mission*, 258.


\(^{21}\) Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 51-2, 224. A similar position is found in Snodgrass, “Matthew and the Law,” 536-54. Jesus did not abrogate the written law, but the observance of food laws or circumcision is not known.
abrogation nor a replacement, but rather a fulfillment (5:17). The weightier demands of the law should take precedence but the lesser things cannot be rejected or neglected (23:23; 5:19). The changes in the law under certain circumstances can only be attributed to the authority of Jesus, who gives the true intention of the law. The heart of the law according to Jesus’ teaching is the Decalogue, which is more fundamental than the purity regulations (15:17-19) or sectarian traditions (15:3-6, 20). Matthew was open to the new Gentile believers and they could join the blessings of God “by affirming the law.” Matthew accepts Gentiles into a Torah-observant community.

As discussed, Matthean scholars vary in their understanding whether or to what extent Jesus advocated a new law which replaces the Torah or is independent of it. A tentative conclusion arising from a survey of materials suggests that Matthew places much more emphasis on the ethical core of the law, with the result that the ethnic laws are overshadowed or relativized. Such discussions of the law cannot be ignored, of course; they are central to the question I am asking—what was Matthew’s attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship with the Torah? Yet the question I have identified promises to go beyond the law discussion and to open up new areas of discussion, namely Matthew’s attitude towards the Gentiles and their relationship with the Torah.

1.1.2 Jewish Attitudes towards Gentiles and Their Relationship to the Torah

Although the question of “Matthew’s view of the law” has often been explored by looking at Matthew within the Jewish context, in much of the discussion little attention has been paid to the

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range of Jewish attitudes towards the Torah and the Gentiles within first-century Judaism. In recent years, however, this has begun to change. Some Matthean scholars have started giving attention to the various ranges of Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah, with the result that the question of “Matthew’s view of the Law” has taken a new form, namely, “How do the commandments of Jesus to the Gentile disciples (‘everything that I have commanded you,’ Mt 28:20) relate to the Law of Moses?” Matthean scholars thus attempt to answer the question about the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles by interpreting Matthew 28:18-20 against the backdrop of various options for the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles within Second-Temple Judaism.

In answer to the question, “How did the new Gentile believers in Jesus keep the Torah in the community of disciples?”, Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20) is significant for the following reasons. First, it is the primary place where Matthew speaks about the participation of the new Gentile believers in the community of disciples. Jesus has commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. Second, the law might be imposed on Gentile disciples. Here, “everything I have commanded you” in Mt 28:20 is reminiscent of Jesus’ teaching of the law. For Matthew, it is apparent that the new disciples from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη are required to keep every commandment that Jesus has given, and that “everything that I have commanded you” (28:20) is

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also the primary content of Jesus’ teaching to Israel during his earthly ministry. Jesus gives many commands about discipleship (e.g., 10:5-42; 13:3-52; 18:1-35; 24:4-25:46), but the most concentrated teachings about discipleship are found in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). The Sermon starts with Jesus’ definitive teaching about the law (Mt 5:17-19), and Jesus’ commandments regarding discipleship are very much linked with the Torah (5:21-48; 6:1-18; 7:12). In Matthew 28:18-20, even though the final commission does not directly mention the law, as Jesus emphasizes making disciples, the law comes into view in the phrase, “everything I have commanded you.” Therefore, the new disciples should be taught to observe the law as it is interpreted by Jesus.

As Matthean scholars try to answer the question about the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles, their readings of Matthew 28:18-20 are diverse. Some scholars say the inclusion of the Gentiles into the community of disciples represents proselytism. For example, Sim contends that Gentiles, like Jews, are originally expected to observe all the regulations of the Torah of Israel. Sim, conscious of the diverse perspectives of first-century Judaism regarding the fate of Gentiles and their relationship to the law of Moses, asserts that Matthew took for granted that Gentiles are required to become full proselytes. In other words, Sim believes that Gentiles need to become proselytes in order to enter the community of disciples, thus proselytism is an entry requirement. His reading of Mt 28:18-20 is that the Gentiles are obligated to obey everything that Jesus commanded, and that this includes the whole Torah, down to the smallest iota or keraia (Mt 5:18). This means that the Gentile males need to be circumcised, and that all Gentile disciples must become full members of the people of Israel.25

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Other scholars present the “righteous Gentiles” as a case for the participation of Gentiles in the community of disciples. For examples, Saldarini and Axel von Dobbeler posit that once they become members of the messianic community of disciples, Gentiles as righteous Gentiles obey the portion of the Torah that pertains to them. Saldarini states that Matthew approaches Gentiles and their fate in the eschatological era with the concept of “righteous Gentiles” who might stand in a positive relationship with the God of Israel by keeping the law as it specifically applies to them. He distinguishes the law pertaining to the Jews from that pertaining to Gentiles. Axel von Dobbeler reads πᾶντα τὰ ἔθνη as “all the Gentiles” (Mt 28:19) and argues that Matthew represents the two different mission statements (10:5-6 and 28:18-20) with distinctive ethnic target groups in mind, and consequently distinctive missional tasks. Jewish believers are expected to follow all the regulations of the Torah of Israel, whereas Gentile believers are bound by a lesser set of regulations. The mission to the Jews represents the proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven and the restoration of Israel. At the same time, the mission to the Gentiles is based on a Jewish perspective of universalism: Gentiles as Gentiles will participate in eschatological blessings as a result of Israel’s restoration.


26 Saldarini understands Mt 8:11-12 as an eschatological restoration of Israel which includes both Jews and “faithful gentiles,” not as the replacement of Jews by Gentiles. He says, “Many gentiles will sit at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven.” This inclusion of righteous Gentiles is consistently recognized in Matthew’s narrative in the parables of the sheep and the goats (25:31-46) and the wheat and the weeds (13:24-30, 36-43). See Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 70-71.

While the recent discussion among Matthean scholars does not exhaust the range of Jewish attitudes towards the Torah and the Gentiles, it does suggest that progress might be made on the question of “Matthew and the law” by investigating it from the perspective of Jewish options of attitudes towards the Torah and the Gentiles. It also suggests that Mt 28:18-20, with its reference to making disciples of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, will be an important interpretive crux.

Actually, the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Mt 28:19) draws attention to two other pertinent readings of Matthew that have been part of the older discussion of the question. The first reading is that Israel rejected God and therefore has been rejected in favor of the Gentiles (8:12; 21:42) and replaced by a Gentile church (28:19). In this case, the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is to be rendered as “all the Gentiles.” Kenneth W. Clark understands that “the gentiles have displaced the Jews” and that this Gentile bias is the main thesis in Matthew.28 Douglas R. A. Hare follows Clark and argues that Jesus’ final commission (28:18-20) applies not to Israel but only to the Gentiles. He regards πάντα τὰ ἔθνη as “all the Gentiles,” and Jews are excluded as the object of mission in the post-resurrection era.29 Therefore, the targets of mission are no longer Jews but Gentiles.

The second idea is that Jesus draws out from the old Torah a “new law” for a new people, comprising both Jews and Gentiles without distinction. In this reading, the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:19) should be rendered as “all the nations” including both Jews and Gentiles.30 The scope of the disciples’ ministry now includes Gentiles and does not

necessarily exclude Israel. Thus, both Jews and Gentiles keep the same entry rite—baptism rather than circumcision—when they enter the Christian church.\textsuperscript{31} John. P. Meier, W. D. Davies and Eckhard J. Schnabel especially make no distinction between the law pertaining to the Jews and that pertaining to Gentiles. The distinction between Jews and Gentiles is not imprinted in their thinking when they talk about the law. Wesley G. Olmstead also contends that Jesus’ final command regarding the universal mission (28:18-20) is geared toward the new ἔθνος which is constituted of a trans-ethnic group. This new people group, which “God raises up in faithfulness to his promises to Abraham,” is “defined along ethical—not ethnic lines.”\textsuperscript{32} Matthias Konradt considers that “the disciples are now no longer sent to Israel alone but to all nations.”\textsuperscript{33} The content of the commission to the Jews (Mt 10) and Gentiles (Mt 28) cannot be strictly distinguished and only the limitation of the mission to Israel (10:5-6) is annulled. The new Gentile members of the church are not made Jews by circumcision but are included “through baptism and instruction in Jesus commandments.”\textsuperscript{34}

While the first reading understands Matthew’s community as completely separated from the Jewish world, the second bears some similarity to a Jewish attitude towards the Torah and the


\textsuperscript{32} Wesley G. Olmstead, \textit{Matthew’s Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21.28-22.14} (Society for New Testament Series 127; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 117. In Olmstead’s understanding, Matthew is arguing that Israel has lost its privileged position as God’s people. That privilege is extended to the new people, which will include Jews and Gentiles alike (e.g., pages 114-17, 160-64).


\textsuperscript{34} Konradt, \textit{Israel, Church, and the Gentiles}, 320. Konradt notes that, just like the presence of Gentile sympathizers in synagogues, the Gentiles’ inclusion without circumcision into Christian communities is plausible. Yet the difference between the Jewish synagogues and church “consists in the fact that these sympathizers were granted full membership in the Christian communities” (p. 320, n. 295).
Gentiles, that is prominent in Diaspora Judaism. The Diaspora view might be called “ethical monotheism” and it was held by some Jews within Hellenistic Judaism. They downplayed the literal observance of the law but emphasized its inner and allegorical meaning as it pertains to both Jews and Gentiles alike. The law has universal applicability and is identified with a “monotheistic form of conventional Hellenistic morality.”

This Jewish perspective toward Gentiles and the law is similar to the interpretation that what Jesus gives is a “new law” for a new people. Jesus comes to fulfill the heart of the law, loving God and loving neighbors (22:37-40), and he puts it into a framework that also has universal applicability. This new law emphasizes ethical law rather than ethnic law and applies to both Jewish and Gentile disciples alike.

Matthean scholars investigate Matthew’s attitude towards the Torah and Gentiles within this framework of the range of Jewish perspectives (proselytism, righteous Gentiles, and ethical monotheism). Matthew 28:18-20 is significant with regard to the question about Matthew’s attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah. Yet it is ambiguous in regard to the question, “How did the new Gentile believers in Jesus keep the Torah in the community of disciples?” The passage can be read such that the Gentiles might be incorporated into the blessings of the God of Israel by affirming the Torah in full force, or such that the Gentiles might

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35 Terence L. Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought.” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 7 (1990), 6, see n. 4. Philo believed that Gentiles had become aware of Judaism and would recognize the one true God and participate in Jewish worship. The Jewish law is a clear manifestation of the natural law. In order to argue this, Philo downplays food laws, circumcision, and the Sabbath. In addition, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 as a whole depicts the nature of the law and of its observance differently from Palestinian Jewish literature. Even though “the law” is meant to be the law of Moses at Mount Sinai (254-58), the content of the Torah is not Jewish specific (circumcision, food regulations, etc.), but is a “basic moral code, accessible, and hence applicable, to all.” See Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’?” 17-18.

36 By ethnic law I mean “halakhic law,” as in Pharisaic/rabbinic interpretation or oral tradition. It is Israel-specific law.
become associated with the blessings of God as Gentiles by affirming the law that pertains to them.

Given the ambiguity in Matthew 28:18-20, can we look to the Jewish patterns of universalism to help us examine the ambiguity? In this study, I hope to clarify Matthew’s attitude towards the Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah by comparing it with such patterns of universalism. The idea of “patterns” is helpful because it clarifies the options that Matthew’s Jesus sets up for the Gentile believers, concerning how they are to keep the Jewish law in the community of disciples. Since we have evidence from the Second Temple period that the Jews were interested in question about the Gentiles and the Torah, it is worth asking what light can be shed on Matthew’s attitude towards the Torah and Gentiles by investigating the Jewish framework. Thus, the commission of the resurrected Jesus at the end of Matthew’s Gospel (Mt 28:18-20) can be seen against the background of Jewish universalism. This comparative study will reveal Matthew’s own approach—namely, a Christological reinterpretation of a Jewish pattern.

37 In some cases, Jewish attitudes towards non-Jews range from hostility (t. Sanh. 13.2, Jub. 15:25-26) to pluralism (Let. Aris. 16). Along this spectrum, several scholars have found various levels or patterns of Jewish universalism by investigating extant Jewish literature. Scholars have noted that non-Jews can always have a positive relationship with the God of Israel. There clearly was the phenomenon of Gentile attraction to Judaism. Cohen describes seven ways that a Gentile could show respect or affection for Judaism: (1) admiring some aspect of Judaism, (2) acknowledging the power of the god of the Jews or incorporating him into the pagan pantheon, (3) benefiting the Jews or being conspicuously friendly to Jews, (4) practicing some or many of the rituals of the Jews, (5) venerating the god of the Jews and denying or ignoring the pagan gods, (6) joining the Jewish community, and (7) converting to Judaism and becoming a Jew. Cohen, “Was Judaism in Antiquity a Missionary Religion?”, 14-23. Feldman mentions the Jewish attitude to Gentiles and recognizes two patterns of universalism, namely those involving, (1) proselytes (full converts to Judaism) and (2) sympathizers who adopted certain practices of Judaism without actually converting. In his understanding, sympathizers or God-fearers were organized as a special class (a recognized group) embracing many different levels of interest in Judaism, ranging from people who supported synagogues to people who observed certain distinctively Jewish practices. See Feldman, Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Yet Feldman ignores the apocalyptic and eschatological literature when he searches for patterns of universalism. Donaldson recognizes that many scholars in their study of patterns of universalism rarely include expectations concerning Gentiles in the end times or notions of natural law and ethical monotheism. After a thorough investigation of the extant Jewish literatures, Donaldson suggests four main patterns of universalism: (1) a spectrum of sympathizers, (2) converts, (3) ethical monotheists, and (4) participants in eschatological redemption. See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 1-13.

38 Donaldson notes that a better knowledge of “Jewish patterns of universalism” will lead to a better grasp of how early Jewish Christianity attracted Gentiles. He says, “while the precise nature of [this] relationship needs to be
To examine Matthew’s attitude towards the Torah and Gentiles against the backdrop of Jewish patterns of universalism means that I am already opposing one interpretation. That interpretation is the idea that Israel rejected God and therefore has been rejected in favor of the Gentiles (Mt 8:12; 21:42) and replaced by a Gentile church (Mt 28:19). I offer reasons for why I have made this decision. First, Israel’s rejection and replacement may not be Matthew’s point. The theme of rejection in Matthew has to do with the Jewish leaders, not with the whole of Israel. Matthew’s attack is never related to the whole people of Israel. So the point is not that the Gentiles replace Israel, but rather that new Gentile believers find a place within the Messianic community. Only the Jewish leaders are rejected by Matthew in chapter 23, since the leaders are hypocrites, blind guides, false interpreters of the Jewish law, and murderers (see the seven “woe oracles,” vv. 13-29). Only occasionally does Matthew shift blame to the Jews, when they join the leaders of Israel. In the trial and crucifixion of Jesus (27:25), the cry of all the people, “His blood on us and on our children,” is often misinterpreted as Matthew’s judgment against Israel. However, they are not the whole Jewish people but a subgroup that is misled away from Jesus by the leaders of Israel. Other accounts depict “the people,” who are differentiated from the Jewish leaders, as positively disposed to Jesus (26:3-5, “lest there be a tumult among the people”; 27:64, “tell the people ‘He has risen from the dead’”).

carefully explored and is not to be assumed in advance, any proper understanding of the Gentile mission in the early church needs to recognize that the early Christian movement came to birth in an environment that was already universalistic. Early Christian debates about whether and on what terms Gentiles could be included in the movement are to be seen not as *sui generis* but as variations of debates that were already well established within Judaism.” Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 9.


Second, the idea of “Israel being rejected and replaced by Gentiles”\(^{42}\) falls outside the Jewish patterns of universalism framework. Neither the “proselytes” view, nor the “righteous Gentiles” view, nor the “ethical monotheist” view suggest the idea that God might reject Israel and choose Gentiles instead. No Jew who believed in Jesus as the promised Messiah would conclude that God had rejected the Jews and chosen the Gentiles.\(^{43}\) For this reason, the idea of “Israel being rejected and replaced by Gentiles” is not a live model for examining Matthew’s attitude towards the Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah.

Given the Jewish orientation of Matthew’s gospel, it is worth looking at Jewish patterns of universalism generally.\(^{44}\) According to the evidence in later Second-Temple Judaism, Jewish perspectives on how Gentiles could join the community of the God of Israel had already developed.\(^{45}\)


\(^{43}\) Matthew’s Jewish authorship has been proposed by recent Matthean scholars. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:7-58; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 45-8; Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 194-206; Runesson, “Judging Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew,” 133-51. Perhaps, the view of Matthew’s Gentile authorship was more popular a generation ago. See Tuckett, “Matthew: The Social and Historical Context,” 108-110.


\(^{45}\) There are some examples supporting the existence of inner-Jewish disputes in terms of the Gentile inclusion to Judaism. First is the debate between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua regarding whether Gentiles can be righteous before God and thereby enjoy a place in the age to come (t. Sanh. 13.2). (2) The second and more explicit debate on this question is the one between Izates’ advisors Ananias and Eleazar in Josephus (Ann. 20:38-48). Ananias and Eleazar differ in terms of the obligations placed upon King Izates regarding his conversion. Ananias advocates the view that uncircumcised God-fearers possibly share in the blessing of God. On the other hand, Eleazar persuades King Izates that he is disobeying God by not being circumcised. Circumcision and conversion are inseparably connected to participation in the service of the God of Israel. See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 333-38, 480-81; and Michael F. Bird, Crossing Over Sea and Land (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2010), 97-9.
Some Jews had the concept of “righteous Gentiles” in the first century, with the idea that Gentiles may share in God’s blessing without becoming full converts to Judaism. Their reverence for Judaism and partial obedience to the Torah could be deemed sufficient for God’s blessing. There is a distinction between Jews and Gentiles with regard to their observance of the Torah. Ethnic laws are required for Jews but Gentiles are bound by a lesser set of laws. In the same way, Matthew might have understood that Gentiles as Gentiles could participate in the community of disciples. The law pertaining to Gentile believers is ethical law, not ethnic law, while the Jewish believers continue to observe the Israel-specific laws. So for Matthew, the law applied to Gentile believers is different from the law that is applied to the Jews. The law pertaining to the Gentiles is ethical law, not the ethnic injunctions of the law.

Other Jews had the idea of “ethical monotheism,” where the features that differentiate Jews and Gentiles are downplayed. The heart of the Torah is knowledge of one God, and at the heart of the Torah there is one law which applies to both Jews and Gentiles. The Torah in ethical monotheism does not include the entirety of the Jewish-specific laws but is equated with a particular articulation of natural law (piety, justice, temperance, and other virtues). Thus, both Jews and Gentiles practice virtues and the ethical way of life. Matthew’s view on the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles might be interpreted against the backdrop of “ethical monotheism” in Judaism. Similarly, Matthew could believe that Jesus came to fulfill the heart of the law, loving God and loving neighbors, which can be applied to Jews and Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles equally must observe Jesus’ inauguration of the new law, which emphasizes ethical law rather than Jewish-specific regulations (circumcision, food laws, etc.). Jesus places much greater emphasis on the ethical and monotheistic aspects of the law, which have universal applicability,
rather than on the ethnic-specific aspects. This reading resembles the ethical monotheism found in the Jewish world.

At the same time, not all Jews would have thought that the partial adoption of Jewish ways of life was sufficient for the Gentiles’ inclusion in God’s blessing. Only full proselytizing would suffice, and they would have viewed circumcision as necessary in order for the Gentiles to join Israel. In their view, Gentiles should keep the specific ethnic injunctions of the law (circumcision, food laws, purity regulations, sacrifices, etc.) to share the blessings of the God of Israel. Matthew can be read in this way. Even if Matthew does not explicitly mention circumcision, various statements on teaching the nations to observe all Jesus’ commands (28:19-20), or on Jesus having come not to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them (5:17-19), imply that the Gentiles should observe the commandment to be circumcised.

In order to explain Matthew’s attitudes toward Gentiles and their relationship with the Torah (28:18-20), we can place Matthew against the backdrop of Jewish patterns of universalism framework. The idea of patterns such as “proselytism,” “righteous Gentiles” and “ethical monotheism” is helpful because it clarifies Matthew’s options.

1.2 Presupposition, Methodology, and Delimitations

1.2.1 Presuppositions

Before turning to the methodology of this study, I need to discuss the framework within which I will explore the question. In this section, I will present an eclectic set of presuppositions and assumptions about Matthew’s Gospel that pertains to its sources, the influence of Jewish universalism, authorship, and eschatology. I will also take into account Matthew’s modification and rearrangement of sources in order to understand his special interests and perspective.
Most basically, this study presupposes the two-document hypothesis. According to the two-document hypothesis, Matthew employed a Markan source and made several changes according to his special interests and theological concerns, independently from Luke’s use of the Markan source. Furthermore, this thesis assumes that these concerns relate to Matthew’s Jewish milieu. Matthew’s Gospel is commonly considered the most Jewish,\(^{46}\) and in recent scholarship, the social location of Matthew’s audience is thought to have been a sect both within and in opposition to the broader Jewish society.\(^{47}\) On this view Matthew’s church remained within the Jewish group. Matthew and his audiences were the true remnant of Israel, and Gentile believers in Jesus might stand in a positive relationship to the God of Israel.

One of the primary implications of these assumptions is that various options of universalism within Judaism itself would provide a basic framework for Matthew’s universalism. This implication is based on the fact that, during the Second-Temple Period, Judaism displayed several patterns of positive attitudes toward Gentiles. Jews were able to conceive of ways in which Gentiles related to the people of Israel and to the law of Moses. Jews reflected on the fate of the Gentiles and asked the “Gentile question”: on what terms might Gentiles stand in a positive relationship to the God of Israel, and what would that mean for their relationship to the law of Moses and the people of Israel?\(^{48}\) Especially in the Diaspora, where Jews lived alongside Gentiles, Jews often asked how Israel should coexist with the Gentiles. In this way, the Jews could develop levels or patterns of universalism.


\(^{47}\) For representatives of this view (called the *intra muros* view), see Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism*; Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*; and Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*.

The influence of Jewish universalism on Matthew would not be compromised if one takes the contrary assumption about the social location of Matthew’s audience. For example, Graham N. Stanton and Paul Foster assert that Matthew’s social location was separated from the Jewish world. Regardless of Matthew’s location inside or outside Judaism, Matthew and his audience would have been intimately familiar with the Old Testament as well as extra-biblical Jewish tradition, especially Jewish attitudes toward Gentiles. My point is not that Matthew knew and used Jewish sources, but only that there is evidence for contemporary Jewish patterns of universalism that would have been central to the process of legitimating Matthew’s attitude toward Gentiles.

The author of Matthew would have been a first-century Jew, and thus a representative of one or another of Jewish patterns of universalism. Matthew has a specifically Jewish perspective on the Gentile question but also represents a Christological variant of one of the Jewish options, thus establishing his view on the place of the Gentiles in the church. Put differently, to understand Matthew in this area we need to see him as a Jew who has come to believe that the crucified and risen Jesus is the expected Messiah.

Finally, eschatological aspects are important to consider. Matthew’s view of eschatology is quite distinct. He believes that the Messiah has already come. The idea of a dying, rising, and exalted Messiah is new and unprecedented. The Great Commission (28:18-20) deals with the Christian mission in the eschatological era. New Gentile believers are expected to practice Jesus’ teaching in an age that began with the death and resurrection of Christ (Mt 28:20). When Jesus was crucified on the cross, the earth shook, the rocks split, the tombs were opened and the holy ones

49 Stanton, A Gospel for a New People, 118-24, 192-206; and Foster, Community Law and Mission, 22-79.
were raised (27:51-52). This series of events show that Jesus’ death has inaugurated a new eschatological age. Even though they are not a full manifestation of end-time realities, those signs indicate that the eschatological age has begun.  

Matthew sees the ages between the resurrection and “the end of the age” as eschatological time (28:20). After Jesus’ resurrection, a new age has dawned, and Jesus’ disciples are commissioned to make disciples until the end of the age. Matthew sees the Gentile mission as a fulfillment of the expectation that the Gentiles would turn to God in the end times. The Great Commission (28:18-20) reveals eschatological aspects of Matthew’s view on the Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah.

**1.2.2 Methodology**

This project is a comparative study. My main methodology for discovering Matthew’s own understanding of the Gentile mission in the first century is to compare Matthew’s Gospel with Jewish writings that represent perspectives regarding Gentiles’ observance of the Jewish law. Judaism is interested in the ways in which Gentiles can be included among the people of God. The idea of Jewish patterns of Gentile inclusion—such as proselytism, the “righteous Gentile” view, and ethical monotheism—are helpful because they clarify Matthew’s options.

In searching for the terms of the mission to the Gentiles and thus how Gentiles keep the Jewish law (Mt 28:18-20), Matthean scholars have attempted to find an answer within Matthew’s text

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51 See more detail in Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain*, 183-88. When God fulfills the promise of Israel’s restoration, Gentiles will participate in the blessings in the end-time. And Christ is the center of the eschatological fulfillment.
It is hard however to find answers to the Gentile question directly in Matthew’s text, since Matthew’s perspective on the Gentiles and how Gentiles observe the Jewish law in the messianic community is not systematic. Even worse, it leaves the matter ambiguous. While Matthew gives us an important clue in his report of a final commission according to which the disciples of Jesus should teach new Gentile believers about Jesus’ command (28:18-20), the commission does not in itself answer the question of how the Gentiles obeyed or should obey the Jewish law. Can looking to Jewish universalism help us understand the ambiguity? To answer the “Gentile question” in Matthew’s Gospel, therefore, it will be useful to compare Matthew with contemporary Jewish literature that also wrestles with the terms of Gentile inclusion within Judaism.

But what criteria should we use when choosing Jewish literature to compare with Matthew? First, we must consider eschatological aspect. As we have seen previously, the Great Commission (28:18-20), the most important passage for Matthew’s view on the Torah and the Gentiles, deals with the Christian mission in the eschatological era. The new age has dawned with Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the new Gentile disciples are expected to follow the law. Since the Great Commission (28:18-20) has eschatological aspects, it is important to compare it with Jewish literature having eschatological overtones, especially texts that portray Gentile inclusion in the age to come.

52 For example, Sim deals with almost all the relevant passages about the Torah and Gentiles in Matthew’s Gospel (i.e., 5:17-20; 7:21-23; 8:5-13; 23:23; 28:18-20), but those passages themselves are not directly clear on how Gentiles are related to the Torah in Matthew. David C. Sim, “The Attitude to Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew,” in Attitude to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren; Library of New Testament Studies 499; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 173-90. To my knowledge, Anders Runesson is the first to try to compare Matthew with Jewish patterns of universalism, yet he does not exhaust the topic. See Runesson, “Judging Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew,” 145-46.

53 Bockmuehl, Jewish Law in Gentile Churches, 163.
Another important principle for choosing Jewish literature to compare with Matthew is that the passages should mention the law with respect to Gentiles. Since Jesus’ final commission (28:18-20) deals with how the new Gentile disciples observe the law, we need to identify Jewish literature that specifically concerns the law and commandments. Jesus teaches that nothing—not even the least stroke of a pen—will disappear from the law until heaven and earth disappear: so the disciples should keep God’s commandments and teach others to do so (5:18-19). And later the resurrected Jesus gives the commission to his disciples to teach the Gentile believers to obey everything Jesus has commanded (28:19). This is the reason that we need to identify those Jewish passages about the law and commandments, for that is exactly what Matthew does.

In Second-Temple Judaism, several Jewish texts meet these criteria of selection. Among these eschatological redemption texts in Judaism, I will focus on the Book of Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. The rationale of choosing these two particular pieces of literature will be clarified in chapter 3. Both Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 have eschatological aspects regarding the place of the Gentiles, and both can be a model of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) regarding how Gentiles will relate to the law in the end times. And this feature provides us with a common basis for comparing the two texts with Matthew.

The idea of patterns of Jewish universalism (proselytism, righteous Gentiles, and ethical monotheism) is helpful because it clarifies the options for Matthew’s attitude towards the Torah and Gentiles. One of these three models can best describe the eschatological Gentiles in Matthew. The purpose of the comparative study, nevertheless, is not necessarily to choose a Jewish model of universalism, because it is possible that Matthew is doing something new against these three models. Investigating how Matthew lines up with these Jewish models will help us get a better sense of the new things Matthew is doing with them. The comparative
method is important, but the purpose is not necessarily to place Matthew into one of the three categories as much as to bring Matthew’s unique Christological reworking into clear view.

1.2.3 Delimitations

This study will not be a detailed analysis of the whole of Matthew. My focus will be on selected passages about the Gentiles, the Torah, and eschatology. Similarly, I am concerned only with those subjects within Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. My use of the comparative method does not mean that I argue for specific relationships or connections between Matthew and those two Jewish texts. Rather, my examination will focus on the way that the three elements (the Gentiles, eschatology, and the Torah) work together logically in each of the three texts. I will examine how these texts theologically link the three elements in different ways.

The purpose of this project is to discover what kind of Jewish law was practiced by the Gentiles in Matthew’s church. The point is not to find out whether keeping the Jewish law is a necessary condition for the salvation of Gentiles, or to discuss whether the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 28:20 have a salvific purpose, since soteriology does not come into view. This project has more to do with the nature of law observance itself. I will investigate whether new Gentile believers in Jesus, when observing the law, also practiced Jewish-specific laws.

1.3 Outline and Procedure

In this thesis, I will investigate Matthew’s three interrelated themes—the Gentiles, the Torah, and eschatology—in so far as each is crucial to the Gentile question. I will then compare Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. Then, I will investigate Matthew’s attitudes toward Gentiles and their relationship with the law.
In chapter 2, I will study the overall picture of Matthew in relation to the Gentile question: how did the Gentiles relate to the Torah and the God of Israel? In examining the Gentile question in Matthew, my selection of passages will include both explicit and implicit references to Gentiles.

First, explicit passages will concern both individuals and groups among the Gentiles, with both positive and negative references. Thus, we will look at four Gentile women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, 1:3, 5-6); the Magi (2:1-12); a Roman centurion (8:5-13); the group of Gadarenes (8:28-34); a Canaanite woman (15:22-28); parables of the tenants (21:43); the proselytes of the Pharisees (23:15); the parables of the sheep and the goats (25:31-46); Pontius Pilate (27:11-24); the Roman soldiers mocking Jesus (27:27-37); a Gentile centurion at the foot of the cross (27:54). We will see positive references to Gentiles as in “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:15); Jesus as the Servant (12:18-21); the proclamation of the gospel to all the nations (24:14). And we will also see negative references to Gentiles such as tax-collectors and the Gentiles (5:46-47); mission to the Jews not Gentiles (10:5-6); Gentile rulers (10:18; 20:25); the “wordy prayer” of the Gentiles (6:7-8); their worries about mundane matters (6:31-32); Gentiles as wrongdoers (18:15-17); prophecies of Jesus’ execution by the Gentiles (20:19); Gentile persecution (24:9). We will also look at the Great Commission itself (28:18-20).

Second, beyond the explicit references to the Gentiles, there are some passages that implicitly refer to the Gentiles. We will examine passages about the light and salt of the “world” (τοῦ κόσμου, 5:13-14) and the “field” (ὁ κόσμος, 13:38). We will also look at the notion of the gospel being preached throughout the world (ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, 26:13).

Some of these passages bearing on Gentiles will deal with the Torah, and some with eschatology. These passages can be interpreted in different ways with respect to the Gentile question, but I will investigate three areas in particular. The first area is that of the interactions between Jews
and Gentiles. How might Gentiles relate positively to the God of Israel? What would this mean for their relationship to the law of Moses and the people of Israel? How does Matthew evaluate the Gentiles? Second, I will investigate the contents and nature of the Torah. I will specifically ask whether the Torah in Matthew’s Gospel is distinctly Jewish (ritual purity, festivals, food, circumcision and the like) or ethical. Third, I will examine the relationship between the Gentiles and the Torah in the end time. I will ask whether there is one law in Matthew for Jews and Gentiles, or whether the law applied to Gentiles is different from the law applied to Jews in eschatological age.

The purpose of chapter 2 is to analyze the passages in Matthew and to demonstrate that Matthew provides reasons for believing that he uses either the proselytism model for the end-time Gentiles or that he thinks other ways are established for the Gentiles to share the eschatological blessings of God. Therefore, the purpose of chapter 2 is not to come to a final answer on the Gentile questions. I will instead simply describe all the places where Matthew comments on Gentiles in the narrative, particularly with information that would be relevant for the Gentile questions I want to deal with.

In chapter 3, I will deal with eschatological passages in Judaism and examine the existing ambiguity in the Gentiles’ status in the end times. I will explain why I am choosing Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 to compare with Matthew. After that, I will answer the three Gentile questions with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. These Jewish works have different ways of linking the Gentiles, the Torah, and eschatology. I will survey Jewish patterns of universalism and eschatological passages in general, and then specifically deal with the Gentile questions in Tobit and the *Sibylline Oracles* 3: (1) what were the interactions between Jews and Gentiles? (2) what were the contents and nature of the Torah? and (3) what was the relationship between Gentiles
and the Torah to be like in the eschatological age? As a result, I will find insightful points of comparison that will bring Matthew’s unique theology into clearer focus.

In chapter 4, I will present Matthew’s own view towards the Torah and the Gentiles, insofar as it can be compared with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. My aim is not necessarily to identify Matthew with one or other of the Jewish models of universalism, since it is possible that Matthew may be doing something new. To investigate the ways in which Matthew is similar or dissimilar to each text will help us understand Matthew’s theology. To do this, I will identify points of interest in Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 and compare them as a whole to the materials from Matthew (as discussed in chapter 2), rather than proceeding passage by passage individually. So the purpose is not necessarily to align Matthew with one or another of the categories of Jewish universalism, but to bring Matthew’s unique Christological reworking into clear view. As we compare and contrast Matthew with the different Jewish works, we will discover that Matthew has a unique messianic theology in which he links Gentiles, Torah, and eschatology.
Chapter 2
The Gentile Questions in Matthew’s Gospel

Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20) raises a question: how do the commandments of Jesus, especially that the Gentile disciples are to observe “everything that I have commanded you” (v. 20), relate to the Law of Moses? Matthew gives an important clue in his final commission, to the effect that the disciples of Jesus are expected to teach new Gentile believers about Jesus’ commands and the interpretation of the law that has the highest authority. In his whole gospel, however, Matthew’s perspective on accepting Gentiles is not systematic, and it leaves the topic ambiguous. As Markus Bockmuehl observes,

> Although Matthew clearly tries to formulate a ‘Jesus halakhah’ (e.g. in 5:21-48; 19:3-9), many questions remain wrapped in diplomatic silence. Thus, issues like circumcision, purity and food laws are not dealt with, although leprosy (8:2-3; 10:8; 11:5), evil spirits (10:1; 12:43) and, by implication, pigs (7:6; 8:30-32) are evidently still unclean. Purity, tithing and phylacteries are significant but depend on inward purity (15:19-20; 23:5, 23, 25-26). Other than the teaching of Jesus, once again no clear criteria for Gentiles emerge. 54

2.1 The Gentile Question in Matthew

In this chapter, I will survey the relevant passages in Matthew’s Gospel that might have a bearing on his attitude towards Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah. Matthew is not directly clear on this issue, or on our three aforementioned Gentile questions. Those questions are, first, how might the Gentiles relate positively to the God of Israel, and what would it mean for their relationship with the law of Moses and the people of Israel? In other words, how does Matthew evaluate Gentiles? Second, what is the nature of the Torah in Matthew’s Gospel? Is it distinctly Jewish-specific or ethical? Third, is there one law for Jews and Gentiles, or is the law

applied to Gentiles different from the law applied to the Jews? In answering these Gentile questions in Matthew as a whole, individual parts of Matthew taken by themselves leave room for various interpretations. I will deal with the individual passages at a basic level and then go on to these three questions in the subsequent section, where I will move from a commentary on individual passages to a synthesis.

2.1.1 Matthew’s Explicit Statements about Gentiles

For Matthew’s views on the “Gentile question,” we first need to investigate individual texts that make explicit Gentile references. By “explicit Gentile” references I mean that Matthew often uses the specific terminology ἔθνος and ἐθνικός, or that he portrays individuals as Gentiles, or that he speaks about the ongoing Gentile world. Those explicit statements regarding Gentiles have to do with the acceptance of Gentiles within the messianic community of disciples. Matthew’s view on the Gentile question is not systematic, and each explicit statement about Gentiles can be susceptible to various interpretations.

Four Women (1:3, 5-6)

Matthew introduces four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) into Jesus’ genealogy. While Matthew places the genealogy of Jesus within Jewish history by connecting him to David and Abraham (1:1), these four women indicate that Jesus was also related to Gentile ancestries. It is quite probable that Tamar (Gen 28; cf. 38:2, 11) and Rahab (Josh 2:6) were Canaanites, and Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4). It is doubtful that Bathsheba

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was non-Jewish,

but her marriage relationship to Uriah, who was a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3), still shows that Matthew is concerned about Gentiles in the genealogy.

Numerous scholars suggest that these three Gentile women, Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in the outset of the Gospel, foreshadow its openness toward Gentiles who would be brought into God’s blessings (Mt 28:18-20).

Then do these women provide any indication of Matthew’s perspective regarding the relationship between the law and the Gentiles? It is possible to understand these women as marks of Gentile inclusion in the community of the God of Israel, in such a way that they could be viewed as proselytes. In fact, during the time of Matthew and in some later Jewish sources, Tamar, Rahab and Ruth were explicitly understood as proselytes to Judaism.

For this reason, some Matthean

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57 Bathsheba can be seen as Gentile, and this interpretation is favoured by Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 23. He states, “[T]here is certainly no real problem about supposing that Bathsheba is included in the genealogy as a Gentile.” According to Old Testament reference, it is also plausible that Bathsheba was a Jewish woman married to a Gentile. Her father, Eliam (2 Sam 11:3), was a Gilonite (2 Sam 23:34); and Giloh is at the south of Hebron. See Warren Carter, Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 59; Jason B. Hood, The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations: Matthew 1.1-17 (Library of New Testament Studies 441; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 107-8.

58 Hood argues that Uriah (and not Bathsheba), along with the Gentile women, is emphasized in Mt 1:6, because the named man plays a more important role than his unnamed wife. These four Gentiles (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah) were seen as praiseworthy models. It is worth noting that their names appear in the genealogy. Matthew envisions the mission to the Gentiles by mentioning four Gentile names at the outset. See Hood, The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations, 127-38.

59 The four women’s Gentile origins or associations do not relate to Mary (the fifth woman in the genealogy), the mother of Jesus, who was not a foreigner. Yet the foreign origin of Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth may well be considered as part of Matthew’s point that Gentiles are to be included in messianic people of God. See Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 73-74; Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 14-5; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew (International Critical Commentary, 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1:171; Craig S. Keener, A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 78-81; Glenna S. Jackson, ‘Have Mercy on Me’: The Story of the Canaanite Woman in Matthew 15.21-28 (JSNTSup 228; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 28, 93-9; Ulrich Luz, Matthew 8-20 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 84-5; Peter-Ben Smit, “Something about Mary? Remarks about the Five Women in the Matthean Genealogy,” New Testament Studies 56 (2010): 191-207.

60 Tamar is mentioned as a proselyte, a female counterpart to Abraham in Philo, Virt. 220ff. In Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 61:6, Ruth is seen as a proselyte since, in the words of David, she “chose herself the ways of the almighty and walked in them.” Rahab also appears as a proselyte in 1 Clement 12:1, 7-8, and in Joshua 6:25, “she has lived in Israel to this day.” See Matthias Konradt, Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew (trans. Kathleen Ess; Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 271, n. 27. Cf. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:171; Nolland, The Gospel of Matthew, 76; and Luz, Matthew 1-7, 84.
scholars argue that Matthew could reflect a Jewish tradition about these three women, and that he could be using them as role models for the terms of Gentile inclusion through proselytism. But this view is only suggestive and not explicit in the genealogy.

The Magi (2:1-12)

The story of the Magi is another reference point for Matthew’s perspective on the Gentiles, and they signal the Gentile inclusion in the messianic community. After Jesus is born in Bethlehem, during the time of King Herod, certain magi come to Jerusalem from the East. The reason is that they know Jesus to be the King of the Jews (2:1-2). While a few scholars view the Magi as Jews, the majority of scholars propose that their ethnic background is Gentile. The reference “the King of the Jews,” for instance, is used only by non-Jewish speakers in Matthew (27:11, 29, 37; cf. 28:15). Jesus is consistently mentioned as the king of the Jews by the non-Jews. This reversal is also depicted in the final judgment scene in 25:34 and 40, where the royal title is taken up by Jesus himself for πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.


62 W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, Matthew (Anchor Bible 26; Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), 498; and David C. Sim, “The Magi: Gentiles or Jews?” Hervormde Teologiese Studies 55 (1999): 980-1000. Sim objects to the idea that the Magi were Gentiles, while most Matthean scholars take for granted their Gentile ethnicity. He summarizes and questions seven arguments that support a non-Jewish ethnicity. His arguments rejecting the Magi’s Gentile ethnicity include the following points: there are several instances of Jewish magi (1 En 72:3; Sib Or 5:521-31); Jews were widespread east of Judea; the reference to “the King of the Jews” is sometimes used by Jews (not always by Gentiles); it is hard to find a direct connection between Balaam (Numbers 22-24) and the Magi. But these observations are in themselves scarcely decisive. For a critique, see Brenden Byrne, “The Messiah in Whose Name ‘The Gentiles Will Hope’ (Matt 12:21): Gentile Inclusion as An Essential Element of Matthew’s Christology,” Australian Biblical Review 50 (2002): 60-2.

The Magi are described very positively in Jesus’ birth narrative. In contrast to Jewish leaders who do not recognize the birth of the royal figure, and in contrast to Herod who attempts to murder him, the Magi receive God’s guidance and come to Jerusalem to worship the king of the Jews. Even before coming, they recognize the star belonging to the king of the Jews; and when the star leads them to the place of Jesus, they rejoice exceedingly with great joy (2:10). They come into the house, fall down, worship Jesus, and present him with gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh (2:11). They obey a divine warning in a dream and return to their country, not to Herod (2:12). This positive depiction of the Magi fairly foreshadows the Gentiles’ faith in Jesus during his later ministry (8:5-13; 15:22-28).

Does this passage tell us anything about the relationship between the law and the Gentiles? The Magi are attracted to Jesus and recognize him as king of the Jews, but they still stand in a marginal position and remain outside Israel. The story never shows the Magi becoming followers of Jesus or acquiring any permanent relationship with Jesus. At most, their acceptance of Jesus is “rudimentary and inchoate” and there is “no organized program” of Gentile inclusion. Nevertheless, the relationship of the Magi to Jesus resembles that of the righteous Gentiles to the God of Israel. In Isaiah 60, there are significant similarities between the visit of the Magi and the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles: “[T]he wealth of the nations shall come to you” (Isa 60:5), “They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD” (Isa 60:6). While the “nations” in Isaiah 60 seem to be in a more subservient role to Israel than are the Magi, nonetheless the allusions do support the view that they relate to Jesus as non-Jews who remain outside Israel as “righteous Gentiles.” In the Second Temple literature, specific activities

64 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 70.
65 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:250-51; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 31; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 114.
of righteous Gentiles comparable to the Magi’s proper action toward Jesus (2:1-2, 10-11) include acknowledging the God of the Jews (e.g., Josephus Ant. 11. 3-5, 103), honouring God by presenting gifts (e.g., 4QDibHam 1-2 IV, 2-13), and participating in worship (e.g., Josephus Ant. 11:87). The only difference between the righteous Gentiles and the Magi is that while righteous Gentiles attach themselves to the God of Israel, the Magi, as Matthew’s story indicates, only recognize the Messiah. The story of the Magi nevertheless is a reference to Matthew’s favourable attitude towards the Gentile world and its association with the Messiah by showing reverence and honour.

Galilee of the Gentiles (4:15-16)

The text shows how Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa 9:1-2). Jesus becomes a light for the people in Gentile Galilee, a region where both Jews and Gentiles are found (4:15-16). Here Jesus may not be actively involved in a Gentile mission, since Jesus is instead active in the synagogue, and in general his mission is restricted to Israel only (Mt 10:5-6). Further, though the text refers to “the people sitting in darkness” (ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότει in v.16), this may designate the

66 Some Gentiles are represented as having acknowledged the God of the Jews. For example, in 2 Maccabees 3:33-39, the Gentile Heliodorus is portrayed as recognizing the “majestic power of God” (3:34) and witnessing God’s mighty deeds to all people (3:36). He acknowledges the supremacy of Israel’s God and offers “sacrifice to the Lord” and makes “very great vows to the Savior of his life” (3:35). In LXX Esther 16:15-16, the Persian king Artaxerxes acknowledges the God of the Jews and issues an edict that the Jews “are children of the living God, most high, most mighty,” and that the same God “has directed the kingdom both for us and for our ancestors in the most excellent order” (16:16). In Jos. Asen. 3:3-4; 4:7; 18:1, 11; and 20:7, the Egyptian family of Aseneth gives glory to God; and in 21:6, the Egyptian king Pharaoh recognizes the Lord God the Most High. In Josephus J. W. 2.201, the Syrian legate Petronius recognizes God’s aiding. In Ant. 11: 3-5, 103, Cyrus, the Persian king, venerates Israel’s God; in 11:120-32, the Jews of Babylon observe Xerxes honoring God; and in 11:331-36, Alexander venerates God and temple. (See also Josephus, Ant. 13:69-71; 18.286-309; CIRB 1260). Another practice of Gentile attachment to Judaism was the offering of gifts to the temple as an expression of honoring God (e.g., 2 Macc 5:16; 9:11-18; 2 Bar. 68:5-6; Philo Embassy 157, 291-320; 4QDibHam 1-2 IV, 2-13; Josephus J. W. 2.340-41; 2.409-17; 4.181; 5.562-64; Ant. 12.11-118; 13.78, 242-44; 14.110; Ag. Ap. 2.48). Still other Gentiles participated in worship as an act of veneration (e.g., 2 Macc 3:33-39; Josephus J. W. 4.275; Ant. 3:318-19; 11.87; John 12:20). For more specific activities and dispositions of non-Jews who attached themselves to Judaism as Gentiles, see Terence L. Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE) (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 469-82.
Jewish people, since Matthew uses λαὸς as a special term only for the Jews. This interpretation also fits well with 2:6, “who is to shepherd my people Israel” (ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαὸν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ) and 4:23, “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming … and curing … among the people” (διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων … καὶ θεραπεύων … ἐν τῷ λαῷ). Therefore, “the people who sat in darkness” (ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότει in v.16) indicates “the orientation of Jesus’ ministry toward Israel.” So Jesus himself fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah insofar as he is the light for the Jews who sit in the shadow of death. For Matthew, then, Galilee is regarded as the location of Jesus’ work within Israel.

Along with Jesus’ ministry toward Israel, however, the passage also signals the inclusion of Gentiles, and specifically the inclusion that would occur after the resurrection of Jesus (28:19). Jesus began his ministry in Galilee. Later in the story, Jesus ended his ministry in Galilee by finally commissioning his disciples to make disciples of all nations (28:16). It is not an accident that Matthew links the Messiah and the Gentiles by characterizing Galilee as “Galilee of the

67 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 28-32; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:383-85; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 158; Konradt, Israel, 274-5.
68 Konradt, Israel, 274.
69 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 383-85; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 158; Konradt, Israel, 275.
71 Some see in this passage the Gentiles’ occupancy of Galilee. See R. T. France, The Gospel of Matthew (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2007), 142-43; Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 115. Carter says, “Galilee of the Gentiles … designates occupied status, a land under the power of, possessed by, ruled by Gentile imperialists (cf. 2 Kgs 17:24-27).” The immediately following context, 4:24-25, also foreshadows the motif of Gentile mission (Mt 28:18-20). The good news of Jesus and his reputation spread to the Gentile regions. Luz notes that Jesus’ fame (v. 24) “already spreads beyond the borders of Israel and probably covers the entire Roman province of Syria” (Luz, Matthew 1-7, 167). Yet in 4:25, ὄχλοι πολλοὶ probably do not refer to Gentiles. Here, the orientation of Jesus’ ministry goes to Israel, and the Gentile mission is not emphasized. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:419, n. 12: “Matthew may presuppose a Gentile presence among the crowds, but he does not emphasize this.” Further, Konradt notes that Matthew omits Mark’s Idumea, Tyre and Sidon (Mk 3:7-8), which are “biblically Gentile territories,” and rather inserts Decapolis, which “covers the northern region of the Transjordanian tribes.” Matthew would regard the many crowds from the Decapolis as Jews. See Konradt, Israel, 50-52.
Gentiles.” The salvation of Jesus Christ (4:16) will continue to be expanded to the Gentile world (28:16-20). In this way Matthew portrays the Gentile inclusion in the Messianic community as biblical and prophetic.

Love for One’s Enemies (5:46-47)
Matthew portrays Gentiles as a negative example when he deals with the topic of love for one’s enemies. “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors (οἱ τέλωναί) do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles (οἱ ἔθνικοι) do the same?” The tax collectors and Gentiles are negative examples that the followers of Jesus should avoid. The parallel accounts in Luke (Lk 6:32-33) use the more definite negative term “sinners” (οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί), as opposed to Matthew’s “tax collectors” and “Gentiles.” Matthew thus depicts “Gentiles” in an unfavourable way. His point is that friendly greetings for one’s family and friends only matches with normal standards of social behaviour, which even Gentiles can do. The disciples of Jesus are expected to do more than tax collectors and Gentiles by practicing radical love that exceeds the ethical standard of the world.73

Empty Phrases like the Gentiles (6:7-8)
In another text depreciating Gentiles, we find Jesus saying: “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles (οἱ ἔθνικοι) do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.” Matthew warns his readers about the Gentiles’ thoughtless repetition in their

72 In Matthew’s Gospel the term “tax collector” is connected with ἁμαρτωλοί “sinners” in Mt 9:10, 11 and 11:19, and with πόρναι “harlots” in Mt 21:31-32 (see Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 73-74). Note that there also exists a tension. The positive view of “tax collectors” is in Mt 10:3, where “Matthew the tax collector” appears, and in Mt 9:9 where Matthew the tax collector is converted by Jesus.

73 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 76-77.
prayers, since incantations or mechanical repetition do not cause any benefit. The polytheism in the Gentile world possibly has to do with this repetition; perhaps the non-Jews uttered many names of different gods in their prayers.\textsuperscript{74} In any case, Jesus’ disciples should be careful not to imitate the practices of non-Jews.

Do Not Worry (6:31-32)

Matthew 6:31-32 describes practices of the Gentiles which the disciples should not imitate.

“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear’? For the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) seek all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.” The text conveys a negative image of the Gentiles, in that they are anxious about their basic needs and fail to be aware of God’s provision.

A Roman Centurion (8:5-13)

Does a centurion’s behaviour tell us anything about the law that is pertinent to Gentile Christians? A Gentile centurion gives respect and recognition to Jesus. Even though Jesus is a Jew under his authority, the centurion takes the initiative to recognize Jesus. He believes that Jesus can cure his paralyzed servant at a distance, and he pleads for help on behalf of his servant. In the end Jesus praises the centurion’s great faith (8:10). The centurion shows faith in Jesus’ power to heal—a faith which Jesus has not found in Israel. The centurion’s great faith makes him the model of a righteous Gentile.\textsuperscript{75} The passage does not relate the Gentile centurion to the law per se,\textsuperscript{76} but it shows that faith constitutes the lifestyle of the disciples.

\textsuperscript{74} Davies and Allison, \textit{Matthew}, 1:588.

\textsuperscript{75} Runesson, “Judging Gentiles,” 146.

\textsuperscript{76} The NRSV translates verse 7 as “I will come and cure him,” but the Greek is not clear enough to render it in this way. Luz translates verse 7 as “Shall I come to heal him?” and argues that Jesus is hesitant to enter the centurion’s house due to his faithfulness to the law (cf. John 18:28; Acts 10:28; \textit{m.Ohol.} 18:7). It might be proper for a Jew to avoid entering Gentile’s home because it might cause ritual impurity. See also Levine, \textit{The Social and Ethnic}
Do verses 11 and 12 tell us anything about the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles? Jesus teaches with the important point that “many” (πολλοί) will participate in the banquet of heaven (cf. 2 Bar 29:4). Most scholars argue that Jesus predicts the inclusion of many Gentiles in the age to come, namely those who have faith in Jesus like the Centurion. One the other hand, Davies and Allison argue that those who come from the east and the west refer to diaspora Jews who once were dispersed from the land of Israel. Davies and Allison make a good case for the pilgrimage of the diaspora Jews into the Messianic feast, but this fact does not necessarily exclude Gentiles from the “many.” According to the theme of Israel’s restoration, when God restores and gathers his scattered people Israel, the Gentiles are included in the Messianic banquet (cf. T. Benj 9:2; Tob 13:5, 13; 14:5-6). So the influx of Gentiles is indicated in several Second Temple sources. And in the context of Matthew 8:5-10, it cannot be ignored that Jesus encounters a Gentile centurion inside Israel.

The Group of Gadarenes (8:28-34)

Jesus, as a Jew, is portrayed as exercising his power and authority in the Gentile region of the Gadarenes. When Jesus meets two men who are possessed by ferocious demons, they recognize Jesus as the Son of God (cf. 27:51-54). Jesus casts the demons out, and they enter a herd of pigs

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*Dimensions, 113; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:22; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 204; France, The Gospel of Matthew, 314. The Gentile centurion recognizes Jesus’ hesitance to come into his house and respects the fact that Jesus is a Jew. And the Gentile centurion “affirms this concern by conceding that he is not good enough for the Lord to enter his house.” Luz, Matthew 8-20, 10-11. Whether or not Jesus hesitates to enter the Gentile centurion’s house, this Gentile respects the Jewish law; and his attitude might be a model case for a righteous Gentile.

77 Evans, Matthew, 189.

78 Gundry, Matthew, 144-46; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 205-6; Luz, Matthew 8-20, 10-11; Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 203-4; and Konradt, Israel, 205.

79 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:27-31; Sim, “Attitude to Gentiles,” 184. Sim argues that the “many” (v. 11) exclusively refers to Jewish pilgrimages and that “the eschatological fate of the Gentiles is not in view here at all.”

80 Matthew’s quotations of Isa 8:23-9:1 in Mt 4:15-16 and of LXX Isa 42:1-4 and 11:10 in Mt 12:18-21 show the context of the restoration of Israel. This theme includes “both diaspora Jews and the gentiles”. Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 71. See also Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 203; and Levine, The Social And Ethnic Dimensions, 126-30.
and rush into the water. The whole town sees Jesus and asks him to leave (8:33-34). Are these people Jews or Gentiles? They could be the Jewish residents in the region of the Gadarenes; however, it seems more likely that they are non-Jews, because they are raising a large herd of swine.\(^{81}\) For the Jewish people, pigs are regarded as unclean, and thus the Jews should avoid eating them (Lev 11:7-8; Deut 14:8). Further, if we regard the demoniacs and townspeople as Gentiles, the omission of Mark 5:18-20 makes more sense. Matthew omits Mark’s depictions of the healed demoniacs’ attempt to follow Jesus, and Matthew also omits other aspects of Jesus’ missionary activity before his resurrection (Mk 5:18-20). Unlike Mark, Matthew does not explicitly mention the demoniacs’ healing (cf. Mk 5:15), he does not say that the healed demoniacs become followers of Jesus (cf. Mk 5:18), and Jesus does not take the initiative in a Gentile mission (cf. Mk 5:19). If the demoniacs and the townspeople are assumed to be Gentiles, this reading conforms with Matthew’s understanding that the mission to the Gentiles did not start until after the final commission (28:18-20).\(^{82}\) The particular people in the regions of the Gadarenes must be Gentiles.

Does this negative portrait of Gentiles say something about relationship between the law and the Gentiles? This might indicate, by reflection, what positive criteria may apply to Gentiles. The proper response to the presence of Jesus and his healing miracles is faith, but when the Gentiles saw the exorcism, they do not recognize Jesus as Lord, respect him (8:2, 6), cry for help (8:2, 25), or have faith in him (8:5-10, 26). They resist against Jesus. Therefore, by their negative

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example, we see what the expected response from the whole town should have been (v. 34): to have faith in Jesus and recognize him as the Lord and eschatological judge (8:29).

Is the destruction of the herd of pigs in 8:32 an indication that Matthew also expects Gentiles to observe food laws? By implication, pigs are regarded as unclean (cf. 7:6); thus it is possible to assume that Matthew may not want Gentiles to eat pork. But it would be hard to make a case that Matthew expects the Gentile townspeople to observe the food laws. First, in the story itself, Matthew does not deal with purity issues such as Gentile territory, pigs, and tombs, all of which might be sensitive to the Jews (8:28, 30, 32). So Matthew may also not be interested in the food laws here. Secondly, other than the food issue, pigs can also be related to commerce or religious rituals; or they may symbolize Rome itself. Therefore, the destruction of the pigs could mean an economic loss, a denial of pagan worship, or a coded depiction of Rome’s downfall.83

Mission to the Jews, not the Gentiles (10:5-6)

Jesus restricts his mission to Israel and prohibits his disciples from going among the Gentiles or entering Samaria (cf. 15:24). This particularism is only temporary, however, and at the final commission of the resurrected Jesus, the Gentile mission is clearly in view (28:19).84 There is an apparent distinction between Jesus’ earthly ministry and the eschatological era following the resurrection of Jesus.

83 Cf. Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 212, 586. Carter gives examples of the various ways pigs are used in the Gentile world. They are raised for food and commerce (Tacitus, Ann 13:54-55) or used for religious rituals (Cicero, De Leg 2:55-57); or in the later talmudic literature, the pig symbolizes Rome. So Jesus’ authoritative command “Go” (Mt 8:32) shows that “God’s empire destroys the pigs, symbols of Roman commercial, religious, and military power … possessed by demons.” Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 213.

84 Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 270-71; Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 234. The Great Commission is often regarded as “a replacement” or “an expansion” of Jesus’ earthly mission charge (10:5-6; 15:24, 26). If it is regarded as “a replacement,” then Jews are excluded from the missional target group after Jesus’ resurrection. If the commission is understood as “an expansion,” the mission to Jews still continues after the resurrection, alongside the Gentile mission. See Levine, The Social And Ethnic Dimensions, 191; Luz, Matthew 21-28, 628.
Does this restricted mission to Israel betray something about the nature of the relationship between Gentiles and the people of God? Since Jesus restricts his mission only to Israel during his earthly ministry, Sim argues that the church did not engage in Gentile mission even after Jesus’ resurrection. After Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20), the church theoretically was open to Gentile mission without actually being engaged in it. Sim argues that negative portraits of non-Jews (5:46-47; 7:6; 10:18; 18:15-17) and the Gentiles’ severe persecution against Christians (10:18, 22; 24:9) support this view. Therefore, the fact that Jesus restricted his mission to Israel provides a warrant for Matthew’s church to shun their Gentile neighbours. However, during his earthly ministry (2:6; 4:12-9:38), Jesus actually interacted with a few Gentiles (8:5-13, 28-34; cf. 15:21-28) and called his disciples “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (5:13, 16). Further, he said that for the sake of his name, his disciples would be brought before the Gentile governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles (10:18). Thus, there is still a possibility that Jesus’ examples and words foreshadow a mission to all the nations. In the eschatological era, the disciples can boldly engage in mission with the promise that Jesus will always be with them (28:20).

Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (11:20-24)

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum are all Jewish regions that do not repent and do not respond properly to Jesus. Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, are all classic Gentile cities that had the opportunity for repentance (11:20-24). Likewise, repentance was recognizable in Nineveh, a Gentile city (12:41). Gentiles repented at the preaching of Jonah more than the Pharisees and the scribes at the preaching of Jesus (12:38). Repentance is a recurring theme in Matthew (3:2, 8, 11; 4:17),

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85 Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 244.
86 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 234, 553; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:687.
and faithful Jews come to John the Baptist with repentance (3:5-6). Both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus in order to join the true Israel are expected to repent.  

Jesus as the Servant (12:18-21)

Jesus is not only Israel’s Messiah but also the redeemer of Gentiles. The Messiah “will proclaim κρίσις to nations” (v.18) and will behave with lovingkindness “until he leads κρίσις to victory” (v. 20). Matthew’s quotation of Isaiah 42:1-4 represents the restoration of Israel, when God will gather diaspora Jews, and when Gentiles as “faithful Gentiles” will also share the eschatological blessings. Then does the meaning of κρίσις indicate something about the relationship between the law and Gentiles? In verse 21, the ἔθνη put their hope in his name (ὅνομα), and this matches well with Matthew 28:19, where the new disciples from πάντα τὰ ἔθνη will be baptized “in the name (ὄνομα) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, accepting Jesus is the membership criterion for the new Gentile believers.

But κρίσις could also indicate a further criterion. The term κρίσις is used twelve times in Matthew and means either “judgment” or “justice.” Since Matthew understands Jesus as a judge of all nations (cf. 12:41-2; 25:31-46), rendering κρίσις as “judgment” is a possible translation. If the term κρίσις (v. 18, 20) is rendered as “judgment,” Matthew is saying that Jesus judges all nations and universal judgment is expected. However, the latter translation as “justice” has good reasons in its favor. First, where the term κρίσις refers to judgment (5:21, 22; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 28:19).  

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87 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 71, 77.
88 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 71.
89 Cf. Konradt, Israel, 278.
90 Cf. Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 71.
91 Some consider this possibility. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:325; Luz, Matthew 8-20, 193-95. This translation always occurs with the theme of eschatological judgment (11:20-24; 12:41-42; 25:31-26).
12:36, 41, 42), Matthew uses formulaic expressions with the dative or genitive case. But in 12:18 and 20 where this term would refer to justice, it is not formulaic but appears as accusative. Second, the separate occurrence of “Gentiles” in verse 21 gives an important clue that κρίσις means “justice.” The fact that verse 21 says that the Gentiles will “hope” in Jesus suggests a positive attitude towards the Gentiles in the passage as a whole. This contradicts the negative sense of “judgment.” Third, the immediate context of 12:18-21 presents the injustice of a Jewish leadership that refuses to allow a crippled man’s healing (12:1-8, 9-13). The leaders oppress people unjustly by insisting upon the strict observance of their own halachic stipulations. Fourth, the same term means “justice” later in 23:23 and implies an ethical demand, since Jesus by using the same term rebukes Jewish leaders for oppressing the people.

So in 12:18-21, Matthew’s focus is on the fact that “Jesus the Davidic Messiah brings justice, mercy, and salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike.” Therefore, justice as an ethical requirement is expected of both Jews and Gentiles (12:18-21). Jesus brings justice to the whole world. We can see its final fulfillment in Jesus’ commission to his disciples “to observe all that I have commanded you” (28:20).

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92 Richard Beaton, “Messiah and Justice: A Key to Matthew’s Use of Isaiah 42:1-4,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 75 (1999): 15. In his view, whereas Jewish leaders advance injustice, Jesus practices the justice which is anticipated in the Eschaton. Beaton connects 12:18-21 with 23:23 and points out the injustice of the Jewish leadership, which “oppresses the people through its zeal to maintain halakah.” The terms mercy and justice imply an “ethical demand” (pp. 16-17).

93 Beaton, “Messiah and Justice,” 5-23.


A Canaanite Woman (15:22-28)

One may assume that a Canaanite woman would be a model of a proselyte if she became a convert to Judaism. G. S. Jackson makes a case that Matthew’s story about Jesus and the Canaanite woman shows how such a woman becomes a proselyte and enters into the Jewish inner group. Matthew has redacted the Markan story (Mark 7:17) and expanded it as a program of conversion to Judaism. Jackson argues that even though the pericope does not explicitly show that the Canaanite woman practices the Jewish law, the four women in Matthew’s genealogy—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah (1:3-6)—are proselytes and therefore foreshadow the Canaanite woman appearing as a female proselyte later in the story.

Many scholars agree that those four women are proselytes. However, not all scholars see them as precedents or models for the Canaanite woman as being a proselyte. Rather, the relationship of the Canaanite woman to Jesus very much resembles that of the righteous Gentiles to Judaism. She calls Jesus “Lord” (15:22, 25, 27) and “son of David” (15:22), while recognizing Jesus’ miraculous healing power. She asks Jesus to share the blessings which originally extend to Jews only (15:26) because she acknowledges that his healing power expands beyond the Jewish ethnic boundary (15:27). She also demonstrates great faith, like the centurion (8:10), and Jesus is amazed at this kind of faith (15:28). The case of the woman and centurion are similar to that of the non-Jewish worshipers of the God of Israel, who are often called “God-fearers.” The text does not specify whether the Canaanite woman has to keep the Jewish law once she comes to

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97 Jackson, ‘Have Mercy on Me’, 28, 93-9; Sim, “Attitude to Gentiles,” 185-86.
faith. At least the text shows that the woman’s faith and her recognition of Jesus’ power and authority are a necessary requirement to share the blessings.

This passage indicates the distinction between the law that is applied to Jews and the law for Gentiles. To see this indication, it is helpful to compare Matthew’s version of the story with Mark’s. First, Matthew still sees the primacy of Israel in Jesus’ ministry here. For one thing, Mark calls the woman “a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth” (Mk 7:26), while Matthew calls her “a Canaanite.” Canaanites are traditionally regarded as enemies that should be shunned by Jews; thus the boundary which separates Jews from Gentiles is still an issue here. For another, Matthew’s Jesus clearly shows his objection to granting the Gentile woman’s plea (15:24, 26). He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and it is not fair for Gentiles to receive a portion of something that Jesus should grant to others. In Mark’s account, Jesus explains why he is reluctant to grant the woman’s request by saying, “Let the children first be fed” (Mk 7:27). In Mark’s account, Israel should be fed first (Mk 7:27); but Matthew omits Mark’s πρῶτον, thus making Jesus’ mission to Israel non-temporary. Matthew persistently sharpens the division between Jews and Gentiles (15:26). Jesus’ objection is clearly that he is sent only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The lost sheep of the house of Israel are still the primary group that needs Jesus’ ministry (15:24).

Second, in contrast to Mark’s account, Matthew’s Jesus continues to practice Jewish law. Unlike Mark’s depiction of Jesus entering into a Gentile’s house (Mk 7:24), Matthew’s narrative omits

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100 Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, 73.
this account and portrays Jesus still outside the Gentile house. It seems that Matthew’s Jesus continues to keep the Jewish law.\textsuperscript{101}

Third, in the woman’s argument there is a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The woman accepts her identity as a “dog,” and Jesus sees her status as a non-Jew to be appropriate (15:27-28). The woman also sees Jesus as the Son of David (v. 22) and as the Messiah of \textit{Israel}. But even though it seems that there is a distinction, Jesus’ reign extends to the Gentiles. It is true that Jesus objects to granting the Gentile woman’s plea (15:24, 26), but this unwillingness is overcome by the woman’s great faith. So Matthew justifies the Gentiles’ great faith in order for them to share blessings with the Jews. The Canaanite woman can continue to be a Gentile while sharing the blessings, as Jesus affirms her non-Jewish status appropriately. Overall, the Canaanite woman’s story implies that faith is important for the Gentiles to share God’s blessings, but it also maintains that there is a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Jesus, a Jew, practices Jewish law, and the Canaanite woman may well continue to be a Gentile.

Dealing with Sin in the Church (18:15-17)

Matthew 18:15-17 details how to solve a problem when a fellow believer sins against another. At first, the offended party should talk with the wrongdoer for reconciliation in a private way. If this does not work, the offended party could get help from one or two other brothers as witnesses (cf. Deut 19:15) and try again. If the wrongdoer still does not listen, he should be brought before the church. If the sinner does not listen even then, he should be regarded as “a Gentile (ὁ ἑθνικὸς)

\textsuperscript{101} Saldarini, \textit{Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community}, 73. Saldarini focuses on Matthew’s retelling of Mark’s account. “Matthew omits the sweeping generalization that Jesus voided purity laws, keeping Jesus out of a gentile house and possibly out of gentile territory entirely. In this gospel, Jesus always obeys Jewish law because Matthew’s group still keeps Jewish law … and is only beginning to face the problems of assimilating gentiles into its fellowship.” See also Donald Senior, “Between Two Worlds: Gentiles and Jewish Christians in Matthew’s Gospel,” \textit{Catholic Biblical Quarterly} 61 (1999): 13.
and a tax collector.” It is generally accepted that this action is a procedure of excommunication involving the avoidance and exclusion of the offender from the church.\textsuperscript{102} Gentiles are depicted pejoratively. The purpose of this severe procedure is primarily to help the wrongdoer to realize his sins and to win him back to the church.

Prediction of Jesus’ death (20:17-19, 25)
Jesus predicts his death when he goes up to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples. The chief priests and scribes will deliver Jesus to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified. And shortly afterwards, Jesus criticizes the oppression of Gentile rulers since they become tyrants over the disciples (20:25).

Parable of the Tenants (21:33-46)
This parable has been interpreted variously and hotly debated. Verse 43 is often interpreted in such a way that Israel is excluded and the Gentiles replace the Jews; thus the term ἔθνες should be interpreted ethnically as “Gentiles.”\textsuperscript{103} The kingdom of God is taken from Israel and is given to the Gentiles (v. 43). Regarding the evidence from the text, however, the Gentiles do not replace Israel. Jesus excludes a set of Jewish leaders, not all Jews; so when Jesus says that the kingdom “will be taken away from you,” he is speaking to the Jewish leadership in particular. First, the larger context of Matthew 21-22 portrays the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leadership (21:15, 23; 22:15, 23, 34, 35, 41), and chapter 23 extends the attack to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. In so doing, Matthew draws a sharp distinction between the leaders

\textsuperscript{102} Among many scholars we can find this view. See Davies and Allison, \textit{Matthew}, 2: 785; Hagner, \textit{Matthew 14-28}, 532; Luz, \textit{Matthew 8-20}, 452-53; and France, \textit{The Gospel of Matthew}, 693-94.

and the crowds. In contrast to the leadership, Matthew depicts other groups of people such as the children and infants (21:15-16), the crowd (21:26), the tax collectors and the prostitutes (21:31), and the crowds again (22:33; 23:1). Second, the immediate context makes explicit the distinction between the Jewish leadership and the crowds. In the final scene (vv. 45-46), Matthew observes that “when they heard them, the chief priests and Pharisees knew that he was speaking his parables about them” (21:45). The “crowds” regard Jesus more positively and are thus excluded from those addressed in verse 43. The designation ἀφ’ ὀμοίων (v. 43) most naturally refers to Jesus’ dialogue partners, thus disqualifying the chief priests and the elders of the people (21:23, 24, 27, 28, 31, and 32). Therefore, Jesus excludes a set of Jewish leaders but not all Jews.

The term ἔθνει thus should include Jews and Gentiles, such that the Gentiles will not replace Israel as a whole. If this interpretation is correct, the Parable of the Tenants implies that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles regarding what is required for both. The term ἔθνει has an inclusive overtone. The emphasis of verse 43 is on “bearing fruit,” and therefore it underlies the ethical

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104 This generation (23:36) and Jerusalem (23:30, 31, and 34) cannot be condemned categorically. The whole chapter criticizes the religious leaders, and the reference to the “generation” does not always have a pejorative sense (cf. 11:16; 12:39, 41; 16:4; 17:17; 24:34). Jerusalem is condemned since it is the city of the religious leaders and of the subgroups who let themselves be deceived by the leadership. The same city is portrayed as God’s city (5:35), a holy city (4:5; 27:53), and thus it cannot be rejected categorically. See Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 463.


106 Even though the term ἔθνει includes both Jews and Gentiles, opinions on what exactly it refers to differ among scholars. Saldarini argues that it could mean Matthew’s own group or a group of leaders who bear fruit in the kingdom. Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 58-61. Or it could mean “the church” consisting of Jews and Gentiles. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:190. Davies and Allison note that the noun is singular and only appears in Mt 21:43 and 24:7. Cf. Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 430. Meier argues that the term does not refer to the “Gentiles” but to an inclusive group of “people” which includes both Jews and Gentiles. This group of people is the “Jewish-Gentile church,” the new people of God (cf. Mt 16:18), and thus it has lost its ethnic state. See John P. Meier, “Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 39 (1977), 97-98. Wesley G. Olmstead argues that ἔθνει refers to a new nation characterized as a trans-ethnic entity. It is simply not Gentiles in contrast to
deeds of the Jews and Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles are responsible for bearing fruit.

Matthew opposes people who do not produce fruit, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. A nation consisting Jews and Gentiles must live faithfully and bear fruit (21:34, 41, and 43). Bearing fruit is the mark of true discipleship (cf. Mt 3:8-10; 7:15-21; 12:33-37; 13:18-23) and comes from actual repentance. So regardless of their ethnicity, bearing fruit in keeping with repentance is an important ethical mark for Jews and Gentiles who find a place in the people of God.

The Proselytes of the Pharisees (23:15)
The term προσήλυτος designates a full convert to Judaism. This new “convert” probably once was a so-called “God-fearer,” but he becomes a proselyte when he is circumcised. He must keep the Jewish law entirely in order to be fully adopted into Judaism.

Might Matthew show a certain negativity or disregard towards what makes a proselyte—namely, circumcision and the full observance of the law of Moses? This passage is the sole place in Matthew where the possibility of proselytism is explicitly mentioned. Matthew comments on the idea that the way for Gentiles to become part of God’s people is to accept the whole law of Moses, with all its ethnic-specific commandments (e.g., circumcision). Matthew’s negative

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108 Wesley G. Olmstead notes when he interprets this verse that “This ‘fruit worthy of repentance’, this ‘will of the Father’ is at once the mark of genuine discipleship and, consequently, the mark of those who enter the kingdom of Israel’s God.” See Olmstead, “A Gospel For a New Nation: Once More, The ἔθνος of Matthew 21:43,” in Jesus, Matthew’s Gospel and Early Christianity: Studies in Memory of Graham N. Stanton, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner, Joel Willitts, and Richard A. Burridge (Library of New Testament Studies 435; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 115-132 (124). Saldarini makes a similar argument by pointing out that Matthew formulates a new definition of Israel. Israel is defined as those who are faithful to God by repentance (Mt 3:7-10). Repentant Gentiles are permitted to join the Matthean group. Matthew’s group is an ἔθνος “which produces the fruit of the kingdom.” Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 60, 77. For Olmstead and Saldarini, fruits and repentance are important marks of membership. Yet although Olmstead thinks that the Jews lose their privileged position as the people of God, Saldarini thinks that Israel still maintains its privileged status as the people of God, and that Gentiles can share the blessings of God through Israel.

comment about this idea—“twice as much a child of hell”—seems to make it very unlikely that Matthew understood the Great Commission (28:18-20) as making proselytes. That is to say, Gentiles did not have to become full observers of the whole law.\(^{110}\)

Hatred by All Nations (24:9)

The fourth sign of the end time is that the disciples will be martyred and hated by all the nations for the sake of Jesus’ name. It is an example of universal hatred against the disciples since Matthew deals with Jewish persecution (10:17; cf. 23:34; 25:32) as well as Gentiles’ (10:18). At least, we can note that hostility is the expected response from Gentiles when the disciples are involved in mission.

The Proclamation of the Gospel to all Nations (24:14)

Jesus presents the picture of a mission that extends to the whole world and the end of the age. He says that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Here, the target group of the disciples’ mission could be translated either “all the Gentiles” or “all the nations.”\(^ {111}\) In this case, the interpretation of “all the nations” seems

\(^{110}\) See Jackson, ‘Have Mercy on Me’, 18. Jackson recognizes that this sole reference to προσήλυτον in Matthew can still support the proselytising of the new Gentile converts, even though the proselytising is done by hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. She notes, “The text can be seen more accurately as Matthew’s narrative use of tension between Jesus and some of the Jewish leaders and cannot be used to develop Matthew’s attitude toward proselytes; the negativity is directed towards certain scribes and Pharisees who are recruiting converts.” However, Jesus’ warning, “twice as much a child of hell” (23:15) shows that the negativity could also be directed to ethnic-specific injunctions that are required for proselytes. This negative attitude towards all the ethnic injunctions makes little sense if Matthew’s Jesus imposes all the ethnic-specific commandments upon the new Gentile believers (28:18-20). The rituals of baptism and the Eucharist rather than Jewish ethnic injunctions play an important role when the new Gentile believers become part of the Messianic community of disciples. As Konradt argues, “unlike the ‘scribes and Pharisees’ in 23.15, the ecclesia does not seek proselytes but seeks, rather, to make disciples and integrate them into the ecclesia of Jesus through baptism.” Konradt, Israel, 320.

\(^{111}\) Hare and Harrington, “Make Disciples of All the Gentiles,” 363, 366. They also argue that πᾶντων τῶν ἔθνων in 24:9 excludes Jews on the basis of Matthew’s redaction of Mark 13:13. Matthew adds τῶν ἔθνων (Mt 24:9) to the Markan account ἀπὸ πᾶντων (Mk 13:13) in order to emphasize “the hatred shown by Gentiles to Christians.” Otherwise, Matthew’s insertion is superfluous. Yet, this addition does not need to be superfluous, unless Matthew intends to make a greater impact than the Markan phrase. Matthew is fair enough to think of this phrase as Mark does, even with the change, since he deals with Jewish persecution against the church (10:17; cf. 23:34). This suggests that Israel can be included among the nations. See Meier, “Nations or Gentiles?” 97.
the more probable. We have no reason to eliminate Jews from this phrase, since the phrase “throughout the world” (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ) designates a universal mission.\textsuperscript{112}

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46)

In the end time, when the Son of Man comes in his glory, πάντα τὰ ἐθνη will be gathered before God. In this final judgment scene, the Son of Man will separate the righteous people from the unrighteous, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The parable describes the concrete criterion of judgment on the basis of how people treat “one of the least of these brothers of mine” (v. 40). Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, giving clothing to the naked, taking care of the sick, and visiting those in prison are the requirements for the righteous. The grounds of separation are compassion and care towards one of the least of Jesus’ family (vv. 40, 45). And for the righteous who shared love and kindness with one of the least, God’s kingdom is prepared (v. 34).

Then who is judged? Does the judgment include Jews and Gentiles or only Gentiles? Here the meaning of the phrase πάντα τὰ ἐθνη is important. Does the phrase include both Jews and Gentiles? Davies and Allison recognize six interpretive options for the phrase: (1) all non-Jews, (2) all non-Christians, (3) all non-Jews who are not Christians, (4) Christians, (5) Christians alive when Christ returns, and (6) all humanity.\textsuperscript{113} Among these options, “All humanity” is the preference for the following reasons. First, Christians are most likely included in the judgment scene, since the judgment of Christians is a repeated theme (13:41), even in the immediate

\textsuperscript{112} Meier, “Nations or Gentiles?” 97-98; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:344. Mark (13:10) simply has one phrase, εἰς πάντα τὰ ἐθνη (“to all the nations”) but Matthew has a double usage referring to ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ (“in the whole world”) and πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐθνεσιν (“all the nations”). Thus, Matthew creates an emphasis here by anticipating the worldwide mission in the post-resurrection era. See Nolland, The Gospel of Matthew, 966-67.

\textsuperscript{113} Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:422.
context (24:45-51; 25:14-30). Second, Jews and Gentiles are the objects of the judgment. Matthew uses the same phrase, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, in the previous chapter when he talks about universal hatred against Jesus’ disciples (24:9), the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world (24:14), and the universal judgment (24:30; cf. 16:27). Since the mission will continue to all humanity, the final judgment “includes all people—Christians, Jews and Gentiles (so also 8:11-12; 12:41-42; 13:36-43).” The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη most likely does not refer only to Gentiles, excluding the Jewish people. Thus “all humanity” is the most probable option. This parable relates to Jew and Gentile equally in terms of how they treat “one of the least of these brothers of mine” in the end time and accordingly that is the ground of separation.

Then what specifically does the Parable of the Sheep and Goats say about the criterion of separation? The theme of the acceptance of the righteous Gentiles who believe in Jesus is repeated in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (cf. 8:5-13; 15:21-28; 13:24-30, 36-43). Moreover, the parable deals with the relationship between the law and Gentiles, such that “ultimately the same criterion of membership in the kingdom of God is applied to both Jew and gentile.” The ground of the separation between the Sheep and Goats is the way the nations treat “one of the least of these brothers of mine” (vv. 40, 45).

114 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 492-93. Anders Runesson illustrates the contrasting view that those judged represent the “outsiders” who do not know Jesus or his teaching. They can achieve salvation as “righteous Gentiles” through the “loving kindness shown to the community” of Christ-believers, even though they are not part of the community of Christ-believers. This may sound pluralistic since according to Runesson salvation is possible for those who do not know Christ or for those who are outside the church, in so far as they are involved in deeds of loving kindness toward the Christ communities. Runesson’s argument is based on the theory that in Matthew there are two judgments, one for the Christ-believers (cf. 24:45-25:30) and another for non-Christians in the final judgment scene of sheep and goats. See Runesson, “Judging Gentiles,” 147-49. However, the context is not explicit on whether there are two judgements, one for Christians and the other for non-Christians. And the context moreover concerns all humanity (24:9, 14). See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:423; France, The Gospel of Matthew, 957-61.

115 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 493. The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη also occurs with eschatological overtones in Mt 28:19 where Jesus gives the commission to make disciples.

116 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 71.
Here, the meaning of the phrase “one of the least of these brothers of mine” is important, and there are two approaches. The phrase could refer to everyone in need, especially the socially marginalized people (the sick, the poor, the thirsty, etc.).\textsuperscript{117} If the phrase is related to everyone in need, the thing that is required of the nations is to love their neighbour, specifically the socially marginal. The commandment to love (7:12; 19:19; 22:39) is the chief imperative which the nations are required to practice, and it becomes the core of the law which applies equally to both Jews and Gentiles.

The second possible interpretation understands “one of the least of these brothers of mine” as Jesus’ disciples. In Matthew, Jesus mentions his disciples as his brothers (12:46-50; 18:15-21; cf. 28:10). The term “least” (τῶν ἐλαχίστων) is the superlative form of the term “little ones” (τῶν μικρῶν), which denotes the disciples themselves (10:42; 18:6, 10, 14).\textsuperscript{118} If the phrase “the least of these brothers of mine” refers to Jesus’ disciples, then the criterion of membership is related to the way that the nations respond to Jesus’ disciples. The righteous people from the nations positively react to the needs of the disciples, so that they indirectly respond to Jesus himself; thus, to welcome the disciples is the way to welcome Jesus and God (10:40). Jesus’ disciples are working as missionaries in desperate straits and under fierce persecution (10:16-39; 24:9-14); and Jesus is always with his disciples as they carry on their missionary task (cf. 1:23; 18:20; 28:20). Righteous reactions of Jews and Gentiles towards Jesus’ disciples include having compassion on vulnerable missionaries who bring the gospel message, recognizing Jesus’

\textsuperscript{117} This interpretation is possible since the term ἀδελφῶν (25:40) appears as to be a “non-ecclesiological use” in 5:22-24 and 7:3-5. Davies and Allison, \textit{Matthew}, 3:432. An interesting Old Testament antecedent can be found in Proverbs 19:17, “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and will be paid in full.” The brother is a reference to the poor. See Joachim Jeremias, \textit{The Parables of Jesus} (New York: Scribner, 1972), 207.

authority over their lives, and thereby following Jesus and his lifestyle by demonstrating God’s love and mercy for all people. Therefore, the Parable of the Sheep and Goats emphasizes compassion and demonstrates that love is the criterion for both Jews and Gentiles in the eschaton.

Gentile Centurion at the Foot of the Cross (27:54)
The Roman centurion recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God. This confession of the Roman centurion and those with him—“Surely, he was God’s Son”—is generally understood as a full Christian confession of Jesus and has become symbolic of the future influx of Gentiles into the people of God. Another line of interpretation suggests that the confession at the cross, made by brutal soldiers who had tortured and mocked Jesus prior to the crucifixion, is simply the result of astonishment at the series of miraculous events at the death of Jesus. It is not a genuine confession of faith in Jesus, but rather a “sense of guilt and concession of defeat in the face of the divine.” In this way, the portrayal of these soldiers foreshadows the fate of the wicked in the future judgment.

The latter interpretation, however, underestimates the dramatic change of the Gentile soldiers’ understanding of Jesus. It is best to understand the Roman soldiers clearly recognizing Jesus’

119 As Carter correctly notes, “The righteous, then, have responded positively to the mission proclamation, and in becoming followers of Jesus they commit to a lifestyle that imitates and continues Jesus’ life of service among the poor.” Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 476. Saldarini notices that accepting the messages of the missionaries is possible, but the texts emphasize the practical actions of the nations. “No mention is made of faith in Jesus.” See Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 252, n. 47.

120 John P. Meier, The Vision of Matthew (New York: Paulist, 1979), 205; Donald Senior, The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (The Passion Series 1; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987), 147-8; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:636. Davies and Allison argue that Jesus’ status is “the messianic Son of David according to 2 Samuel 7, where it is promised that David’s son will be God’s son and that he will build a house (temple) in God’s name.” They mention that the soldiers are often seen “as representatives of the Gentiles, who are now, after the death of Jesus, welcomed into the people of God.”

identity as Messiah and the Son of God. First, the soldiers would have been familiar with the Jewish leaders (cf. 27:29, 37) and would have heard of Jesus’ identity as “God’s Son” from Jewish authorities (27:43). Second, the soldiers sharply contrast the Jewish mockers who fail to recognize and accept Jesus (27:31-41). Third, the phrase “they were terrified” is used two different places in Matthew. One is when his three disciples are “terrified” at the heavenly voice in the transfiguration account (17:5-6), and the other is when the women are “terrified” when the resurrected Jesus appears to them (28:8-9). Those are both revelatory experiences. Fourth, although in the Roman soldier’s genuine confession, the definite article is lacking before the phrase “Son of God,” the phrase does not necessarily have a sense of a semi-divine being or someone special. A predicate noun followed by a verb usually does not have a definite article in New Testament Greek; and furthermore, in Matthew’s use anarthrous “Son of God” has a definitive sense (4:3, 6; 27:40, 43). The soldier’s genuine confession of the status of the “Son of God” is the same anarthrous wording of the disciples—“truly you are the Son of God” (14:33)—and it corresponds to God’s decree about “my beloved Son” (3:17; 17:5). Therefore, the soldiers’ reaction to Jesus’ death is not merely an expression of astonishment but a clear recognition of Jesus’ identity as Messiah and the Son of God.

Matthew evaluates the Roman centurion and the soldiers with him positively. He regards them as symbolic examples for future Gentiles accepted into the disciples’ community. Gentiles who

122 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 537; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:636; Hagner, Matthew 14-28, 852-53; France, The Gospel of Matthew, 957-58; Luz, Matthew 21-28, 569-70. Saldarini has the slightly different view that the Roman centurion’s acceptance of Jesus is “rudimentary and inchoate.” His acceptance of Jesus is rather “symbolic” and there is no “permanent relationship” established with Jesus. Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 70.

recognize the identity of Jesus correctly and confess him as Messiah and the Son of God will be included into the people of God.

The Great Commission (28:18-20)

For the purpose of the project we are dealing with, the translation of the phrase πάντα τὰ ἐθνη is an issue. The target group of the disciples’ mission could be all the Gentiles or all the nations. In support of the former interpretation, there are many examples within two or three centuries of Christ’s lifetime that the Hebrew word goyim and its Greek rendering ἔθνη denote non-Jewish individuals or the whole collective of nations other than Israel. Many Hebrew texts (e.g., Zadokite Document CD 11:14-15; 12:8-9; War Scroll 1 QM 4:12; 6:6; 9:8-9) and the Septuagint (1 Maccabees 5:9, 38) describe goyim and ἔθνη as individual non-Jews.124 And in the same way, ἔθνη in 28:19 may well refer to non-Jewish individuals. Obviously, the natural reading is that Jesus commands his followers to baptize and disciple individuals rather than a nation.125 In support of rendering “all the nations,” on the other hand, when the term ἔθνη is modified by the adjective πᾶς in Matthew’s Gospel, then it always has an inclusive sense of nations or people, not excluding Israel (24:9, 14; 25:32). In this way, one may well insist that πάντα τὰ ἐθνη in 28:19 has an inclusive sense, and thus it should be translated as “all the nations.”126

If the phrase πάντα τὰ ἐθνη refers to all the nations, then both Jews and Gentiles are the target group of the disciples’ mission. This might suggest that the same criteria will be applied to the new disciples from “all the nations” for practicing Jesus’ message, which is one set of

124 Hare and Harrington, “Make Disciples of All the Gentiles,” 360-61.
125 Douglas R. A. Hare, Matthew (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 333.
126 Meier, “Nations or Gentiles?” 97-102; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:683-84.
commandments for both Jews and Gentiles.\textsuperscript{127} On the other hand, if the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη refers to all the Gentiles, it might suggest that the target audience is ethnically distinct from Jews. There is a Jewish mission (10:5-6) and there is a Gentile mission (28:18-20); thus two separate missions exist in Matthew.\textsuperscript{128} In this case, one set of laws applies to the Jews and the other set of laws applies to the Gentiles. Gentiles are required to keep Jesus’ teaching as it is specifically applied to them.

2.1.2 Matthew’s Implicit Statements Regarding Gentiles

In searching for Matthew’s attitude towards Gentiles and their relationships with the Torah, we should also investigate his implicit statements regarding Gentiles. These implicit statements reveal the Gentiles’ vital relationship to Israel. They also give us some helpful points for answering the three Gentile questions previously mentioned.

\textsuperscript{127} If πάντα τὰ ἔθνη refers to “all the nations,” there is no replacement of the Jewish mission by the Great Commission, but it is rather an expansion of Jesus’ previous mission (10:5-6) to include the Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20). See Luz, \textit{Matthew 21-28}, 628. Sim argues that the Great Commission never replaces even the terms in Jesus’ Jewish mission (10:5-6, 23). The mission to “all the nations” (28:19) is equally as valid as the mission to the Jews, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:6). The Gentile mission must be performed on the exact same terms as the Jewish mission, which is law-observant. Both Jewish and Gentile believers are expected to follow the Mosaic law in full (cf. Mt 5:17-19). Sim, \textit{The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism}, 245-6. Not all scholars, however, agree with Sim’s understanding that the nature of the Jewish mission (10:5-6, 23) is law-observant. For example, Joel Willitts hardly finds any emphasis on law-observance in Jesus’ Galilean mission (Mt 4:12-19:1). The story itself shows that Jesus’ mission does not support Torah observance; rather, Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:10-13) and teaches the importance of mercy and not sacrifice (9:13; 12:8). See Joel Willitts, “The Friendship of Matthew and Paul: A Response to a Recent Trend in the Interpretation of Matthew’s Gospel,” \textit{Hervormde Teologiese Studies} 65/1 (2009), 153.

Out of These Stones (3:9)

This is an implicit reference to the Gentiles. John the Baptist says, “God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” The term “stone” appears to be referring to Gentiles, though in the immediate context, it might not be plausible to find a Gentile connection in John’s words. In his warning, John challenges the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ confidence that they will escape the coming wrath of God and be saved because they are the children of Abraham. John’s warning opens up a possibility in the larger context, however, that Gentiles will be accepted as part of Abraham’s children. First, given that Matthew has an interest in the universality of salvation through the mission to the nations, John’s warning might indicate that God will raise up new offspring, namely non-Jewish believers, to Abraham. Second, the references to Abraham elsewhere in Matthew’s Gospel suggest this Gentile relation to Abraham. Jesus is designated as the “Son of Abraham” (1:1), and Matthew reminds us that God gave the clear promise of blessing to the Gentile world through Abraham (Gen 12:3; 18:18). Further, in 8:11 the reference to Abraham is connected with the expectation of the Gentile influx. Many people will come from the east and the west and will sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, in line with the larger context, 3:9 has clear implications about Matthew’s openness toward the Gentile world.

Yet the term “stones” does not exclusively refer to Gentiles. It does not necessarily exclude Jews from being “stones.” Jews and Gentiles will constitute the children of Abraham by producing

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129 John’s use of “stones” seems to be a deliberate word-play, since in Aramaic and Hebrew the terms for “stones” and “children” are similar. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:308-9; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 50.

130 The theme of the inclusion of the Gentiles among the children of Abraham in 3:9 is recognized. See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:308-9; Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 50-1; Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 98; Olmstead, Matthew’s Trilogy of Parables, 75; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 137; Konradt, Israel, 265-7.

fruit in keeping with repentance. This is indicated by the fact that in verses 5 and 6 Jews from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan come to John the Baptist, confess their sins and are baptized. Jewish ethnicity itself eventually does not matter for fleeing from the coming wrath, but repenting and producing good fruit count for both Jews and Gentiles (3:9-10).

Salt and Light of the World (5:13-16)

The disciples of Jesus are the salt of the earth (γῆς) and the light of the whole world (κόσμου).

The terms “earth” (v. 13) and “world” (v. 14) refer to the realm of the disciples’ influence and the object of mission. The term γῆ occurs forty-three times in Matthew. The “earth” in Matthew has a variety of meanings, ranging from the narrow meaning, of soil (10:29; 13:5, 8) or a geographic territory (2:6, 20; 4:15; 9:31; 11:24; 14:34) to the wider concept of the world itself (5:18; 12:40, 42; 27:45, 51) or its inhabitants (5:5, 35; 6:10, 19; 10:34). In Matthew 5:13, “earth” could be confined to the local sense and restricted to the land of Israel 132 or may refer to “all those dwelling on the earth.” 133 The latter meaning would be the best for two reasons. First, if we focus on the use of γῆ in Matthew’s Gospel itself, there are many places where γῆ is used with respect to the world as a whole. For example, the combination of “heaven” and “earth” often refers to the whole universe created by God. There are three instances of the phrase “heaven and earth” in Matthew (5:18, 11:25, and 24:35), and “earth” is a realm in which God’s saving work will be done. Often “heaven” and “earth” come into view as pairs, giving the sense of earthly and

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132 In this context, the “earth” may have a geographic sense, and it can be understood in relation to the covenantal background for the “salt.” The use of salt in the covenant context in the Old Testament (Lev 2:13; Ex 30:35; Num 18:19; 2 Chron 13:5) shows that “the disciples are to function as the Servant community” and “are seen as in prophetic succession, and thus like their Old Testament counterparts as covenant witnesses and guarantors to their age.” W. J. Dumbrell, “The Logic of the Role of the Law in Matthew V 1-20,” Novum Testamentum 23/1 (1981), 11-13; and France, The Gospel of Matthew, 174.

133 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:472. They insist that the term γῆ appears in Matthew to refer not to Palestine but to the earth (as in 5.13, 18, 35; 6.10, 19; 9.6; 11.25; 12.42; 16.19; 18.18-19; 23.9; 24.30; 28:18); cf. Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 137-8.
heavenly realms (5:34-35; 6:10, 19-20; 16:19; 18:18-19; 24:29-30; 28:18, cf. 23:9). And especially “all the tribes of the earth” in Matthew 24:30 is a clear manifestation of humanity in general. In another example, the term γῆ without a reference to heaven also denotes humanity dwelling on earth (5:5, 35; 9:6; 10:34; 17:25). The second reason for interpreting “earth” broadly is that the Jews are not excluded in this scene of 5:13-14, since the next term “world” (κόσμος) clearly is universalized.134 The “world” refers to humanity in general, the same humans who can recognize a city from a distance. The disciples are to live as a light for both Jews and Gentiles and therefore this passage envisions the worldwide mission.

This metaphor represents the important lifestyle of the disciples of Jesus. Jesus exhorts them, “So let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (v.16). The good works give an important indication of the lifestyle of the people of God which includes Jews and Gentiles alike.135 The nature of salt and light as the lifestyle of the disciples involves special challenges, as it requires the disciples to show mercy, purity, righteousness, and peace even under fierce persecution (5:7-12). As Donald Hagner correctly mentions, the disciples’ good works are based on the love commandments (cf. 22:37-40), and the disciples are called to be salt and light by “living according to the perfection of the

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134 The term κόσμος appears elsewhere in Matthew and it either denotes the whole creation (Mt 24:21; 25:34) or humanity in general (Mt 4:8; 13:38; 16:26; 18:7; 26:13). In this case of Mt 5:14, it is a reference to Jews and Gentiles. The most immediate usage is in Mt 4:8, the story of the temptation of Jesus. Here, the devil brings him to the high mountain and tempts him by showing him πάσας τὰς βασίλειας τοῦ κόσμου (Mt 4:8). Davies and Allison note, “κόσμος …means ‘world’, ‘earth’, not just Rome and her empire or Palestine.” (Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:371). See also Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 138. Matthew provides us with a picture of Jerusalem on Mt. Zion, to which all the Jews and Gentiles will gather. Cf. Terence L. Donaldson, Jesus on the Mountain (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 117-8.

135 The term ἄνθρωπος (v.16) refers to human beings in general, and it has the same meaning in the immediate context (in Mt 4:4, 19; 5:13). Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 66. Further, this term can also be used for designating a Gentile. In Mt 8:9, a centurion uses this term for self-reference, καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος εἰμὶ ἐπὶ ἐξοικεῖαν. So the word ἄνθρωπος has a more general sense and can include Jews and Gentiles alike. See Henry Pattarumadathil, Your Father in Heaven: Discipleship in Matthew as a Process of Becoming Children of God (Analecta Biblica 172; Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2008), 96.
kingdom and thus manifesting the righteousness of the Torah according to its correct interpretation.”

Their good works enable them to function as salt and light in the world and lead others to praise God. Jesus also commands his disciples to act generously towards others in Mt 7:12, which does not limit the sphere of the disciple’s influence to a particular group but enlarges it to everyone in general. Later in the Gospel, new disciples will be taught this lifestyle (28:19).

The Field (13:38)

The parable of the field is a good example showing the target of the mission which will be performed by the disciples of Jesus. Jesus gives an interpretation of the parable of the wheat and weeds (13:24-30) in which he explicitly identifies “the field” with “the world” (κόσμος). This identification indicates “the worldwide mission of the Church in the spread of the gospel (cf. 24:14; 28:19).”

This term is also used for the target of the mission dominated by Satan (see 4:8, “all the kingdoms of the world” πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου), but the message of God’s kingdom should also be sent out to the world, even though it is a sphere of rejection more than

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136 Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 100-101. Cf. John I. Kampen, “‘Righteousness’ in Matthew and the Legal Texts from Qumran,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge, 1995: Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten* (ed. Moshe J. Bernstein, Florentino García Martínez and John Kampen; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 484-487. Kampen provides a comparative study of Matthew with Qumran texts. In Matthew 5:20, “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”. Kampen understands that the righteousness is not to be understood quantitatively but “qualitatively” as it is interpreted by and “attributed to Jesus” (p. 484). After he explains the concept of righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount and the woe against the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23:28), he concludes that “righteousness was a word which defined the way of life for the Matthean community” and that “the author of this Gospel viewed the adherents of the Jesus way of life within that Jewish community as ‘the righteous’” (p. 486).

137 Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:688. They state for Mt 7:12 that “the unqualified ‘men’ must include everyone.” Also in his explanation of the so-called Golden Rules, Luz mentions that “Jesus’ exemplary demand to love enemies, based on the contrast between kingdom of God and world, now becomes the general demand to take the initiative in actively loving every person.” Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 367-68.

acceptance (13:3-9, 18-24). So the parable is good ground for understanding the Gentile mission.

As a portrayal of the end time, the passage implicitly indicates the requirements that are to be recognized in the people of God. The harvest, which often appears as an image of judgment in Matthew (9:37; 13:19), will be at the end of the age. People who sin and do evil will be weeded out of the kingdom. The parable represents by implication the lifestyle of disciples (13:41). Not committing sin or doing evil is a requirement for the people of God.

The Gospel is Preached Throughout the World (26:13)

A woman comes to Jesus with a jar of very costly ointment and pours it on his head. Certain disciples complain that her act is a waste (26:8), but Jesus gently rebukes them and says, “She has prepared me for burial” (26:12). The woman recognizes Jesus’ identity as the Messiah and honors the one who will suffer and die on the cross. Jesus’ words, “Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world (κόσμῳ),” are reminiscent of the command to preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world (24:14), and they anticipate the universal mission in the post-resurrection period (28:18-20). Paul Foster correctly points out that this passage does not directly use the specific term “Gentiles” (ἔθνη), and the preaching can even possibly be understood as a proclamation to diaspora Jews. Further, the primary function of Jesus’ words is to conclude the story of his “anointing” by the adoring woman, with her recognition of and service to Jesus. It would be an exaggeration to use Jesus’ words (26:13) as a definitive statement advancing the Gentile mission. Yet, as Foster notes, the phrase, “wherever this gospel

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139 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 293.
140 Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 293.
is proclaimed in the whole world (κόσμῳ),” can be compared with 24:14 and 28:19, and in this way it implies “the spread of the gospel in the world.”\textsuperscript{142} Therefore, preaching the gospel exclusively to Jews in the diaspora is probably not in view here.

2.2 The Attitude to Gentiles in Matthew

In this section, we move from commentary on each passage to synthesis, discerning how Matthew might provide answers for the three Gentile questions. As we have seen, interpretations of the texts above range from the very apparent to the highly controversial. Yet is Matthew as a whole clear in answering the three Gentile questions? To individually describe the materials in Matthew which address the three questions is to identify the fact that Matthew as a whole is also ambiguous regarding each of the three questions.

First Question

The first question concerns the interactions between Jews and Gentiles. Did the Gentiles relate positively to the God of Israel, the law of Moses, and the people of Israel? How does Matthew evaluate Gentiles?

Matthew’s attitude towards the Gentiles is ambiguous between evaluating Gentiles positively and negatively. One the one hand, Matthew takes a positive stance on the Gentiles and their world. First, the Gentiles in Matthew are often portrayed favourably. The Gentile Magi recognize the King of the Jews, travel to Bethlehem to meet Jesus, and worship him (2:1-12). A Roman centurion reverences Jesus and shows great faith that Jesus can cure his paralyzed servant at a distance (8:5-13). A Canaanite woman also demonstrates great faith, like the Gentile centurion (15:28). She calls Jesus “Lord” (15:22, 25, 27) and “son of David” (15:22) and recognizes Jesus’

healing power. At the foot of the cross, the Gentile centurion and the soldiers with him are positively portrayed in that they recognize the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah (27:54). The response of some classical Gentile cities such as Tyre, Sidon, Sodom (11:20-24) and Nineveh (12:38-41) contrasts favourably with that of the Galilean cities and Jewish leaders.

Second, Matthew foreshadows an openness towards Gentiles. Gentile associations in the outset of the Gospel of Matthew foreshadow its openness toward Gentiles who would be brought into God’s blessings (Mt 1:3, 5-6). John the Baptist’s word, “God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham,” envisions that Gentiles will be accepted to be part of Abraham’s children (3:9). Galilee of the Gentiles (4:15) refers to Gentile territory and envisions the inclusion of Gentiles (28:16). Jesus interacts with a few Gentiles (8:5-13, 28-34; 15:21-28) and calls his disciples the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (5:13-15). In Jesus’ interpretation of the parable of the wheat and weeds (13:24-30), he identifies the field with the world, and this identification shows that the target group of the mission includes Gentiles (13:38). Gentiles will produce spiritual fruit and receive the kingdom of God in the future (21:33-46). The phrase “wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world (κόσμῳ)” refers to the spreading of the gospel throughout the world (26:13), and may well be linked with 24:14 and 28:19, where the mission to the Gentiles is in clear view.

On the other hand, numerous examples illustrate a negative attitude towards their world. First, Matthew’s Jesus does not actively involve himself in Gentile mission. Jesus does not minister to non-Jews in Galilee of the Gentiles (4:15). Jesus restricts his mission only to Israel, and the disciples are forbidden to go to the region of Samaria (10:5-6; cf. 15:24). Gentiles are considered as outsiders that should be shunned (18:15-17).
Second, Gentiles are used as negative examples. The ethical standard of the Gentile world is only to love one’s family and friends, but the disciples are required to practice radical love that includes their enemies (5:46-47). The Gentiles’ empty incantations in prayer might represent a polytheism in which many different names of gods are mentioned (6:7-8). They fail to trust God’s provision for their basic needs (6:31-32).

Third, Gentiles are portrayed as persecuting Jesus and his disciples. A group of Gadarenes do not welcome Jesus and his disciples, instead asking them to leave the town (8:28-34). The disciples will be dragged before Gentile rulers for the sake of Jesus’ name (10:18, 22 cf. 20:25) and will be hated and martyred by Gentiles (24:9). Jesus is also handed over to Gentiles for crucifixion (20:19). These can be seen as examples of Gentile persecution, or as any persecution carried out by any group (including Jews) hostile to the Matthean group.

How can we understand these negative references to the Gentiles while keeping the view that the Gospel of Matthew has a universalistic perspective and a largely positive view of the Gentile world? There are four main suggestions in Matthean scholarship. First, the negative references to Gentiles may prove Matthew’s anti-Gentile perspective. This negative use of Gentile imagery is caused by the fact that the Jews are being persecuted by their Gentile neighbours, and therefore the members in Matthew’s community avoid contact with Gentiles and do not support

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143 Sim, “The Attitude to Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew,” 181-82.

144 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 80. The term ἔθνη can include the Jews and their leaders. “Thus the use of the word ‘nations’ does not automatically refer to the Jew-gentile distinction, but to insiders and outsiders vis-à-vis Matthew’s group.” See also Levine, The Social and Ethnic Dimensions, 224-25.

145 Most recently Sim, “The Attitude to Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew,” 176-82, helpfully summarizes various views on this topic. On the following discussion, my categorisation is indebted to Sim’s work. For the general discussion of this issue, see also Levine, The Social and Ethnic Dimensions, 31-7; Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 68-83; Donald Senior, The Gospel of Matthew (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 45-52.
any participation in the mission to the Gentiles. 146 David C. Sim is the most important advocate of this view. Sim argues that several negative references to the Gentiles (5:46-47; 6:7-8; 6:31-32) exemplify how Matthew’s audiences should not behave. The members of Matthew’s community are required to oppose the practices of the Gentile world. Further, in his study of Mt 7:6 (“Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you”), Sim argues for the disengagement of the Gentile mission. Dogs and swine metaphorically symbolize Gentiles (cf. 15:26), and “what is holy” and “pearls” represent the kingdom (cf. Mt 13:45-46). Just as pearls and sacred things must not be given to dogs or swine, the precious message of the kingdom should not be given to the contaminated Gentile world. 147 The church’s disengagement with the Gentile mission is again confirmed by Mt 18:15-17, which explains the procedure of excommunication. Just as the offender should be avoided and excluded by the church members, Gentiles are considered as outsiders that should be shunned. Therefore, Matthew clearly adopts an anti-Gentile stance, while his community also avoids their Gentile neighbors. The downplaying of the mission to the Gentiles is thus plausible.

146 See Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 215-256, especially 243: “accepting the legitimacy of the Gentile mission does not necessarily mean that the Matthean community had any active involvement in it.”

147 Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 238-39. Cf. Luz, Matthew 1-7, 355-56. Ulrich Luz in his reading of Mt 7:6 argues that “dogs” could be interpreted in various ways such as “Gentiles,” “stupid people,” “Christian apostates” or one who rejects the Christian missionary message. In his opinion, these suggestions do not fit with the present Matthean context. Matthew uses “dogs” simply because verse 6 appears in his copy of Q, and the conservative Matthew keeps his tradition regardless of his universalistic attitude toward the Gentiles. Not all scholars see “dogs” as exclusively Gentiles. While in some Rabbinic literature, dogs metaphorically designate “Gentiles,” yet this does not automatically confirm this specific term as the code for Gentiles. See Konradt, Israel, 63 with n. 271. In some Jewish and Christian texts, the negative designation “dogs” is used for Jews and Gentiles alike. The term “dog” was used in a sense of derogation (1 Sam 17:43), humiliation and contempt (1 Sam 24:15; 2 Sam 9:8; 16:9), and negative metaphor (Prov 26:11); and many of these examples are applied to Jews. Similar negative connotations also occur in the New Testament. “Dogs” may designate Judaizers (Phil 3:2), the wicked (Rev 22:15), or apostates (2 Pet 2:21-22). In Ignatius Eph 7:1, dogs metaphorically refer to heretics. See Evans, Matthew, 165-66; and J. Schwartz, “Dogs in Jewish Society in the Second Temple Period and in the Time of the Mishnah and Talmud,” Journal of Jewish Studies 55 (2004), 246-7. “Dogs” can also refer to Jewish leaders who associate with King Herod and his dynasty (Mt 1-4). See Boris Paschke, Particularism and Universalism in the Sermon on the Mount: A Narrative-Critical Analysis of Matthew 5-7 in the Light of Matthew’s View on Mission (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 56; Münster: Aschendorff, 2012), 164-78.
The second solution to the problem is that Matthew does not posit an anti-Gentile perspective in some or even all of those texts that depict Gentiles unfavourably. R. H. Gundry suggests that the negative references to the Gentiles are not necessarily anti-Gentile at all. Among Jesus’ disciples, the word “Gentiles” (5:47; 6:7, 32; 18:17) probably means “non-disciples” instead of “non-Jews,” and thus the term has no ethnically specific sense. In the same way, “dogs” in Mt 7:6 refers to false disciples within the church. Matthew has concerns about false disciples in the congregation who could contaminate or turn against other true disciples. The term “dogs” connotes the wicked who attack the righteous in the time of persecution (cf. Ps 22:17, Phil 3:2; Rev 22:15).\footnote{148} A.-J. Levine investigates the pejorative use of τὰ ἔθνη (6:32; 20:19; 20:25; 24:9) and ὁ ἐθνικὸς (5:47; 6:7-8; 18:17). She concludes that the target of Matthew’s objection is not a Gentile corporate group but the cross-ethnic “nations” who do not have faith in Jesus (20:19; 24:9). In Matthew 20:25, the phrase ὁι ἀρχοντες τῶν ἔθνων could include Jewish leaders. Gentile rulers exercise “domination and exploitation” and this verse “is comparable to the woes against the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23.”\footnote{149} Also, the term τὰ ἔθνη in 6:32 cannot be viewed as an “ethnic slur,” since both Jews and Gentiles have the same type of faults.\footnote{150} Further, Levine argues that the term ὁι ἐθνικοὶ does not point to Gentiles but the “pagans” who have rejected Jesus or who do not know his message yet (6:5-6; 5:47-48; 18:17).\footnote{151} Therefore, “Gentiles” and “pagans” do not convey ethnic prejudice, and the gospel is not anti-Gentile.

The third approach to the problem is to say that Matthew preserves his Jewish tradition regardless of his universalistic attitude toward Gentiles. While the anti-Gentile outlook is not his

\footnote{148} Gundry, Matthew, 99, 103-4, 122-23, 368.  
\footnote{149} Levine, The Social and Ethnic Dimensions, 32.  
\footnote{150} Levine, The Social and Ethnic Dimensions, 33.  
own viewpoint, Matthew is conservative in using his Jewish sources, which have a negative or stereotypical understanding of the Gentiles who reject or ignore the law of God. John Nolland understands the texts portraying the anti-Gentile perspective to reveal “the stereotypical negative Jewish image of Gentiles.” Warren Carter also views the negative references to Gentiles as the “stereotypical” Jewish view. He suggests that the purpose of the negative usage is to instruct disciples to avoid the Gentile way of life and to resist the cultural values of the Gentile world that dominates their society. Still, Gentiles are the object of mission and people to be restored to the community of disciples (18:17). Carter understands that a Gentile and a tax collector are not to be shunned or left out indefinitely. Gentiles are actually valued (8:5-13; 12:18, 21; 15:21-28). Even in the case of tax collectors, Jesus does not exclude them from his mission. In spite of Jesus’ former criticism of tax collectors, they are the object of inclusive love (5:43-48), and they are also the recipients of Jesus’ salvific ministry (9:11-13). They are called to become Jesus’ disciples (9:9), to eat with Jesus (9:10), and to become friends of Jesus (11:19). In the same way, criticism of the Gentiles does not necessarily mean exclusion. Rather, Matthew keeps a positive attitude towards Gentiles even when he deals with negative references.

Lastly, more recent scholarship (for example K. R. Iverson) argues that these unfavorable Gentile portraits can be understood best within the restoration eschatology of Second Temple

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152 Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 270, 313, 747-8. All the texts that use bad images for Gentiles (Mt 5:47; 6:7, 32; 18:17) are based in a Jewish stereotypical understanding of Gentiles. It is clear that Gentiles are portrayed negatively, but this does not necessarily mean that the disciples have to shun the Gentiles (18:17). This kind of shunning should be temporary and does not match with Jesus’ image as “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (11:19) and with Matthew’s evangelistic concern for the nations (Mt 10:18; 12:18, 21; 24:14; 28:19). See Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 747-8. A similar approach is found in Senior, “Between Two Worlds,” 5-18. The negative statements about Gentiles only represent Jewish “stereotypical and stock judgments” (p. 11).


Judaism. In Matthew’s Gospel, the earthly mission of Jesus is first and foremost to the Jews, and an openness to Gentiles is clear only after the resurrection of the Messiah (28:18-20). This recognition is confirmed by the fact that Jesus sends his disciples only to Israel, not to the Gentiles (10:5-6; cf. 15:24). If Jesus’ earthly ministry is seen in terms of the restoration of Israel, the negative references to Gentiles can be used as the contrasting examples to proper Jewish actions.155 Jesus uses Gentile examples as embarrassing models to be shunned by the disciples (Mt 5:47; 6:7; 6:31-32). Yet, “the negative evaluations do not necessarily suggest that Jesus was unconcerned with the status of the Gentiles.”156

In his book Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism, Terence L. Donaldson contends that Jewish eschatological literature portraying Gentile inclusion in the age to come has two common features. First is an expectation that when God restores Israel, Gentiles will share the end-time blessings with Israel. Second is an assumption that the future fate of Gentiles will be “a by-product of Israel’s vindication and redemption.”157 Matthew can be seen as providing a basis for such an eschatological interpretation, given that it already exists in Second Temple literature. In other words, the negative evaluations of Gentiles in Jewish literature do not necessarily suggest that Jews were carefree about the future fate of Gentiles (Tob 14:6; Sirach 36; T. Levi 14:4; Ps. Sol. 17:34). Jesus’ earthly ministry focused on the restoration of Israel, and though the Gentile mission is explicit only after the resurrection of the Messiah, Matthew’s Jesus also envisions and expects the eschatological participation of Gentiles during his time on earth.

157 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 509.
This anticipation is recognizable in a more favourable attitude toward Gentiles as the narrative unfolds (2:1-12; 4:14-16; 8:5-12; 10:18; 12:21; 15:21-28; 24:14; 28:18-20).

Matthew’s texts are ambiguous, and it is difficult to explain his attitude toward Gentiles. While Matthew portrays Gentiles positively and holds a largely positive view of Gentile world, he also refers negatively to Gentiles and their world. As we have discussed, diverse positions attempt to solve the contrast in Matthew’s attitude towards Gentiles. The negative usage of τὰ ἔθνη (6:32; 20:19; 20:25; 24:9) and ὁ ἔθνικὸς (5:47; 6:7-8; 18:17), as well as Matthew’s negative depiction of the Gentiles, can be interpreted in four different ways. (1) Matthew’s negative use of Gentile material could indicate that he is not interested in the Gentile mission during Jesus’ ministry on earth and even after his resurrection. (2) Matthew does not suggest an anti-Gentile perspective even in the materials that depict Gentiles unfavourably. (3) His negative references might simply repeat standard stereotypes of Gentiles familiar to Jews. (4) His negative references might be understood in relation to the restoration of Israel, and thus the mission to all nations after Jesus’ resurrection is in clear view.

Second Question
The second Gentile question concerns the contents and nature of the Torah. Is the Torah in Matthew’s Gospel distinctly Jewish (with its ritual purity, festivals, food, circumcision and the like) or universal (with its ethical and monotheistic commands)?

In the Gentile passages we have looked at, Matthew does not clearly mention ethnic-specific parts of the Torah. It is not immediately clear how Gentiles are related to the Torah in Matthew as a whole. For example, the Magi (2:1-12), the centurion (8:5-13), and the Canaanite woman (15:21-28) are not clearly described as keeping Jewish law. One might think that the Gadarene
Gentiles would be expected not to consume pork, because Jesus destroys the herd of swine (8:28-34); yet this is merely a possibility, and it would be hard to make a case for this. And in the Great Commission (28:18-20), it is not crystal clear whether “everything that Jesus commands” includes circumcision, tithing, and food laws. Therefore, when Matthew deals with Gentiles directly, Jewish-specific injunctions do not come into view.

Third Question
The third Gentile question concerns the Gentiles and the Torah. Is there one law for Jews and Gentiles, or is the law that is applied to Gentiles different from the law that is applied to the Jews?

The demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is not clear in Matthew’s Gospel. On the one hand, Matthew might be interpreted as applying the same set of laws to Jews and Gentiles alike. If the target group of the disciple’s ministry at the end of the Gospel (28:18-20) is all the nations (πᾶντα τὰ ἔθνη), and if that includes both Jews and Gentiles, then Matthew applies the same set of laws to Jews and Gentiles alike (“teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you”). In this case, Matthew’s strong emphasis on the full observation of the law (5:17-20) could be taken to imply that the Gentiles will become end-time proselytes. It is possible that the whole Torah, including Jewish-specific laws, is to be obeyed by Gentile disciples. One implicit example can be added: Tamar, Rahab and Ruth may be understood as proselytes to Judaism, so one could argue that the Gentiles could share the blessings of God as proselytes (1:3, 5-6).

One the other hand, Matthew’s Gospel as a whole could be interpreted as believing that both Jews and Gentiles should keep only the ethical and monotheistic aspects of the law. First, the heart of the Torah, characterized by love and mercy, is required of both Jews and Gentiles. In the
Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Matthew describes how Jews and the Gentiles should treat “one of the least of these brothers of mine” in the end time. Love, compassion, care, and acceptance in practical actions are the requirements for righteousness in relation to vulnerable people (25: 31-46). In the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples are to manifest their good works as salt and light to the world (5:13-16). The good works give an important indication of the lifestyle of the people of God, including Jews and Gentiles alike. This lifestyle is characterized by mercy, purity, righteousness, and peace (5:7-12). It is to be manifested by the disciples, and their good works are supposed to lead others, both Jews and Gentiles, to praise God. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commands his disciples to act generously towards people in general (7:12). Later in the Gospel, new disciples will be taught this lifestyle (28:19).

Second, repentance, a recurring theme in Matthew, is also required for both Jews and Gentiles (3:2-12; 4:17; 11:20-24; 12:38-41). Faithful Jews come to John the Baptist with repentance (3:5-6). All archetypical Gentile cities such as Tyre, Sidon and Sodom have the potential for repentance, all of which contrasts with the lack of repentance in the Galilean cities (11:20-24). The repentance of Nineveh is also recognized (12:38-41). In the Parable of the Tenants (21:33-46), both Jews and Gentiles are required to bear the fruit that comes from actual repentance (3:7-10. cf. 7:15-20; 12:33-37; 13:18-23). Both Jews and Gentiles who want to join the community of disciples are expected to repent.

Third, accepting, honoring, believing, worshiping and recognizing Jesus are the membership criteria for both Jews and Gentiles alike. In the story of the Gadarenes (8:28-34), for example, the expected response is that they have faith in Jesus and recognize him as the Lord and eschatological judge (8:29). Accepting Jesus is the same criterion for membership in the kingdom of God, for both Jews and Gentiles (12:21).
Fourth, justice as an ethical conduct is expected to both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus will proclaim justice to the nations (12:18) and Jesus rebukes Jewish leaders for their neglecting justice (23:23).

Fifth, with respect to the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah, the only explicit requirements seem to be recognizing Jesus and obeying the ethical and monotheistic aspects of the law (not ethnic law). The Gentile Magi recognize the King of the Jews; they receive God’s guidance and are led to Jesus by the star; they recognize the star belonging to the king of the Jews; they rejoice with great joy; and they worship Jesus by falling down and presenting gifts (2:1-12). The relationship of the Magi to Jesus is very similar to that of the righteous Gentiles to Israel and Israel’s God. There is no explicit mention of the Magi’s inclusion in Israel, and they never become followers of Jesus. The Gentile centurion is the model of great faith, which is characterized as the lifestyle of the disciples (8:5-13). He respects Jesus (8:5) and Jewish law (8:8), and he recognizes Jesus’ power to cure and has faith that Jesus will heal his servant (8:10). He comes to Jesus out of compassion, but the text does not tell us anything about the Gentile centurion keeping ethnic law. In the Canaanite woman’s case, she recognizes Jesus as “Lord” and “son of God” (15:22, 25, 27), has faith in Jesus (15:28), and recognizes his power and authority (15:22-28). But the text does not indicate whether she has to keep the Jewish ethnic injunctions once she has faith in Jesus (15:28). The Roman centurion and the soldiers with him recognize the identity of Jesus as the Messiah and God’s Son (27:54).

When Jesus makes anti-Gentile statements, the ethical and monotheistic parts of the law are in the background as requirements for the Gentiles as well. The negative portraits of Gentiles may indicate, by reflection, what positive criteria may apply to Gentiles. Jesus’ references to Gentiles are somewhat judgmental (5:46-47; 6:7-8; 6:31-32) in order to teach the disciples how not to
behave. By avoiding Gentiles’ behaviour, the disciples are to love their enemies (5:46-47), pray properly (6:7-8), and live without care (6:31-32). The group of Gadarenes does not recognize Jesus and resist him (8:28-34). In the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, Jesus negatively portrays people in the world who sin and do evil (13:38-43). Further, if anyone does wrong to brothers in church, he should be treated as a Gentile (18:15-17). Gentiles are portrayed as persecuting Jesus and his disciples (10:18, 22; 20:19, 25; 24:9). As Saldarini comments on Mt 5:46-47, “Matthew does grant to the ethnikoi and tax collectors normal standards of social behavior.”

However, Matthew also implicitly demonstrates that Gentiles can be part of God’s blessings and that they are possible recipients or beneficiaries of the disciples’ ministries (5:16). Hans Dieter Betz is correct when he comments on Mt 6:7:

Indeed, some of the language and ideas used by the SM may have previously been taken over into Judaism from originally “pagan” backgrounds. To the SM, the rejected ideas and corresponding practices are nothing but manifestations of pagan stupidity. In a way typical for some forms of Judaism at this time, paganism is shown to be in need of enlightenment. When that enlightenment comes, people will turn away from this false religion to the true religion. One can connect precisely this expectation with Jewish apologetics and also with the early Christian mission as reflected in the letters of Paul.

Even though Gentiles live according to the conventional standard of the world, Gentiles who follow Jesus are also expected to respond faithfully to God and practice radical love. Gentiles as disciples of Jesus are required to love their enemies (5:46-47). When they pray, they are not to babble (6:7-8) but to pray as Jesus teaches (6:9-15). They are expected not to worry about material goods but to trust in God (6:32). Gentiles are also expected to do good to their brothers

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158 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 77.
in the church (18:15-17) and not to persecute Jesus and his disciples (10:18, 22; 20:19, 25; 24:9).
The group of Gadarenes is expected to have faith in Jesus and recognize him as the Lord and eschatological judge (8:28-34). In the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, the angels will weed out anyone from the world who does evil, but the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God. Thus, by implication, not sinning or doing evil is the criterion applying to the Gentiles (13:38-43). Therefore, friendliness towards strangers and enemies, a genuine prayer life, carefree living based on God’s provision, and a generous attitude towards Jesus and his disciples could be counted among the positive standards applied to the Gentile believers in Jesus.

From what we have noted above, we can understand that both Jews and Gentiles are expected to practice the “weightier matters of the law,” which are love, mercy, and justice (23:23). They are also to recognize Jesus as the Son of God.

At the same time, the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is noticeable. Matthew seems to distinguish the law for Jews from the law for Gentiles, even though there is no explicit example that affirms two different sets of laws for two different target groups. A few implicit examples draw a distinction between the law for Jews and the law for Gentiles. In the Gentile centurion’s case (8:5-13), a Gentile prevents a Jew (Jesus) from coming under his roof (v. 8). Most likely the centurion is sensitive to the Jewish legal interpretation that Jews are encouraged to avoid visiting Gentile’s home and therefore becoming “unclean” (8:8 cf. John 18:28; Acts 10:28; m. Ohol. 18:7). This notion implicitly suggests that the ethnic distinction might be maintained. In the Canaanite woman’s case as well (15:22-28), Matthew does not abolish the Jewish characteristics which distinguish Jews from Gentiles, and he omits Mark’s depiction of Jesus entering into a Gentile’s house (Mk 7:24). Matthew indicates that Jesus keeps the Jewish law. Even though Jesus values the Canaanite woman’s faith, that faith does not abolish the distinctiveness of
Judaism. The boundaries and the practices in Judaism are maintained. Further, when Matthew mentions Gentiles such as the Magi (2:1-15), the centurion (8:5-13; 27:54), and the Canaanite Woman (15:21-28), he seems not to be interested in Jewish-specific laws for the Gentiles. Faith and worship become important beyond the ethnic boundaries, and they function as the only requirements for the Gentiles. Therefore, Matthew might be interpreted as distinguishing the law for Jews from the law for Gentiles.

It seems reasonable, then, to conclude that the material in Matthew provides ground for at least three different interpretations regarding the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah. (1) Matthew fully applies to both Jews and Gentiles the same set of laws, including the ethnic-specific laws given to the Jews. (2) Matthew focuses on the “weightier matters of the law” (23:23), which apply to both Jews and Gentiles. The weightier matters of the law are identified as ethical and monotheistic aspects of the law. (3) The law that is applied to Jews differs from the law that is applied to the Gentiles.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the question, “How do the commandments that the new Gentile followers of Jesus are to observe (‘everything that I have commanded you,’ Mt 28:20) relate to the Mosaic law?” As we examine Matthew’s Gospel as a whole, Matthew’s own understanding of the relationship between the Gentiles and the Torah in Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20) is not clear. In a certain way, Matthew might lead us to believe that proselytism is the case for the Gentile disciples. Gentiles might be incorporated into God of Israel by affirming the whole Torah. In another way, Matthew might be seen as introducing the possibility that Gentiles might become associated with the blessings of God as Gentiles by affirming the law that pertains to them.
We might also infer that both Jewish and Gentile disciples should keep one set of the law: the full-content of the Torah, including its Jewish-specific aspects as well as its ethical law. Gentiles are thus expected to become proselytes and observe the whole Torah. Or we might infer that the Gentiles are differentiated from the Jews in keeping the Torah. The demarcation between Jews and Gentiles exists in the end times. One set of laws is applied to Jews, and the other set of laws is applied to Gentiles. Jewish believers in Jesus are expected to follow all the regulations of the Torah of Israel, whereas the Gentiles are bound by the lesser set of laws. Alternatively, we might note that Jesus gives to both Jews and Gentiles the ethical monotheism law, the heart of the Torah, which focuses on the weightier matters of the law presented as universal (ethical and monotheistic). These aspects of the law deal most directly with loving God and loving neighbour.

After this basic survey of Gentile texts in Matthew, my conclusion is that Matthew provides material enough for several different interpretations regarding the relationship between the Gentiles and the Torah in the end times (Mt 28:18-20).

To find Matthew’s answers to the Gentile questions, therefore, we should turn to a new investigation. We should look to the Jewish patterns of universalism, which also struggle with the same questions. My suggestion is that the patterns will help us analyze the ambiguities in Matthew and clarify the options that Matthew sets up for his eschatological view of the Gentiles. Since Matthew 28:18-20 deals with the law, Gentiles, and eschatology, it will be helpful to look at Jewish materials that deal with Jewish restoration eschatology in the Second Temple Period.
During the end times, the Gentiles will ponder the law, abandon their idols, and thus share in the eschatological blessings with Israel.\footnote{Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 502-3, 509.}

In the next chapter, after a brief survey of the Jewish patterns of universalism in general, I will investigate selected Jewish texts that deal with the eschatological redemption of the Gentiles. I will ask how they try to answer the Gentile questions. These eschatological redemption texts in Judaism have eschatological ramifications regarding the place of the Gentiles, and thus they can serve as models for our interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20.
Chapter 3
Gentile Questions in Selected Jewish Literature

During the Second Temple Period, we find diverse attitudes towards Gentiles in Judaism. In some cases, the Jewish attitude ranges from hostility (t. Sanh. 13:2; Jub 15:25-26) to seeming pluralism (Let. Aris. 16). For example, in the Tosefta Rabbi Eliezer is quoted as saying, “None of the Gentiles has any share in the world to come” (t. Sanh. 13:2). However, this statement cannot be taken as typical or representative of Jewish attitudes towards Gentiles in the Second Temple Period. It was also the case that Jews were able to conceive of ways in which Gentiles might stand in a positive relationship with the God of Israel. Even though there was a tension between the universalism of monotheism and the particularity of Israel’s election in this period, in one way or another the story of Israel could only be told with reference to the non-Jews.

The Gentile question was a continuing issue for the Jews, both in the Diaspora and in Israel. Jews lived day by day among Gentiles and asked how Israel could coexist with Gentiles. Scholars have noted that non-Jews could have a generally positive relationship with the God of Israel and show respect or affection for Judaism. Jews were aware of several different ways in which Gentiles could be included, and these positive attitudes towards Gentiles can be categorized into patterns. The most recent major contribution to the place of Gentiles in Israel and the Diaspora is the work of Terence L. Donaldson. In his book Judaism and the Gentiles:

Donaldson identifies four main patterns of universalism that group the Gentiles under the following four categories: (1) sympathizers, (2) converts, (3) ethical monotheists, and (4) participants in eschatological redemption. Donaldson especially notes the fourth pattern, according to which the Jews often reflected on the future fate of the Gentiles in the end times. Many Jews anticipated that the eschatological Gentiles might participate in the blessings of the God of Israel. While Gentiles are not always portrayed positively in the end time, an ample amount of Jewish literatures in the Second Temple period represents the place of Gentiles in the eschatological day of restoration. They are included in the redemption and share the eschatological blessings.

God’s primary focus is the restoration of Israel. The redemption of the Gentiles in the end time is the by-product of Israel’s restoration. The Israel-centered restoration, including the re-gathering of the Jews, the reestablishment of righteousness in Israel, the repairing of Jerusalem and the temple, the defeat of Israel’s enemies, and the vindication of Israel precipitates the Gentiles’ gathering into the restored Jerusalem. Gentiles “finally recognize the validity of Israel’s self-understanding, abandon their futile ways of worship, and devote themselves to Israel’s God.”

The redemption of the Gentiles and their participation in the eschatological blessings of Israel are envisioned in Judaism.

For the purposes of this project, to discover the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles in Matthew’s eschatological description (Mt 28:18-20), it will be helpful to look at the patterns of Jewish universalism which address the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles. As we

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have seen in chapter 2, Matthew’s text itself is ambiguous in presenting the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles. Matthew provides material enough for several different interpretations on whether the new Gentile believers in Jesus are, for example, proselytes or righteous Gentiles or ethical monotheists. Given the ambiguity in Matthew, comparing Matthew with Jewish texts will help us to clarify the options that Matthew’s Jesus sets up for Gentile believers, specifically regarding the way in which they should keep the Jewish law in the community of disciples.

I will relate the Jewish literature to the same three Gentile questions that I have applied to Matthew. Those questions concern (1) the Jews’ attitudes towards Gentiles, (2) the contents and nature of the Torah, and (3) the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah. While Matthew is ambiguous in answering these three Gentile questions, other Jewish texts give answers regarding whether the contents of the Torah are distinctively Jewish-specific or universal (ethical and monotheistic), and whether the text makes a distinction between the Jews and Gentiles with regard to the observance of the Jewish law. As a result, I will find pertinent points of comparison for each Gentile question and will bring Matthew’s unique theology into clearer focus.

How should we choose Jewish texts to compare with Matthew? Since Matthew is working within an eschatological framework, it is the eschatological redemption texts in Judaism that are significant. The Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) deals with the Christian mission in the eschatological era. New Gentile believers in Jesus are expected to practice Jesus’ teaching in the age that began with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is important to choose Jewish literature with eschatological overtones, especially texts that picture Gentile inclusion in the age to come. The second important principle for choosing Jewish literature to compare with Matthew is that the passage should clearly show the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles.
The Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) is the most important passage for Matthew’s view of the Torah and Gentiles. While Jesus’ final commission does not directly mention the law, “everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:20) is reminiscent of Jesus’ teaching about the law (Mt 5:17-19). It is notable that Jesus’ teachings regarding discipleship are very much linked with the Torah (5:21; 6:1-18; 7:12). Yet, as we have seen in chapter 2, it is not clear what kind of Jewish law the new Gentile disciples should practice in Matthew’s Gospel. So Jewish literature that meets this criterion of selection—namely, that they talk about how Gentiles are related to the law—is significant for the purpose of comparison. Therefore, we have two criteria for selecting Jewish literature; one is eschatology and the other is the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles.

A survey of the “eschatological redemption” texts in Second Temple Judaism will be helpful in setting out the range of opinions on the status of the Gentiles with respect to the Torah in the coming age. Gentiles could fully be incorporated into Judaism, thus becoming “end-time proselytes,” or they could preserve their identity as non-Jews, worshiping God “as Gentiles.” Yet in most cases eschatological redemption texts in Judaism are ambiguous about the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles. For example, the terms of the Gentiles’ conversion are vague, and it seems that the literature is not concerned about the terms. Further, it is not easy to line up all the Jewish eschatological texts with the categories of proselytism, righteous Gentiles, or ethical monotheism. Most passages in eschatological redemption texts are ambiguous in their description of the status of Gentiles with respect to the Torah. In other words, it is not easy to

find material that clearly depicts the future status of the Gentiles as eschatological proselytes, eschatologically righteous Gentiles, or end-time monotheists.

In this chapter, I will deal with the eschatological passages in Judaism and examine the existing ambiguity in the Gentiles’ status in the end time. I will explain why I am choosing Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 to compare with Matthew. After that I will investigate how Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 answer our three Gentile questions regarding (1) attitudes towards Gentiles, (2) the contents and nature of the Torah, and (3) the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah. Both of these eschatological redemption texts address the relation of Gentiles to the law in the end times.

### 3.1 Gentiles and the Torah in Eschatological Redemption Texts

Texts representing proselytes, righteous Gentiles, and ethical monotheists, all demonstrate the possible relationships between the Torah and the Gentiles. Yet in the eschatological redemption texts, when Gentiles are invited to share the blessings of Israel in the age to come, are they fully incorporated into the people of the God of Israel as end-time proselytes? Or do they continue to exist as Gentiles worshipping the God of Israel while not necessarily becoming Jews? What will be the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles in the age to come? In this section, I will investigate end-time redemption passages from the Second Temple period, including those in Philo’s *Moses, 1 Enoch, Sibylline Oracles 5, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch*, some eschatological sections of the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and the *Psalms of Solomon*.165 We will see how these passages portray the Gentiles’ relationship with the Torah in the eschatological era.

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3.1.1 Ambiguity in the Eschatological Redemption Texts

*Moses* 2:43-44

Of the eschatological redemption texts of Second Temple Judaism, none clearly provides any solid evidence for the proselytism of Gentiles in the eschatological pilgrimage. At most there is only one possible example, *Moses* 2:43-44, which introduces the end-time proselytes but says nothing about the terms they must fulfill in order to be fully incorporated into Israel. No information is given on whether Gentiles will have to be circumcised and keep all the Jewish-specific injunctions to share the end-time blessings.166 Philo mentions the Mosaic law (2:17-25), observing that “Not only Jews but almost every other people” admire and honour the laws (2:17). Greeks, barbarians, and every country and nation show “aversion to foreign institutions,” but they are attracted to and adopt the Jewish laws (2:17-24). Eventually, the Gentiles translate the Scriptures into Greek (2:25-43). And in the future age, when Israel’s fortunes will be transformed, Israel will cause the Gentiles’ conversion. This conversion will be expressed in the Gentiles abandoning their peculiar ways, throwing out their ancestral customs, and honoring Jewish laws alone (2:43-44). The Gentiles’ full incorporation into Israel is in view, and it will be “wholehearted and complete.”167 The passage does talk about the proselytism of the Gentiles, but at the same time it does not provide any solid example of full Torah observance for the Gentiles in the end time. Ambiguity is present. While the ethnic-specific parts of the law are downplayed, Philo provides a view of eschatological proselytism.

166 This is same in all the works of Philo. He does not make any clear reference to circumcision. One passage explicitly mentions proselytism (*Quaest. in Exod*. 2:2), but Philo uses this terminology only because he describes Israel as uncircumcised proselytes when they were slaves under Egypt (LXX Exod. 22:21). In his view, the true proselyte is not the one who is physically circumcised but the one who is circumcised in pleasures, desires, and other passions of the soul, so that he abandons idolatry, worships God only, and lives virtuously. See Terence L. Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 7 (1990), 15.

1 Enoch 10:21-11:2

In 1 Enoch we find a description of the “sons of men” and “all the people” becoming righteous and turning to worship God (10:21). This indicates that the Gentiles are expected to share in the end-time blessings, but there is no interest in the status of the Gentiles in relation to Israel or the Jewish-specific laws. The blessings are universally distributed without distinction between Jews and Gentiles.168

1 Enoch 48:4-5; 50:2-5

In 1 Enoch 48, the Son of Man will support “the righteous ones.” This is a different community from “the gentiles” (48:4).169 And in the following verses, we see that Son of Man will be “the light of the gentiles” and “the hope of those who are sick in their hearts” (48:4). So he extends his influence to the Gentiles by becoming light and hope. Then in 1 Enoch 48:5, “all those who dwell upon the earth shall fall and worship before him; they shall glorify, bless and sing the name of the Lord of the Spirit.” It is expected that Gentiles will worship the Son of Man and share end-time blessings as Gentiles. Yet in what manner the Son of Man becomes the light of the Gentiles, and in what way the Gentiles are expected to keep the Torah, remain unclear.170

Ambiguity is also found in 50:2-5. Nickelsburg and VanderKam translate the term “the other” (v. 2) as “the Gentiles” because the following phrase “the deeds of their hands” seems to denote

168 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 80.

169 The “righteous ones” are the Jews, since they are portrayed as “chosen” (56:5-7) and “righteous” (47:1, 4; 48:4-9). There is “nothing in the Similitudes to suggest that the community of the righteous would see themselves as among ‘the gentiles’” (Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 94-95). See also Adam Gregerman, “Biblical Prophecy and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of Isaiah,” in ‘What Does the Scripture Say?’ Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Volume 1: The Synoptic Gospels (ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias; Library of New Testament Studies 469; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 237-38.

170 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 95-96.
“idols” (cf. 46:7). God’s mercy is shown to others among the Gentiles, and they will share salvation in the end times (v. 3; cf. *Ps Sol* 17:34). The Gentiles are required to repent in order to obtain divine mercy, yet again nothing is clear about which Jewish law they are required to keep.

1 Enoch 90:30-38

Verse 37 says, “And I saw how a white bull was born, and its horns were large. And all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven were afraid of it and made petition to it continually.” Here, “a white bull” (v. 37) is identified with the patriarchs (i.e., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac) just as in other passages (85:3, 7-10; 89:1, 9, 10). And “all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven” refer to Gentiles, who will share the blessings of the end time. This group can be seen as Gentiles exclusively since they are the counterparts of the redeemed of Israel, “all that had been destroyed and dispersed” (v. 33). In verse 38, the text says, “I saw until all their species were changed, and they all became white cattle.” Here, the transformation can refer to the change of the whole of humanity, including Jews and Gentiles. Yet “all their species” and “they” might

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172 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2*, 182-83.

173 Nothing is mentioned about Torah observance or proselytism. Gentiles seem to share end-time blessings as Gentiles. See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 95-96; Gregerman, “Biblical Prophecy and the Fate of the Nations,” 238.


176 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 407; Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse*, 385. Both Nickelsburg and Tiller contend that “all their species” and “they” in verse 37 have an inclusive sense. Thus in the eschatological era all
refer to Gentiles, the group formerly described as “all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven” (v. 37). This group might be distinct from the redeemed Israel, and it might maintain its identity as Gentile.\textsuperscript{177} The boundary between Jews and Gentiles is distinct, but it is not clear whether the Gentiles must adopt any kind of Jewish-specific law to be incorporated into Israel.\textsuperscript{178} Gentiles are not criticized for their disobedience of God’s commands. Their faults are mainly related to their oppression of Israel. Even more, it is ambiguous whether even the Jews keep the Torah. Circumcision is not mentioned in the story of Abraham (89:10-12), and the purpose of Moses’ climbing of Sinai is not described as receiving the Torah (89:29). For the Jews in the passage, the real issue is not the law but impure worship.\textsuperscript{179}

\textit{1 Enoch} 91:14

The vision in \textit{1 Enoch} 91 describes the universal judgement. It affects the whole earth, and all the deeds of wickedness will vanish from the world. In the ninth week, all humans, including Jews and Gentiles, will look to the path of eternal righteousness. But what is the status of the Gentiles in the end time? The text itself is not clear. The Torah observance that is required of Gentiles in the end time is not specified. One the one hand, as George W. E. Nickelsburg notes, the Gentiles seem to be proselytes. God’s righteous law will be revealed to all of humankind and there will finally be a conversion of all humanity, “who, acting upon the revelation of the righteous law, obey it by ‘looking to the path of eternal righteousness’” (\textit{1 Enoch} 91:14).\textsuperscript{180} The “righteous law” could exclusively refer to the law of Moses. On the other hand, it could also

\textsuperscript{177} Donaldson gives the example of 89:10, “where similar language (‘every kind of species’) is used to talk about the Gentile nations as distinct from Israel.” See Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 89.

\textsuperscript{178} Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 89-90.

\textsuperscript{179} Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 90, n. 33.

\textsuperscript{180} Nickelsburg, \textit{1 Enoch 1}, 446, 449.
denote the commandments given to Noah for universal application. As Donaldson suggests, in 93:4 the “law” might be related to Noachian decrees and thus “the righteous law” in 90:14 can also be understood as “the commandments given to the whole of humankind through Noah.” Therefore, the text itself shows that the Gentiles’ terms of law observance are ambiguous.

*1 Enoch* 105:1-2

In the end time, the righteous people will receive the books of Enoch, which reveal joy, uprightness, and wisdom (104:12-13). The righteous who possess the book “will summon and testify against the sons of earth” and dispense their wisdom throughout the world. The scope of their mission is “all the earth.” Just as the righteous have been nurtured with the books of Enoch in 104:12-13, they now give testimony to the sons of earth (105:1-2). As Nickelsburg sees it, the overall picture of the status of the Gentiles in the end time indicates that Gentiles will convert and become part of the righteous people. But what kind of instruction do the righteous give to the Gentiles? The instruction relates to “paths of truth” (v. 2) but is otherwise ambiguous. Does the content of the instruction include the whole Torah or ethical law? The Gentiles might be required to observe the full Torah so that they become end-time proselytes. This is a possible reading because the “paths of righteousness” are often regarded as “the commandments of the Most High” (99:10). And if the “sons of earth” are expected to preserve the same level of righteousness—namely, what the righteous have learnt from the book of Enoch (104:13)—then the instructions for living “in the paths of truth” (105:2) must mean living in keeping with the whole Torah. Yet as Donaldson points out, there is no explicit clue that Gentiles are end-time

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183 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 535.
proselytes. \(^{184}\) Gentiles could be associated with the righteous group by keeping the ethical aspects of the Torah instead. The “paths of truth” may indicate “an ethical contrast with ‘the ways of wickedness’ or ‘of iniquity’ (91:18-19; 94:1; cf. 94:2)”\(^ {185}\)

_1 Enoch_ 108:11

The present verse shows the vindication of the righteous, who had faced hardships (108:8, 9, 10), and the reward that is appropriate for them. The righteous are the ones who “keep the law in the last days” (108:1). God will “summon the righteous” in the end time and “will transform those who have descended into darkness, who in their bodies were not recompensed with the honour appropriate to their faithfulness” (108:11). There are variants on “those who have descended into darkness.” \(^ {186}\) As E. P. Sanders notes, the phrase could be rendered as “those who were born in darkness,” and those people could be understood as Gentiles. Some of this group “are faithful and are rewarded” (v. 12), while other Gentiles “remain in darkness, missing the blessing of salvation” (v. 14). \(^ {187}\) They are born as sinners and then must become faithful or experience conversion. In this interpretation, the Gentiles are in view and will be transformed in the end. \(^ {188}\)

This emendation might not be definitive and leaves questions. If we adopt this translation, an inconsistency arises between verses 11 and 14. In verse 11, the variant “those who were born in darkness” leaves room for the sinners to be converted or enlightened. But in verse 14, the same people (“those who were born in darkness”) face the opposite fate of being cast into darkness. As

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\(^ {184}\) Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 85.

\(^ {185}\) Loren T. Stuckenbruck, _1 Enoch 91-108_ (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 604.

\(^ {186}\) Nickelsburg, _1 Enoch 1_, 555; Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 96. Cf. Stuckenbruck, _1 Enoch 91-108_, 734.


Donaldson notes, in this chapter as a whole there is no hint that the unrighteous (the evildoers, sinners, or blasphemers in verses 2 and 6) “would escape this fate and be transformed in the end.” Nickelsburg’s interpretation seem to be compelling. He argues that the text should be read “those who descended into darkness” (v. 11). Those people do not point to sinners or Gentiles but to the righteous who have gone through darkness, that is “verbal and physical abuse by ‘evildoers’” (vv. 7-10). If this view is correct, then the picture of the Gentiles’ redemption in the end time is not actually discussed in this passage.

_Sibylline Oracles_ 5: 247-80, 420-31, 484-503

_Sibylline Oracles_ 5 does not show the same level of interest in the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles as _Sibylline Oracles_ 3, yet the idea that the Gentiles should keep the law in the eschatological age “is present.” There is no emphasis on the ethnic-specific injunctions that separate Jews from Gentiles, but the actions expected of the Gentiles relate to abandoning idolatry (278-80) and worshiping God only (277). Immoral behaviour (sexual transgression, pederasty, murder, etc.) will cease among the Gentiles in the eschatological era; and therefore the Gentiles are expected to reject their evildoing (429-31). Gentiles will turn to the eternal God (490), abandon their idols (493), and erect a great and holy temple (501). Even though this striking picture of the end times is temporal, large numbers of Gentiles are portrayed as turning

189 Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 96.

190 Nickelsburg, _1 Enoch_ 1, 553, 558. Nickelsburg notes that “those who descended into darkness” are righteous ones whose spirits are pious and humble (v. 7) and “found to be pure” (v. 9). And the term “the generation of light” (v. 11) is well contrasted with “those who have been born in darkness” (v. 14).

191 Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 97.


193 Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 172.

to God. The distinction between Jews and Gentiles is clear. Gentiles will continue to be Gentiles worshiping God in a separate temple in Egypt.\(^\text{195}\)

\textit{4 Ezra} 6:25-28

The passage in \textit{4 Ezra} 6 deals with the survivors of the eschatological era, after God’s redemptive work. Those who remain faithful to the law until the severe trials end (cf. 7:27; 9:7-8, 21-22; 12:34) shall see God’s salvific work, which is available to everyone (including “the earth’s inhabitants,” 6:26). The hearts of the inhabitants of the earth shall be changed and converted to a different spirit.\(^\text{196}\) As Donaldson has noted, “the earth’s inhabitants” could refer to all humanity, both Jews and Gentiles, since verse 18 clearly has a sense of universality. On the other hand, “the inhabitants of the earth” could indicate Gentiles only, since verse 19 makes a clear distinction between Jews (“the humiliated Zion”) and Gentiles (“the doers of iniquity”).\(^\text{197}\) In any case, Gentiles are expected to “be included in eschatological redemption.”\(^\text{198}\) The passage does not suggest explicitly what kind of Jewish laws are to be practiced by Gentiles. Their eschatological status is also ambiguous.

\textit{4 Ezra} 13:12-13

The passage in \textit{4 Ezra} 13 envisions the Gentles being gathered to the land of Israel in the end times, with offerings. Verse 13 reads, “Then many people came to him, some of whom were joyful and some sorrowful; some of them were bound, and some were bringing others as


\(^{198}\) Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 183.
offerings.” The phrase “some were bringing others as offerings” (v. 13) is obviously related to Isaiah 66:20, where the Gentiles bring the scattered people of Israel from all the nations “as an offering to the Lord, … just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord.” Michael E. Stone views the attitude toward Gentiles in this verse as negative, since “the joyous are interpreted as the Israelites, and the sorrowful as the Gentiles.” This negative view suggests that Gentiles have no hope of sharing the end-time blessings, and thus they feel sorrow for their future fate. Yet this negative reading may not fit with the positive portrayal of Gentiles who bring Israelite exiles as offerings to God (v. 13b). As Donaldson notes, the optimistic reading is more plausible. The joyous (v. 13) would refer to “redeemed Gentiles” offering “Diaspora Jews”; and the sorrowful (v. 13) would denote “those Gentiles destined for destruction.” Therefore, the passage pictures the eschatological participation of Gentiles.

While the text shows the distinction between exiled Jews and ingathering Gentiles, there is no mention of the law that the Gentiles should keep.

2 Baruch 72:2-6

The text in 2 Baruch 72 describes a sort of eschatological participation for the Gentiles. This participation pertains to Gentiles who do not oppress the Jews in the current age, yet it is ambiguous what kind of law the Gentiles should practice for their participation. In the passage,

199 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 184-85.

200 Stone, Fourth Ezra, 387. See also Michael P. Theophilos, “The Portrayal of Gentiles in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature,” in Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, ed. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren (Library of New Testament Studies 499; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 82-85. Theophilos sees the positive views of the Gentile participation in the end time as simply part of the larger context—namely, future punishment against the ungodly Gentiles. Yet 4 Ezra 12-13 is an example that does show the redeemed Gentiles in the eschatological pilgrimage tradition. First, Gentiles bring the exiles, which are offerings to God; and this fact echoes “the positive features of Isa 66:18-21.” Second, the term “bound” only refers to Gentiles (not the exiles) when it appears in eschatological texts (Isa 45:14; 2 Baruch 40:1). See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 184-85.

201 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 185. Stone is also conscious of the general interpretation of the commentators that verse 13 “describes the ingathering of the converted Gentiles who bring with them the dispersed of Israel” (Stone, Fourth Ezra, 387).
nothing suggests that Gentiles will become Torah-observant people, while Torah observance is emphasized for Israel (e.g., 52:7; 59:2; 61:6; 66:5). The only indication is that the Gentiles who afflict Israel will be punished by the Messiah, and others will share the blessings of the age to come. The Gentiles’ future fate is based on how they treat Israelites in the present time, but chapter 72 mentions nothing about Gentiles being end-time proselytes.

*Testament of Levi* 18:2-9

The purpose of the Torah, which is applicable to all people on earth, is to bring enlightenment (*T. Levi* 14:4). In the end time, this purpose will be fulfilled: “the nations shall be multiplied in knowledge on the earth, and they shall be illumined by the grace of the Lord” (*T. Levi* 18:9). It follows that “the lawless men shall rest from their evil deeds” (v. 9), so law observance is expected for Gentiles. Yet there is no mention of the Gentiles keeping particular laws; and further, it is not clear what kind of laws the Gentiles are to observe. While the *Testament of Levi* associates the Torah with abandoning idolatry (17:11), ethical virtues (cf. 2:3; 9:9; 14:5, 6), light (14:4; 18:4), piety (16:2), righteousness (18:9), good deeds (13:6, 9), and wisdom (ch. 13), the law that separates Jews from Gentiles (e.g., circumcision, food law, temple worship) is downplayed. As H. C. Kee also notes, while there is throughout the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* “a stress on obedience to the Law, the ethical appeal rarely refers to specific legal

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202 Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’?” 22.
204 Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 130.
205 In *Testament of Levi* chapter 9, only the Jews are expected to keep the cultic aspects of the law which have to do with the temple worship. Circumcision is mentioned one time in chapter 6, but the reference is “tangential to its covenantal role” (Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 130). Collins also recognizes the downplaying of the distinctive Jewish law that separates Jews from Gentiles (e.g., circumcision). See Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 183.
_statutes of the Torah.” Gentiles will be law-keepers in the end time (18:9), yet we can only infer that they are expected to abandon idolatry and to live virtuous lives in the age to come.

*Testament of Judah* 24:4-6; 25:5

The *Testament of Judah* 24 tells us that the nations who call on the Lord will be saved. Other than this, the text does not give us any clear indication of what kind of law the Gentiles are to practice for their salvation (24:6). Calling on the Lord could mean abandoning idolatry, but there is no indication that the Gentiles are required to keep Jewish law. Given that the law Judah gave his son is associated with a “universal moral code” (11:2; 12:3; 13:2; 6; 16; 17; 19:1), we can infer that the Gentiles should follow the same moral injunctions.

Still, the passage does not clearly state on what terms the Gentiles might share the end-time blessings of God. There is no indication that the Gentiles are fully incorporated into Israel. Gentiles plausibly continue to exist as Gentiles.

*Testament of Zebulon* 9:8

The *Testament of Zebulon* 9 portrays God’s redemption of Israel, along with his healing and compassion. The Israelites practice idolatry (9:5) and God punishes them and sends them into exile under the power of Beliar (9:6). The text also states that “God will liberate all nations from

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209 Cf. Marinus de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of Their Text, Composition and Origin* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1953), 95. In *T. Judah* 25:5, de Jonge interprets “all peoples” (πάντες οἱ λαοί) as referring to “all nations,” and he seems to separate Israel from all nations. He notes, “Israel will rejoice and all nations will glorify the Lord forever.” The plural “all peoples” (πάντες οἱ λαοί) in verse 5 is in contrast with the singular “one people” (ἐἷς λαὸς) in verse 3, which reads “And you shall be one people of the Lord, with one language.” Here, “one people” seems to refer to Israel. And Gentiles “come into the picture only in v. 5 (‘all peoples’), and here the plural stands in contrast with verse 3” (Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 132, n. 108).
Beliar’s captivity” and make them “zealous for him” (9:8). Yet the nature of being “zealous for God” is not specified. Zealousness could mean abandoning idols in the immediate context, or it could mean observing the Torah as it is portrayed in the Testament of Zebulon. For Zebulon, the law is very much related to the theme of brotherly love (chs. 4-8, cf. 5:1).

**Testament of Naphtali 8:1-4**

Verses 3-4 mention that Israel’s God will be glorified among the nations in the eschatological era. Naphtali says that God will gather “the righteous from among the nations,” but the text does not establish any specific ground for righteousness. Further, it is hard to know whether “the righteous” refers to either diaspora Jews or Gentiles. On the one hand, it is possible to think that God will gather diaspora Jews from among the nations. On the other hand, it is also plausible that God will gather Gentiles as eschatological pilgrims who will share God’s salvation. The latter reading is more likely, since God will save the race of Israel (τὸ γένος Ἰσραήλ, v. 3a) and then bring in the righteous Gentiles to share the eschatological blessings (v. 3b). Yet the text is still ambiguous regarding the status of these end-time Gentiles. There is no description of the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles (8:4).

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210 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 133.

211 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 133. Brotherly love is a prominent theme in the Testaments. “This love is extended not only to the people of Israel but to all humankind” (e.g., T. Issachar 5:2; 7:6; T. Zebulun 5:1; 6:4; 6:7; 7:2; 8:1; T. Benjamin 4:2); Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem, 179.

212 Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’?” 23.

213 Lloyd Gaston, Paul and the Torah (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 24. Gaston suggests that T. Naphtali 8:3 shows that, in the end time, Gentiles “were attracted to Judaism” by practicing some Jewish customs “without in any sense being Jews” (24). Donaldson also notes that the previous phrase in verse 3, “God will appear to save the race of Israel” (v. 3), thus refers to “Israel as a whole”; and therefore the following phrase, “the righteous from among the nations,” may well be associated with the Gentile pilgrimage. See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 134.
The Psalms of Solomon 17 shows the future fate of Gentiles under the reign of the Messiah, who will “judge peoples and nations (λαοὺς καὶ ἔθνη) in the wisdom of his righteousness” (v. 29). As Mikael Winninge recognizes, the attitude towards the Gentiles in Psalms of Solomon 17 is “interestingly ambivalent.” On the one hand, their future fate is depicted negatively. The Messiah will “purge Jerusalem from gentiles” (v. 22). No Gentiles will live in Jerusalem (v. 25) and “the alien and foreigner (πάροικος καὶ ἀλλογενὴς) will no longer live” near Israelites (v. 28). The messianic king “will have gentile nations serving him under his yoke” (v. 30). On the other hand, the text also states that in the end time the Gentiles (ἔθνη) will bring back the scattered Israelites and gather them “from the ends of the earth” to see “the glory of the Lord” (v. 31). Further, positive overtones towards eschatological Gentiles might also be seen in verse 34, which says that the messianic king “shall be compassionate (ἐλεήσει) to all the nations (who) reverently (stand) before him” (v. 34). Thus, there are enough reasons to see that Psalms of Solomon 17 “can be counted among those texts that anticipate end-time blessings for the Gentiles.” Yet the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles is not specified here. The law


215 D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC-AD 100 (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 301. Russell argues that while the Gentiles might have a place in the restored portion of Israel, it is in “complete subservience to Israel” (p. 301).

216 Winninge, Sinners and the Righteous, 98. He states, “there is an obvious tension between particularity and universalism.”

217 There is an awkward connection, γὰρ, between verse 34 and 35. “He shall be compassionate to all the nations (who) reverently (stand) before him. For (γὰρ) he will strike the earth with the word of his mouth forever” (vv. 34-35). It seems unreasonable that a compassionate king would “strike” the earth. G. B. Gray left the word καὶ ἐλεήσει untranslated in his version because he believes that the words καὶ ἐλεήσει “are probably due to some corruption.” G. B. Gray, “The Psalms of Solomon,” in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (vol. 2; ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 650. Winninge also notes the strange conjunction γὰρ but he attempts to solve the problem by shifting the subject of each verse. He takes God as subject in verse 34, while he takes the messianic king as subject in verse 35. So, he suggests, “the nations, brought to reverence for God by the judgment of Messiah, will receive mercy from the Lord himself.” See Winninge, Sinners and the Righteous, 95.
is not mentioned often in this psalm (4:8; 10:4; 14:2). Gentiles seem to remain Gentiles when they gather, testify to God’s glory, and receive messianic mercy in the age to come. They are not incorporated into Israel.218

3.1.2 Two Selected End-Time Texts

As we have seen in our survey of Second Temple eschatological redemption literature, most texts are ambiguous about the Gentiles’ relationship to the Jewish law.219 It is not easy to find material that clearly describes the redeemed Gentiles as eschatological proselytes, righteous Gentiles, or ethical monotheists. Jewish eschatological texts do not line up neatly within these patterns. But that is not to say that every Jewish end-time text is ambiguous. There are some texts that mention the law explicitly, and there are others that clearly do not mention the law in regard to Gentiles at all. One of the latter is the book of Tobit. Tobit talks about Gentiles and the coming age but does not mention the law itself as something to be observed by Gentiles.

While Tobit places a great deal of emphasis on Jews observing the Torah, the book shows little interest in Gentiles keeping the Jewish law in the end times. Tobit keeps the traditional festivals (1:6; 2:1-2), purity regulations (2:5, 9), and the requirements of sacrifices and tithes in the temple (1:6, 8). Tobias, the son of Tobit, should marry Sarah because he is the closest kin to her (6:12; 7:10). Any references to the law are related to Jewish observance. Yet there is no mention of the law that Gentiles are required to obey in the eschatological age. The book of Tobit portrays a particular hope that eschatological pilgrims from the nations will gather in Jerusalem and worship Israel’s God (Tob 13:11-14; 14:5-7). And in the end times, the Gentiles will share the

suggests that the fear (φόβος) of the Lord (v. 34) is “a characteristic of the devout” in another place of the Psalms of Solomon (e.g., 2:33; 4:12; 8:5; 18:7-9). See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 140.

218 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 140-41.

219 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 503-505.
blessings of the coming age as Gentiles by abandoning their idols and worshiping Israel’s God at the temple.\footnote{Some scholars understand the nations in verse 6 as Gentiles fully converted to Judaism. Scott McKnight suggests “conversion to Judaism.” See Scott McKnight, \textit{A Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 37. The text however is not so clear on whether they are end-time proselytes. Rather, the verb “to turn” does not imply proselytism. The end-time Gentiles turning to Israel’s God are only required to abandon idols and worship God, and there is no indication of circumcision, commandments, and Jewish law \textit{per se}. See Wolfgang Kraus, \textit{Das Volk Gottes: Zur Grundlegung der Ekklesiologie bei Paulus} (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum neuen Testament 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1996), 79; Amy-Jill Levine, “Diaspora as Metaphor: Bodies and Boundaries in the Book of Tobit,” in \textit{Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel} (ed. Robert S. MacLennan and J. Andrew Overman; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 108; and Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and Gentiles}, 44-5.} Those seem to be the only requirements for the Gentiles, and there is no mention of circumcision, commandments, and the law \textit{per se}. The clear expectation seems to be that Jews will continue to follow the full Torah, but Gentiles will not.

In a few other places in Jewish literature, on the other hand, Gentiles are depicted relatively clearly as observing the law in the eschatological age (i.e., \textit{T. Levi} 18:9; cf. 14:4; \textit{T. Naph.} 3:2; \textit{Sib. Or.} 3:719, 757-58; \textit{Sib. Or.} 5:265; \textit{Moses} 2:43-44). Of these, \textit{Sibylline Oracle} 3 mentions the law most explicitly with respect to Gentiles, and thus I have chosen it as the second text to compare with Matthew. \textit{Sibylline Oracles} 3 describes the Gentiles observing the law of God and implies that Gentiles might become associated with Israel in the future. The law involves abstaining from various forms of immorality (idolatry, murder, sexual immorality, etc.). In the future age, some Gentiles consider the Law of the Most High (3:719), abandon their idols (3:548; 763), acknowledge their sins of idolatry (3:721-22), offer sacrifices to God (3:624-29), abstain from adultery, homosexuality, and infanticide (3:764-66), and share in the future blessings of the Jews.\footnote{God will judge those who do not accept that “he himself alone is God and that there is no other” (3:760). It is important to note that the requirements for Gentiles are common moral principles or natural laws such as refraining from idolatry, homosexuality, arrogance, greed, astrology, augury, and divination. See Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, \textit{Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting: With an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary} (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 17; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 189; Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and Gentiles}, 122.}
While *Sibylline Oracles* 3 describes the Gentiles obeying the law, there is no emphasis on circumcision or food laws. Even more, when it comes to Israelites keeping the law, there is no hint that the law includes circumcision, purity laws, and dietary regulations. Rather, the law for the Jews emphasizes the moral law, rejecting astrology and magic (221-33), helping the poor (241-45), remaining faithful in marriage (595), and rejecting pederasty (596). *Sibylline Oracles* 3 could be read in a way that places natural law above the Jewish Torah and binds the Jews and Gentiles equally.\textsuperscript{222} A hierarchy exists among the laws, creating primary and secondary types of law.\textsuperscript{223} The heart of the law for Jews and Gentiles both is worshiping God, abandoning idols, and living a moral life. The Mosaic law is equivalent to the natural law, and without distinction the law is observed by Jews and Gentiles alike.

Therefore, based on these principles of selection, I have chosen *Sibylline Oracles* 3 and the book of Tobit for comparison with Matthew—two eschatological texts, one of which mentions the law explicitly with respect to Gentiles (*Sibylline Oracles* 3), the other of which does not (Tobit). Both Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 have eschatological content regarding the place of Gentiles, and either might be seen as analogous to the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). These features give us a convenient basis for comparison among the three texts. Since Tobit shows that his family keeps the written law, and that there is no explicit obligation for the Gentiles to keep the written law (Tobit 14:5-7), I will investigate whether the Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20 are like

\textsuperscript{222} Jews failed to obey the holy law of God and worshiped idols (3:275-79); and the same thing happened to Gentiles. They also failed to keep the law (3:599-600). The requirement for both Jews and Gentiles is the Law of Moses, but there is no mention of the Jewish laws regarding circumcision or dietary restrictions, which separated Jews from Gentiles. See Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 162-4.

\textsuperscript{223} The secondary type of law contains Jewish-specific regulations which are only exceptionally mentioned in *Sibylline Oracles* 3: the whole earth is offended by Jewish customs (272), and Jews are depicted as participating in morning prayers with ritual ablutions (591-94). However, there is absolutely no mention of circumcision, ritual purity, food taboos, observance of the Sabbath, and the Jewish festivals. See Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 183-84.
the righteous Gentiles in Tobit. On the other hand, since in *Sibylline Oracles* 3 Jews and Gentiles seem to follow the same law, which is the heart of the Torah—worshiping God, abandoning idols, and living a moral life that nevertheless pays very little attention to the Sabbath, circumcision, or food laws—I will use *Sibylline Oracles* 3 to examine whether Matthew’s Jesus really gives one new eschatological law that applies both to Jews and Gentiles. By the “new eschatological law” I mean ethical monotheism law as Jesus teaches it for life in the eschatological kingdom. These aspects of the law deal most directly with loving God and loving one’s neighbor. This comparison between Matthew and the two Jewish texts will enable us to draw fruitful conclusions about Matthew’s view of the Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah in the end times.224

### 3.2 The Gentile Question in Tobit

In the following sections, I will relate Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 to our three Gentile questions. Those questions surround (1) how the Gentiles might relate positively to the God of Israel, Moses, and the people of Israel, (2) the nature of the Torah and its characteristics as distinctly Jewish-specific or universal, and (3) whether there is one law for Jews and Gentiles alike, or whether different laws are applied to them.

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224 The detailed comparison will be set out in chapter 4.
3.2.1 Attitudes towards Gentiles in Tobit

The book of Tobit is relatively clear on these questions, although it does present mixed attitudes towards Gentiles and their world. Tobit emphasizes the ethnic and social boundary of Judaism in an exclusive way. He himself is portrayed as a model of piety and holiness for all Jews who live in the Diaspora. Maintaining social and religious boundaries, however, causes a separation from the Gentile world.

In the setting of exile, Tobit has a concern for the plight of his countrymen, who have lost familial and tribal ties. While the separation is not as drastic as that of Jubilees (20:4; 22:16; 25:4-5; 30:7-17), Tobit keeps himself “from eating the food of the Gentiles (ἐθνῶν)” (1:11). He does not marry outside his own tribal family (1:9). Tobit also prohibits his son Tobias from marrying a Gentile woman, instead telling him to “marry a woman from among the descendants of your ancestors; do not marry a foreign woman (γυναῖκα ἀλλοτρίαν), who is not of your father’s tribe” (4:12). The portrayal of the Gentile king Sennacherib is also negative. In the Gentile setting of Nineveh, Sennacherib blasphemes God and murders many Israelites (1:18). Tobit buries the corpses of his countrymen in obedience to the Torah, but one of the Ninevites

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225 I will use the NRSV translation for the discussion since the NRSV follows the longer recension (Codex Sinaiticus S). The Book of Tobit is preserved in diverse ancient translations, (Greek, Latin, Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, and Syriac) and in two main textual forms, a shorter and a longer. The shorter Greek recensions (G I) include Vaticanus (B), Alexandrinus (A), and Venetus (V). The short version of the Latin translation is the Latin Vulgate (Vg). The longer Greek translations (G II) include Sinaiticus (S) from the fourth/fifth century. There is a long version of the Latin translation, Vetus Latina (VL), the Old Latin form of the Book of Tobit. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which contained both Hebrew and Aramaic fragments, there was uncertainty as to which of these recensions, the shorter or the longer, best preserved the original text. The excavation of the Qumran fragments shows that the Qumran texts (4Q196-4Q200) correspond well with G II. Therefore, the longer Greek recension (G II) would be the best textual tradition to preserve the original Tobit text. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Tobit (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 5-6. See also Carey A. Moore, Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (The Anchor Bible 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 53-64; Benedikt Otzen, Tobit and Judith (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 60-65.


informs King Sennacherib, and he orders Tobit to be put to death (1:19). Tobit and the whole northern kingdom of Israel suffer from the reproach of all the nations (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, 3:4) and Tobit suffers from the undeserved insults of the Ninevites (3:6).228

On the other hand, Tobit adopts an inclusive posture towards the Gentiles. Due to his wholehearted faithfulness to God and the Torah, Tobit is rewarded with good standing before Shalmaneser (1:12-13). Even though the Gentiles (πᾶν ἔθνος) are ignorant of the Torah, Tobit teaches his son that “the Lord himself will give them good counsel (βουλὴν ἀγαθὴν)” (4:19).229 So God’s generosity extends to the Gentiles. After God has restored Tobit’s eye sight, Tobit and Tobias are counselled by Raphael to acknowledge God before the Gentiles. Raphael, the angel of God, exhorts Tobit and Tobias to bless God and acknowledge him “in the presence of all the living” (πάντων τῶν ζώντων) and declare his deeds to “all people” (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις) (12:6).

Further, Tobit paints a very optimistic picture of future Gentile inclusion in the blessings of the God of Israel, as the result of God’s restoration of his chosen people. Tobit 13:11-14 and 14:5-7 are good examples of the eschatological participation of Gentiles.

### 3.2.2 The Contents and Nature of the Torah in the Book of Tobit

Tobit makes a distinction between the present (chs. 1-12) and the eschatological future (chs. 13-14). While the first twelve chapters deal with Tobit and his family’s story of restoration, the final two chapters focus on the present adversities and the future restoration of Israel as a whole.


229 There is a gap in Codex Sinaiticus from verse 7 to 19. For this lacuna, the chief text of GII depends on Vaticanus (B) and Alexandrinus (A). In 4:19, the first half comes from BA which reads, “none of the nations has understanding.” And from the second half, the Greek text of Codex Sinaiticus resumes and reads, “the Lord himself will give them good counsel.” BA reads, “the Lord himself will give all good things.” While BA uses “all good things” rather than “good counsel,” the Gentiles are still described as the beneficiaries of divine gifts. See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 178; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 40, n. 35.
Chapter 13 is Tobit’s prayer for the Israelites exiled in the Diaspora, and it pleads for the future restoration of Jerusalem and its temple. In the end, “many nations” (ἔθνη πολλὰ) will also gather into Jerusalem (13:11). In chapter 14 Tobit predicts that Nineveh will collapse and the temple will be desolate; but God will bring Israel back, and nations will then be drawn to Jerusalem (14:3-7).

For the purpose of comparing Matthew and Tobit with regard to the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the eschatological era, it is important to see Tobit’s understanding of the Torah in the end time. Specifically, what is the nature of the Torah in the book of Tobit? Is it distinctly Jewish-specific or universal (ethical and monotheistic)? In the description (chapters 13-14), Tobit emphasizes that piety and faithfulness to the Torah will facilitate the redemption of Israel. While the Torah is not explicitly mentioned as the law for Jews in the end time, Tobit expects that Jews will continue to practice the same piety (13:5, 6, 9, 13; 14:7). Yet the future account does not give enough information to say whether the content and nature of the Torah is Jewish-specific or universal. Especially regarding the relationship of the Gentiles and the Torah, there is no mention of the law in the end time. Rejecting idols and worshipping God seem to be the only requirements for Gentiles. To get some idea of the nature and content of the Torah in the end times, it would be helpful to look at Tobit as a whole.230

3.2.2.1 The Content and Nature of the Torah in the Present Age

Tobit’s religious practices and his teaching about the law make him a concrete role model, with a family-centered religious piety that is to be manifested by every diaspora Jew. Tobit lives in the eastern diaspora region of Mesopotamia (1:2), and for Tobit it is a challenge to live as a pious

230 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 45.
Jew. Correct education from the head of the household is necessary for Jews to maintain a life of piety as the covenant people of God, especially since they are under the influence of evildoing and the “chronic condition of exile.”\textsuperscript{231} Tobit draws a clear line of separation between Israelites and Gentiles in the Diaspora by emphasizing the significance of the Jewish law. Tobit establishes the Mosaic Law as the ultimate authority “overruling requirements of family allegiance.”\textsuperscript{232} Therefore, it is crucial for Tobit to educate his children in the Torah and encourage them to practice the law earnestly in the diaspora setting.

What are the content and nature of the Torah, as Tobit understands them? The formal teachings in the book of Tobit give instructions to practice a pious and righteous life style (4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:9-11).\textsuperscript{233} But they are exhortations for the present era, not the future. These teachings are related to the “wisdom” instructions. In chapter 4, Tobit admonishes his son Tobias regarding filial duties, including instructions to honor his mother, to do what pleases her, not to abandon her, and not to grieve her all the days of her life (4:3). And Tobias should give her a proper burial (4:4). Tobias is also taught to do acts of mercy and practice righteousness. He is to give alms from his possessions (4:8-11), avoid sexual immorality by accepting endogamous marriage (4:12), and love his neighbors (4:13). He should not let pride and idleness accompany him (4:13), delay payment (4:14), let drunkenness go with him (4:15), or let his eye begrudge when

\textsuperscript{231} Levine, “Diaspora as Metaphor,” 105. She describes the condition of exile in the following terms: “In exile, dead bodies lie in the streets and those who inter them are punished; demons fall in love with women and kill their husbands; even righteousness is no guarantee of stability, as both Tobit and his nephew Ahikar (cf. 14:10) realize.” Cf. Beate Ego, “The Book of Tobit and the Diaspora,” in The Book of Tobit; Text, Tradition, Theology (ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 45.


\textsuperscript{233} George W. E. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction (Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 2005), 33-34.
giving (4:16). He is to be open to wise education (4:18). At all times he is to worship God and pray to him (4:19).

In chapter 12, Raphael gives moral instructions to Tobit and Tobias. The first exhortation is to worship God and to recognize his deeds (12:6). Raphael continues with two further exhortations. Tobit and Tobias are commanded to proclaim the wonders of God (12:7); just as in his exhortation to them, Raphael himself declares the fact that God has been working in the lives of Tobit and Tobias (12:11-14). Raphael’s second admonition is for them to “do good and evil will not overtake” them (12:7). His examples of good deeds are prayer, almsgiving, and avoiding sins (12:8-10).

In his farewell discourse, Tobit summons Tobias and shares his wishes before his death. He repeats his set of instructions from chapter 4 in a shortened form (14:8-11). Tobit exhorts his son to do what is pleasing in God’s sight, to give alms, to remember and worship his name with all his fidelity and strength, to practice righteousness, and to bury his mother alongside him (14:8-10). Tobit urges his son to leave Nineveh, for there is much wickedness and deceit while people are without shame (14:10). Tobit gives the example of Ahiqar and Nadab, and he depicts how Ahiqar practicing almsgiving is recompensed and how Nadab attempting murder is destroyed (14:10). Therefore, Tobit’s and Raphael’s exhortations and teachings amount to wisdom instructions.

Furthermore, the book of Tobit as a whole also emphasizes the demarcation and boundaries between Jews and Gentiles. In these teachings, it is striking that Tobit and Raphael do not
mention circumcision and the Sabbath regulations. Yet Tobit talks about Gentile proselytes (προσηλύτοις) and it can be assumed that circumcision was part of the process by which a male Gentile became a full convert (1:8). Regarding Sabbath law, while there is no explicit reference to it, Tobit says, “Also for six years (ἕξ ἐτῶν) I would save up a second tenth in money and go and distribute it in Jerusalem” (1:7, cf. Deut 14:24-26). While GI omits “six years,” GII preserves it. “Six years” are mentioned because “there was no tithe in the sabbatical or seventh year” (cf. Lev 25:4-7). The mention of “six years” might suggest that Tobit is aware of a sabbath of complete rest for the land in the seventh year, so he only tithes during the “six years.” It is not necessary to conclude that Tobit downplays the Sabbath law. In the formal exhortations of Tobit and Raphael (4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:9-11), acts of almsgiving, the burial of kinsmen, and endogamy show the demarcation between his family clans and the Gentiles. Since the setting is in exile, Tobit shows a deep concern for the plight of his fellow Jews and is very jealous to protect his familial ties. The primary concern for giving instructions is to enhance the


235 The converts Tobit mentions are not simply resident aliens but proselytes to Judaism. Fitzmyer says that προσηλύτος, ‘‘one who has come over,’’ is a technical term for a ‘convert’ to Judaism.” Fitzmyer, Tobit, 111. This Greek expression is usually the LXX translation of γέρ, “resident alien” (Ex 12:48; 22:21; Ezek 14:7). So it is possible to think of προσηλύτοις as resident aliens who are included in Israel and keep the common life-style of the Israelites. However, the language Tobit uses favors the rendering “proselytes.” After he mentions προσηλύτοις in 1:8, Tobit explains them as those “who had attached themselves to Israel.” As Donaldson clearly notes, this language “attached” (προσκειμένοις) is “commonly used in the Second Temple period of full proselytes.” (Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 42, n. 42). See Esth 9:27; Jdt 14:10; Jos. Asen. 16:14; 4QpNah frags. 3-4, 2:9; Philo Spec. 1:51; Josephus Ant. 13:319.

236 Fitzmyer, Tobit, 119-10. Leviticus 25:3-4 reads, “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.”

237 Moore, Tobit, 109.

238 Collins notes that there is no mention of the Sabbath in Tobit’s teaching, but he also recognizes that while Tobit does not have “the halakhic intensity” that can be found in Jubilees or in “some of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” the law of Moses in Tobit is something “more inclusive than the written text of the Torah, and roughly equivalent to ‘normative Jewish tradition.’” See Collins, “The Judaism of the Book of Tobit,” 33-34.
solidarity of his clan and to define “a separation line between them and other nations.”

Further, Tobit is portrayed as surpassing his clan in the observance of the law. His exemplary cultic observances maintain his Jewish identity and separate him from the Gentiles. These observances include festivals (1:6-8; 2:1), purity regulations (2:9), dietary laws (1:10-11), and offering the first fruits and tithes (1:6-8). This is a list of cultic laws that contemporary diaspora Jews normally exercised in the diaspora setting. So I will deal with how these particular laws show a strict separation between Jews and Gentiles.

Endogamy
Endogamy has great value in the book of Tobit. Tobit himself marries a kinswoman (1:9) and instructs Tobias to follow his model. Eventually Tobias marries Sarah, also from their kindred (3:15; 4:12; 6:11-13, 16; 7:10-12). The marriage between Tobias and Sarah means that they remain faithful to the Mosaic Law. When Tobit and Azariah arrive at Ecbatana, Sarah’s father Raguel says, “She is given to you in accordance with the decree in the book of Moses (τῆς βίβλου Μωυσέως), and it has been decreed from heaven that she be given to you” (7:11). In the book of Tobit, the law of Moses is explicitly mentioned only in connection with endogamy (6:13; 7:11-13) and Tobit’s pilgrimage to Jerusalem (1:8). So we may conclude that endogamy highlights a family’s Jewish identity by preventing “assimilation.” Further, John J. Collins suggests that the issue behind endogamy is not simply a concern about intermarriage with foreigners. It is more about maintaining the social system of tribal society. In 4:12, Tobit forbids

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240 Devorah Dimant, “The Book of Tobit and the Qumran Halakhah,” in The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2; Reihe 35; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 123-24.

Tobias from taking a foreign woman “who is not of your father’s tribe,” rather than simply a foreign woman (γυναῖκα ἀλλοτρίαν). So Tobit behaves more like a patriarch in Genesis rather than Ezra, who clearly extends the marriage prohibition to all foreign women around Israel (Ezra 9:1-2). In contrast to Ezra’s concern about the “holy seed” mixing itself with foreign women and thus falling in idolatry, Tobit strives to “maintain the traditional bonds of tribal society.” Tobit believes that each tribe in Israel should retain its inheritance by taking wives from inside their own tribe (cf. Numbers 36:9). Endogamy represents a devotion to one’s family and Israelite tradition and identity.

Acts of Almsgiving
Tobit’s acts of charity to his kinsmen manifest his Jewish identity in the Diaspora. Tobit walks in the path of righteousness by giving alms (1:3). Tobit cares about the Israelites as brothers, gives food to the hungry, and clothes the naked (1:16-17; 2:2, 14). In Tobit 4, he teaches his son Tobias not to turn his face away from the poor but to give alms. Practicing almsgiving will deliver him from death and darkness, and it is “an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High” (4:7-11, 16-17). Eventually, Tobit and his charity are vindicated by the message of the angel Raphael that “almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνη) saves from death and purges away every sin” (12:9). After regaining his eyesight, Tobit continues to give alms (14:2). Still, his almsgiving

242 Collins, “The Judaism of the Book of Tobit,” 30. See also Otzen, Tobit and Judith, 38. Tobit wants his family clans to be faithful to their Jewish ancestral traditions and to preserve their Jewish identity. The book of Tobit also represents endogamy as God’s law. Both Raphael and Raguel, Sarah’s father, appeal to the authority of the Book of Moses in their words to Tobias (6:13; 7:11-12). And on the basis of the law of Moses, Raguel writes a marriage contract to Tobias (7:13). Collins goes on to say that the Book of Tobit represents “the law of Moses” as being equivalent to the “normative Jewish tradition” that goes beyond the written Mosaic Torah. It is because of his recognition that the law in the book of Tobit is somewhat different from the actual Mosaic law (cf. Deut 25:5-10; Deut 24). With regard to the investigation of endogamy compared to Mosaic law, Collins concludes that “the law of Moses” can embrace “Jewish tradition broadly, even including details that are not actually found in the written Torah” (Collins, “The Judaism of the Book of Tobit,” 33-34). See also Francis M. Macatangay, The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 12; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 267-70. Therefore, it can be inferred that “the law of Moses” highlights Jewish ethnic identity, which must be preserved by Tobit’s own clans.
extends exclusively to his own relatives. The demarcation between his family and the Gentiles still exists.

Burial of Kinsmen
The proper burial of Israelites is an important concern of the book of Tobit (1:17-19; 2:3-8; 4:3-4; 6:15; 14:10-13). Tobit properly buries his kinsmen who are put to death by Sennacherib, even though he stands in danger of execution as a consequence of his charitable burial. The necessity of burying dead Israelites is not limited to Tobit. Tobias is also obliged to bury his family members properly (4:3-4). Tobit practices and teaches proper burial as an act of charity.

Festivals
Tobit keeps the traditional feasts. In Tobit 1:6 and 2:1-2, the Feast of Weeks is mentioned. In the book of Tobit, this is the only Jewish festival mentioned by name. Tobit makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the festivals (1:6). He sends his son Tobias to find poor persons among the exiled Israelites to share his family feast (2:1-2). Tobit’s hospitality towards poor people among his kinsmen fits well with Deuteronomy 16:9-12, in which God commands Israelites to contribute “a freewill offering” and to “rejoice before the LORD your God—you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, the Levites resident in your towns, as well as the strangers, the orphans, and the widows who are among you—at the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.” It is an indication of Tobit’s fidelity to the Torah.

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244 Benedikt Otzen notes that practicing almsgiving is necessary to “preserve a Jewish society in the Diaspora.” Otzen, *Tobit and Judith*, 37.


246 Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 133.
Purity Regulations

Tobit practices purity regulations by washing his body after the burial of a murdered kinsman (2:5, 9). This is Jewish-specific regulation that separates Jews from Gentiles, but there is no special emphasis or explicit teaching on this practice in the text. Tobit does not discuss this practice by name, as he does with endogamous marriage, even though it is also a Jewish-specific law in connection with the law of Moses (7:11-12).247

Dietary Law

Tobit practices the dietary laws, and he separates himself from the food of the Gentiles (1:10-12). Tobit is faithful in keeping the law because he is utterly mindful of God even while he is exiled in Nineveh. Tobit keeps his Jewish distinctiveness even when his all relatives eat the Gentiles’ food.

Offering first fruits and tithes

In Tobit 1:6-8, unlike all his kindred and countrymen, Tobit is described as the only Jew who is obedient to the law of Moses (Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 23:9-12). He brings the first fruits of the crops and tithes of the cattle to Jerusalem, while his relatives fall into idolatry (1:5-6). In Tobit 1:7, he pays a second tithe on the basis of Deuteronomy 14:22-27 and 26:12-13. In verse 8, he then gives a third tenth to the poor, based on Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12. Deborah, Tobit’s grandmother, also taught him to tithe (1:8). Tobit therefore keeps his Jewish identity and is distinct even from the rest of his people.

247 Faßbeck, “Tobit’s Religious Universe,” 181. Tobit also never mentions circumcision and Sabbath observance, which are important for the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The religious practices and observations are closely connected with Jewish law, but they are not explicitly mentioned or emphasized in the book of Tobit. But endogamy between Tobias and Sara is explicitly connected with “the Book of Moses.” John J. Collins investigates the use of the phrase “the Book of Moses” (7:11-12; cf. 6:13) and finds that it does not “point to a specific biblical law, but rather to ancestral traditions.” Thus it can contain the Jewish tradition broadly and its requirements exceed the literal observance of the written Torah. See John J. Collins, “The Judaism of the Book of Tobit,” 32-33.
Fasting

Raphael’s exhortation to Tobit and Tobias mentions prayer with fasting: “Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness” (12:8). There are textual variants. G¹, Vetus Latina, and Vulgata Latina have νηστείας; thus, they read “fasting.” But G² has ἀλήθειας, which is rendered as “truth” or “fidelity.” It is possible to accept the latter reading “truth” or “fidelity,” since ἀλήθεια is a significant concept in the book of Tobit. Tobit practices and teaches this idea (1:3; 3:5; 4:6; 13:6; 14:7) and ἀλήθεια has distinct connections with prayer (3:2; 8:7).248 The former reading however is more likely. The joint use of “prayer” and “fasting” is very common in the biblical tradition (Neh 1:4; Ezra 8:23; Joel 1:14; Jer 14:12) and is also extra-biblical (T. Jos 10:1). The three deeds of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were important practices of fidelity in the postexilic period.249 Fasting can be seen as a Jewish rite with an important place in the pre-exilic period (Judg 20:26; 1 Kgs 21:9) as well as the postexilic period (1 Macc 3:44-48; Esth 4:1-3).250 If we accept Raphael’s exhortation regarding “prayer with fasting,” then this is yet another example of Tobit and Tobias preserving their Jewish identity by practicing rituals.

As we have seen (chapters 1-12), the book of Tobit places a great deal of emphasis on Jews observing the Torah in the present age. The contents and nature of the Torah are the ethical life style (4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:9-11) and Jewish-specific regulations separating Jews from Gentiles (1:6-8, 10-12; 2:1, 5, 9; 3:4-5; 4:5). Specifically, the Torah piety mentioned in the book of Tobit intensifies the Jews’ ethnic identity. Since the loss of Jewish self-identity is the main issue, the

249 Moore, Tobit, 269-70; Fitzmyer, Tobit, 292.
250 Moore, Tobit, 269.
book of Tobit says a lot about the law for the Jews. Compared to the great emphasis on Jews observing the Torah, the law for Gentiles is not a matter of concern in the present time.\textsuperscript{251}

While there are two cases having implications for the Gentiles and their Torah observance in the present age, the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is still valid. The first is the fact that Tobit helps certain Gentile proselytes (προσηλύτοις) with his tithes (1:8).\textsuperscript{252} While proselytes are permitted to cross the border between Jews and Gentiles, the border remains intact. The second is the statement that God will give Gentiles “good counsel” (4:19).\textsuperscript{253} Yet the emphasis falls on the fact that the teaching and praxis of the law is primarily related to the Jews in the present time. Almost all cases of teaching and praxis are related to the Jews, not the Gentiles. Jewish adherence to the Torah creates a definite distinction between Jews and Gentiles. There is no doubt about “the sharp line of demarcation between Jew and Gentile that such Torah piety produces.”\textsuperscript{254} Endogamy, the proper burial of kinsmen, and almsgiving are the most important teachings of Tobit, and they highlight devotion to family-centered religious piety, Israelite tradition, and Jewish identity. Traditional festivals, purity regulations, sacrifices, tithes, dietary laws, and fasting define the border between Jews and Gentiles.

3.2.2.2 Content and Nature of the Torah in the Future Age

Might the description of the Torah in the present age give us some idea about the content and nature of the Torah in the age to come? Just as Torah fidelity is important to Tobit and his family and the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is important in the present age, it might be the

\textsuperscript{251} Faßbeck, “Tobit’s Religious Universe,” 193-94.

\textsuperscript{252} Fitzmyer, \textit{Tobit}, 111; Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 42, n. 42.

\textsuperscript{253} Cf. Moore, \textit{Tobit}, 162, 174. See also Fitzmyer, \textit{Tobit}, 178.

\textsuperscript{254} Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 45.
case that the same borderline is maintained in the future age. In Tobit 13:5-17 and 14:5-7, Tobit shares his vision of the final restoration of Israel and its gathering from the nations. Tobit 14:7 reads, “All the Israelites who are saved (οἱ σῳζόμενοι) in those days and are truly mindful (μνημονεύοντες) of God will be gathered together; they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety forever in the Land of Abraham.” But the text does not clearly mention the law itself for Jews in the future age. For example, Ronald Herms argues that true repentance is the only requirement for the Jews to obtain mercy from God.

Those elements of piety that distinguish the people of God in exile from all others — so crucial to the self-understanding and rhetorical motivation of Tobit in the earlier chapters — are conspicuously absent in the description of the New Jerusalem in the final two chapters. Not only has the scope of the author widened to include all nations but the requirements for belonging to the people of God seem, at the very least, to be presented in broader terms. In the final two chapters, Jew and Gentile alike are called to demonstrate true repentance in order to receive the mercy of God, while the only prediction of what Gentiles will actually do to enter the New Jerusalem is to “abandon their idols” (14.6).

Herms argues that ethnic demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is clear in the present age, but that in the future age the ethnic border is doubtful. After stating the future vision (14:5-7), Tobit goes back to present issues and mentions the law itself, such as proper burial and almsgiving (14:8-11). Here Tobit is returning “to the motif of the exercise of piety on the part of the people of God in exile” and exhorting his family “to reproduce his faithful example in the present.”

This law description pertains to the present age, not the future. For the eschatological age (13:5-17; 14:5-7), Herms believes that the ethnic distinction between Jews and Gentiles is blurred since

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256 Cousland, “Tobit: A Comedy in Error?”, 552. Cousland mentions that “A desolate Jerusalem will be exalted forever (13:16-17), and powerful Nineveh will be destroyed.” The theme of Israel’s vindication underlies the book.


258 Herms, An Apocalypse for the Church and for the World, 71, n. 74.
there is no explicit example of a Jewish-specific law that separate Jews from Gentiles. This view is based on his interpretation of Tobit 13:5-6. Tobit calls for the repentance both of the Jews (“children of Israel” vv. 5-6) and the Gentiles (“you sinners” v. 6).259 Worship is also an important requirement for both (13:6, 11; 14:5-7).260 It seems that Herms insists on a new eschatological law that signifies an ethical monotheism law for both Jews and Gentiles in the end times. True repentance, abandoning idols and worship seem to be the requirements to join in God’s blessings.

Herms focuses on “repentance” as the element of piety required for Jews, yet he virtually neglects the language that Tobit uses when he distinguishes his people from Gentiles. Tobit shares the conviction in chapter 13 that despite God’s scattering of Israel for their “iniquities” (v. 5), God will show mercy to the Israelites if they turn to God with all their heart and with all their soul, do what is “true” (v. 6), and become “righteous” (vv. 9, 13). Here the terms used for the Jews in the age to come are reminiscent of the previous accounts of Jewish distinctiveness and fidelity to the Torah: “iniquities” (v. 5; cf. 4:5; 12:8, 10), “true” (v. 6; cf. 1:3; 3:2, 5; 4:6; 8:7; 12:11), “righteous” (vv. 9, 13; cf. 4:17; 12:8).

Even though Tobit does not clearly mention the law for Jews in the future age, it seems that the language he uses supports a future piety based on the Torah. First, Tobit predicts in chapter 14 that “All the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together” (14:7). Here the verb “be mindful of” has already figured prominently in the book of Tobit. In the earlier chapters, the verb μνημονεύω (“be mindful of,” “remember” v. 7; cf. 4:5, 19)

259 Herms, An Apocalypse for the Church and for the World, 73. However, it is not clear whether “you sinners” (v. 6) definitely refers to non-Jews. See Moore, Tobit, 279; McKnight, A Light Among the Gentiles, 34; Fitzmyer, Tobit, 310-11.

260 Herms, An Apocalypse for the Church and for the World, 73-4.
and its cognate μμημεν (cf. 1:12; 2:2, 6; 4:4, 12; 6:16; 8:2) are used when Tobit summarizes and refers back to his initial exhortations. Torah fidelity is continually and closely connected with the act of remembrance. So we can infer that when God restores Israel, Jews are expected to be truly mindful of God and therefore Jews should keep the Torah properly (14:7). The act of remembrance will motivate people to keep the Torah, and those who truly remember God by keeping the law will be gathered together in the end time. This motif of remembering is repeated right after the future prediction (“be mindful of God,” μμημεν του θεου), and it reaches its culmination with the final exhortations that Tobit gives to his children; to serve God faithfully, to do what pleases God, to do what is right, and to give alms (14:8).

Second, Amy-Jill Levine argues that endogamy is “a necessary element” in the eschatological picture of Israel. In Tobit 4:12, Tobit tells Tobias to remember how his ancestors, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, married endogamously and were blessed with children. Their posterity shall inherit “the land” (cf. 14:7, 10). So the regathering of the Jews from the deportation is “the telos of endogamy,” and Israel will obtain “the land” again as “the result” of

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262 Di Lella identifies an influence from Deuteronomy regarding the “theology of remembering” (Deuteronomy 8:2, 18; 16:3; 24:9). So the act of remembrance is a motivation for proper action. Di Lella, “The Deuteronomic Background,” 385. Ego recognizes that acts of charity and practicing the dietary law may be understood as “expressions of Tobit’s remembrance of God” (Ego, “The Book of Tobit and the Diaspora,” 49). Macatangay also suggests that “remembrance is intimately connected with right action and proper conduct…, so Tobit’s exhortations themselves employ the act of remembering as motivation for proper action and behavior” (Macatangay, The Wisdom Instructions, 77). See also Nowell, The Book of Tobit, 3:1015.

endogamy in the eschatological era.\textsuperscript{264} Therefore, in the end times Jews are expected to continue practicing endogamy in order to inherit the land.

In this sense, Herms’s one new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles is unlikely. Jews are expected to keep the Torah faithfully both in the present age and in the age to come. The Book of Tobit as a whole emphasizes Jewish-specific aspects of the Torah. Just as the borderline between Jews and Gentiles is important in the present age, and just as they maintain the Torah to preserve it, Jews are expected to keep their ethnic identity when they gather into Jerusalem in the end time. Accordingly, in the next section we will investigate the relationship between the Gentiles and the Torah in the age to come.

3.2.3 The Relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the Book of Tobit

In the present age (chapters 1-12), with regard to the Gentiles, it seems that the Book of Tobit is not much concerned about Torah observance. It is not clear whether Gentiles are obliged to observe the Torah in the present time. Any reference to the law is related to Jewish observance. Tobit, Tobias, and Sarah are all Jews. Adherence to the Torah creates a sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and the ethnic distinction is clear.

But does this ethnic borderline between Jews and Gentiles persist in the age to come? In Tobit’s description of the future, Gentiles are clearly in view when they gather to worship God in the restored Jerusalem (13:11-14; 14:6-7). Gentiles abandon idols and begin to worship God. Those two actions seem to be the sole requirements for Gentiles. There is no reference to covenant, circumcision, commandments, or the law \textit{per se} in relation to the Gentiles in the end times.

Tobit 13:11-14 (NRSV)

Chapter 13 is a lengthy prayer. Tobit praises God and thanks him for his deliverance. Tobit expresses his concern for the expelled Israelites in exile and sings about the future restoration of Jerusalem and its temple. He asks the Israelites to exalt God and acknowledge the one who will look with favor upon them and give them mercy. The Israelites are required to recognize the fact that they must turn away from their sins and go back to God in all sincerity.

In verse 10, Tobit describes the tent of God in the temple in Jerusalem, which will be rebuilt and restored to its glory. In verses 11-14, the glory of the tent will reach to “all the ends of the earth.” Tobit prays in verse 11 that “many nations” (ἔθνη πολλὰ) from the ends of the earth will gather to worship God, while bearing gifts in their hands. They will recognize the special status of Israel and Jerusalem, which “will endure forever.”

11 A bright light will shine to all the ends of the earth; many nations will come to you from far away, the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the earth to your holy name, bearing gifts in their hands for the King of heaven. Generation after generation will give joyful praise in you, the name of the chosen city will endure forever. 12 Cursed are all who speak a harsh word against you; cursed are all who conquer you and pull down your walls, all who overthrow your towers and set your homes on fire. But blessed forever will be all who revere you. 13 Go, then, and rejoice over the children of the righteous, for they will be gathered together and will praise the Lord of the ages. 14 Happy are those who love you, and happy are those who rejoice in your prosperity. Happy also are all people who grieve with you because of your afflictions; for they will rejoice with you and witness all your glory forever.

Here “many nations” refers to non-Jews, since in the following verse “all who conquer you and pull down your walls” clearly denotes Gentiles. Those Gentiles who are hostile towards

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265 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 43; Fitzmyer, Tobit, 304.

266 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 43. Fitzmyer comments on verse 12 to the effect that those who attack the holy city recall Gen 27:29, Num 24:9, and Isa 54:17, where Gentiles are in view. He also mentions, regarding verse 13, that Jerusalem will be “the focal point” of the Jews returning from the Diaspora, and it will also “become a center to which people of all nations will flock” (Fitzmyer, Tobit, 314-15).
Jerusalem and plunder its walls, towers, and homes will be cursed. But those Gentiles who “revere” (φοβούμενοι)267 Jerusalem will be blessed (v. 12). This means that in verse 11 many Gentile worshipers will bring gifts in their hands, and generation after generation “will give joyful praise” in God. In this way Gentiles will also be “blessed forever” (v. 12). The phrase “blessed forever” could mean that Gentiles do not simply observe blessings but are eligible to participate in salvific blessings.268 Yet the text does not clearly say whether they will share God’s blessings as proselytes or as Gentiles. Gentiles are expected to worship God and show affection for Jerusalem, but there is no mention of Gentiles keeping the Jewish law. A more detailed description of the future status of Gentiles is in the following chapter.

Tobit 14:5-7 (NRSV)

In chapter 14, Tobit gives his final instructions to Tobias and his grandchildren in the form of a farewell discourse. In his admonitions Tobit mentions the fate of Israel: in God’s appointed time, Assyria and Nineveh will fall, all Israel will be scattered, and God’s temple will be desolate. But God will gather those who are captive or exiled, rebuild Jerusalem, and restore the temple (vv. 4-5). The prediction also includes the Gentiles’ eschatological participation in God’s blessings. As is typical in Jewish eschatology, when God restores Israel, Gentiles will share end-time blessings with Israel, as a result of Israel’s redemption.269

5 After this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor; and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt, just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning

267 Those who are blessed in revering Jerusalem are the counterpart of those who are cursed in the same verse. See Fitzmyer, Tobit, 314. The term “revere” has textual variants. G1 reads “all who love you,” while VL reads “all who build you” (Fitzmyer, Tobit, 314). Cf. Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 43, n.45.

268 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 43 n. 46. Moore notes that verse 11 clearly is reminiscent of the gathering of the Gentiles and their worship of God (cf. Isa 2:3; 60:5; Zech 8:22; Pss 86:9; 96:7-8). Thus Moore says, “Although Tobit may have confined most of his time and charity to his fellow Israelites, here Tobit’s (or better, the author’s) compassion and broad-mindedness are clearly evident” (Moore, Tobit, 280-81).

269 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 509.
it. Then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth. They will all abandon their idols, which deceitfully have led them into their error, and in righteousness they will praise the eternal God. All the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together; they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety forever in the land of Abraham, and it will be given over to them. Those who sincerely love God will rejoice, but those who commit sin and injustice will vanish from all the earth.

In this passage, when “the nations in the whole world” will be gathered, they will “worship” (φοβηθήσονται) God in truth, “abandon” (ἀφήσουσιν) their idols, and “praise” (εὐλογήσουσιν) the eternal God (vv. 6-7). Here, “the nations in the whole world” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γη) can be compared to the “many nations” (ἔθνη πολλὰ, 13:11). Since they abandon idols, “the nations in the whole world” is clearly a reference to non-Jews. Moreover, in verse 7, Tobit goes back to the topic of Israel’s restoration. “All the Israelites” who are saved and are truly “mindful of God” (μνημονεύοντες τοῦ θεοῦ) will be gathered to Jerusalem from exile and will dwell in the land of Abraham forever. And then Tobit goes on to predict the gathering of the Gentiles. Donaldson suggests that in verse 7 Gentiles are in view because of “a universal note” (“from all the earth”). Thus “those who sincerely love God” include the Gentiles. Even more, the shorter textual tradition presupposes that group to be exclusively Gentile. In G¹, “all those who love the Lord God in fidelity” are described as those who “show mercy to our kinsfolk.” Therefore, verses 6 and 7 envision the Gentiles’ end-time participation.

While Gentiles are clearly present in this picture, the text does not say whether Gentiles are to be fully incorporated into the Jewish people or whether they will share end-time salvation as

270 Fitzmyer, Tobit, 330. Fitzmyer suggests that the idea of the Gentiles’ eschatological participation in God’s blessings (Tob 13:11; 14:7) parallels the thinking that Israel will become a light to the nations (Isa 9:1; 60:3; Psalm 22:28; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 8:20-22) and that the nations will worship God truly (Isa 2:3; 18:7; 19:22; 45:14-15). Fitzmyer, Tobit, 313, 330.

271 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 44.

272 The translation is quoted from Fitzmyer, Tobit, 331. See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 44.
Gentiles. Some scholars view the Gentiles in verse 6 as proselytes and translate ἐπιστρέψουσιν as “will be converted.” For example, Scott McKnight interprets this as a conversion to Judaism, but he does not specify the reason.\(^{273}\)

Most recently Renate Egger-Wenzel has argued that Tobit 13:13 and 14:6 should be read as end-time proselytism. While there are “only few traces in the book of Tobit” regarding the topic of proselytism and circumcision, Egger-Wenzel argues that conversion is the way for Gentiles to be accepted into the Jewish community in the future time (13:13; 14:6).\(^{274}\) Egger-Wenzel’s interpretation is based on the fact that there is strong emphasis on Torah piety for Jews in the present time.\(^{275}\) She investigates several clues about conversion as the means of acceptance into the Jewish community. First, Tobit 1:8 mentions proselytism positively. Circumcision is “a requirement for a proselyte” and here “circumcision is also assumed” indirectly.\(^{276}\) Second, Tobit’s religious practices maintain his Jewish identity. Tobit separates himself from foreign religions and keep his own religious duties by “presenting offering, celebrating feasts, keeping kosher, maintaining ritual purity and burying the corpses of his people.”\(^{277}\) Third, Tobit’s male genealogy (1:1) and Tobias’ endogamy within his own tribe show their distinction from the

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\(^{276}\) Egger-Wenzel, “Acceptance into the Jewish Community,” 105. She also mentions, “conversion and circumcision must have been an issue for the author and his contemporaries” (Egger-Wenzel, “Acceptance into the Jewish Community,” 103).

Gentiles. Fourth, the geographical setting as a pagan one hostile to Jewish religious practice would cause the absence of circumcision and the Sabbath in the book as a whole. Even though for Jews the historical setting was “a challenging environment in the diaspora,” some of the Jews were “willing and able to separate themselves in certain respects from the foreign population and to live according the Law of Moses.”

While Egger-Wenzel’s argument that present-day proselytism is the way to be accepted into the Jewish community is probable, her argument about end-time proselytes (13:13; 14:6) leaves questions. She mentions that “all nations will leave their idols and worship the true God (cf. the pilgrimage of the nations motif in Isa 2:2-3; Mic 4:1-2),” and she takes this as a clue about proselytism. Yet, the Gentiles’ practice of worship and abandonment of idols (13:13; 14:6) do not necessarily indicate that they are proselytes. It is correct that both Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2 might imply end-time proselytism, since both passages do say that Gentiles will gather to learn the Torah. However, Tobit 13:13 and 14:6 by no means mentions the law per se.

In Tobit 14:6, the term ἐπιστρέφω can be translated as “turn” rather than “being converted.” This translation could indicate that Gentiles will share end-time blessings as Gentiles, with the ethnic distinction between Jews and Gentiles continuing into the

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282 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 499-505.
283 This term ἐπιστρέφω occurs 9 times in G¹ (2:5; 3:17; 5:16; 13:6 [x2], 8; 14:5 [x2], 6) and 12 times in G² (2:3, 5; 3:17; 5:17; 6:13 [x2]; 10:1; 13:6 [x2]; 14:5 [x2], 6). No case indicates proselytism, but they all simply mean “to turn” or “to return.” For 14:6, Paula Fredriksen reads, “Then all the Gentiles will turn in fear to the Lord.” See Paula Fredriksen, “Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2,” Journal of Theological Studies 42 (1991), 546, n. 40. Fitzmyer reads, “all peoples will turn and worship God truly” (Fitzmyer, Tobit, 330). Cf. Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 44-5.
eschatological era. One might disagree with this view and argue that in the end times, both Jews and Gentiles will be required to keep the Torah fully.\(^{284}\) Certainly this possibility can be raised by the fact that the language Tobit uses for Gentiles when they “turn to God and worship him in truth” (v. 6) is quite similar to the previous terms which he uses to exhort his fellow Jews to preserve their Jewish distinctiveness. As Donaldson has observed, Tobit repeats the previous terminology attributed to pious Jews when he predicts that Gentiles will “fear God” (v. 6; cf. 4:21) “in truth” (v. 6; cf. 1:3; 3:5; 4:6) and “praise the Lord” (v. 7; cf. 3:11; 4:19; 8:5, 15; 10:14; 11:14, 16; 12:6, 17, 18, 20, 22; 13:6, 15, 13, 17) “in righteousness” (v. 7; cf. 1:3; 2:14; 4:5, 7; 12:8).\(^{285}\) These overlapping terms would lead one to think that the Gentiles who gather in the future Jerusalem will be expected to practice the Torah as the pious Jews do.

However, while that interpretation is possible, it is not required by the text. Levine and Donaldson correctly note that Tobit is presenting not an eschatological conversion of Gentiles to Judaism but simply a turn toward God in which Gentiles abandon their idols.\(^{286}\) There is almost no indication that Gentiles will practice the full Torah and become proselytes in the age to come. While Tobit mentions that God will give Gentiles good counsel (4:19) and even describes proselytism (1:8) in the present time, it is striking to note that in the future time Tobit does not refer to any content of the law, covenant, or commandments—especially not circumcision, which is a \textit{sine qua non} for Gentiles to become Jews.\(^{287}\) Abandoning idols and worshiping the God of

\(^{284}\) Cf. Herms, \textit{An Apocalypse for the Church and for the World}, 71.


\(^{287}\) Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’?” 20; \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 45; Fredriksen, “Judaism,” 546-47.
Israel “seem to be the only requirements” for the eschatological Gentiles (vv. 6-7). Therefore Gentiles will share end-time blessing as *Gentiles* with the covenant people of God: they do not become end-time proselytes to Judaism.

In this section, I have investigated the Gentile questions in the book of Tobit. While most of the other eschatological redemption passages in Judaism are not clear in answering the question of whether the Gentiles will become end-time proselytes, the book of Tobit gives adequate answers for the discussion. In terms of the attitude towards Gentiles, the book of Tobit adopts a mixed position. Tobit maintains a separation between Jews and Gentiles, caused by the observance of the Torah (1:9, 17, 18, 19; 3:6; 4:12). But Tobit also adopts a positive attitude towards Gentiles (1:12-13; 4:19; 12:6; 13:11-14; 14:5-7). Regarding the nature of the Torah, the formal teachings of Tobit and Raphael are related to wisdom literature (4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:9-11) and at the same time emphasize Jewish-specific laws. Almsgiving, the burial of kinsmen, endogamy, and the portrayal of cultic observances (festivals, purity regulations, dietary laws, first fruits and tithes, fasting) show that the nature of the Torah is both Jewish-specific and universal in its ethical and monotheistic commands.

With respect to the status of Gentiles in the end time, I have discussed how pertinent data from Tobit have led scholars to different interpretations. For example, Herms argues that there will be one new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles. Herms’ argument is based on the fact that Tobit uses similar language with reference to Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological period. The call for an ethical monotheism law (repentance, abandoning idols, worship) directed both to Jews and Gentiles would constitute the new eschatological law (Tob 13:5-6). Yet, as I have

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argued, Herms fails to recognize that ethnic-specific laws continue to be required for Jews in the age to come. In the present time, Jewish-specific laws intensify devotion to one’s family, one’s Jewish ethnic identity, and the Israelite tradition, and they accordingly produce a sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Jews may be expected to preserve this distinction when they gather into Jerusalem in the end times.

Another example is Egger-Wenzel’s eschatological proselytism. Gentiles will participate in the blessings of God by keeping the full Torah. Egger-Wenzel’s argument is based on the fact that Tobit 1:8 refers to proselytism positively, and that it emphasizes Torah observance in the present period, including Jewish-specific aspects of the Torah. Regarding the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah, however, she fails to recognize that there is no mention of the law for Gentiles in the age to come (13:11-14; 14:6-7). Abandoning idols and worshiping the God of Israel seem to be the only requirements for Gentiles.

Eschatological Gentiles will participate in the end-time blessings as Gentiles and not as proselytes. Therefore, it is proper to conclude that there are two different sets of laws; one is Jewish-specific and the other governs the Gentiles’ exclusive worship of God and their abandonment of idolatry. Thus, the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles is maintained in the end times.

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3.3 The Gentile Question in *Sibylline Oracles* 3

*Sibylline Oracles* 3\(^{291}\) is an instance of Jewish eschatological redemption literature that clearly presents us with a form of ethical monotheism. In this section I will investigate this text for its answers to our three Gentile questions. How do the *Sibylline Oracles* 3 relate the Gentiles to the God of Israel? What is the nature of the ethical-monotheistic Torah in *Sibylline Oracles* 3? And do the oracles present only one law for Jews and Gentiles?

3.3.1 Attitudes towards Gentiles in *Sibylline Oracles* 3

*Sibylline Oracles* 3 describes an eschatological picture in which the Gentiles will gather to Jerusalem and turn to God in the age to come. *Sibylline Oracles* 3 is composed of five distinct oracles (3:97-161, 162-95, 196-294, 545-656, 657-808)\(^{292}\) and the motif of the Gentiles’ eschatological participation occurs in 191-95, 545-50, 556-72, 624-31, 710-23, 732-33, 740, and 762-75. The attitude towards Gentiles is mostly positive, especially in the context of the eschatological age, but not always.

There are some negative portrayals of Gentiles. *Sibylline Oracles* 3 often points out Gentiles’ present faults and wickedness, and predicts divine punishment and destruction against the Gentile nations in the future. For example, God gave intelligence and reason to everyone in

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\(^{291}\) The Greek text used for this study is Johannes Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina* (Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 8; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1902). I have used the translation done by John J. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 1; ed. James H. Charlesworth; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 362-380.

common (3:262-262), but the Gentiles are condemned for idolatry and immorality (3:586-600). The oracle’s “woes” against various nations show the Gentiles’ follies in the present time: Babylon (3:300-313), Egypt (3:314-24), Asia Minor (3:337-49, 433-488), Rome (3:350-80), and Phrygia (3:401-32). The Sibyl also predicts future disasters on the pagans who do not recognize the law and the judgement of God (3:686-687).

There are also positive portrayals of Gentiles. Sibylline Oracles 3 often looks forward to the restoration of Israel in the eschatological era, when the Gentiles also will benefit. The Sibyl prophesies to the nations of the world, and at the end of her prophecy she mentions that the seventh king of Egypt will raise the Jews to positions of influence (3:191-95). Gentiles have been immoral in many ways, but after the reign of the Egyptian king, Jews will take leadership roles to guide all humanity (βροτοῖσι, 3:194-95). The seventh king is mentioned as ending the practice of idolatry (3:601-609), and all mortals (πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι) who practice idolatry will be condemned. The figure of the seventh king reflects the Jewish hope that the Gentiles will “piously honor” (τιμᾶν ὁσίως) God with reverence (3:604-8). After that, God will bring a king

293 Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibyline Oracles, 209-35.

294 There is a debate regarding the identity of the seventh king. Collins understands the references to the “seventh king” or “seventh reign” (3:192, 318, 608) to have a numerical sense, such that he identifies the seventh king as Ptolemy VI Philometor, who ruled Egypt from 180 to 145 BCE. See John J. Collins, The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 13; Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature and Scholars Press, 1974), 28-33. While this position is possible, Erich S. Gruen suggests that this numerical sequence is not probable. Any official documents on stone, papyri or coinage do not designate kings by numbers. Hellenistic literary sources (e.g., Polybius 14:3-4; 13:10) and Jewish sources (I Maccabees 10:51; 10:55; 11:8; II Maccabees 1:10; 4:21; III Maccabees 1:1; 3:12; 7:1) and even the Letter of Aristeas (13, 35, 41) do speak of the Egyptian kings, but again not by number. See Erich S. Gruen, Heritage and Hellenism: the Reinvention of Jewish Tradition (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1998), 278-79. Against this, Collins quotes a reference to “Ptolemy the Fourth” as Alexander the Great. See John J. Collins, “Third Sybil Revisited,” in Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone (Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements 89; Danvers, Massachusetts: Brill, 2004), 8 with n. 20. But this is the only example, and there is no direct numerical designation for Philometor. Buitenwerf recognizes other usages in the phrases “seven decades of times” (3:280) and “seven lengths of annually recurring times” (3:728) and argues that “the number seven is used here to designate a certain, predetermined totality” (Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibyline Oracles, 189). While it is hard to specify the identity of the seventh king, the most we can say is that the king is a Gentile figure (the seventh king of Egypt) and during the time of his reign, eschatological deliverance will take place. Cf. Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 117.
from Asia to invade Egypt (3:610-18), and then God will give great joy to men, “for earth and trees and countless flocks of sheep will give to men the true fruit of wine, sweet honey and white milk and corn, which is best of all for mortals (βροτοῖς)” (3:619-23). God will send “a King from the sun,”\textsuperscript{295} and in accordance with God’s plan the king will cease all unjust wars, murders, and unwanted oaths of loyalty (3:652-54). He will govern not with his own plans but in accordance with God’s teaching (3:655-6). In the future age, the Jewish temple will be restored and all the Jews are anticipated to gather around it (3:702-8). The Gentiles (“all islands and cities,” νῆσοι πᾶσαι πόλις [sic], v. 710) will recognize the God of Israel, worship him alone, gather at the temple, and understand the Law of the Most High (3:715-20). The Greeks will see God’s judgement, and they will also experience prosperity and peace throughout the whole earth (3:732-61). God will raise up the eschatological kingdom, will dwell with the Gentiles, and will give immortal light and perfect peace (3:785-95). The Sibyl portrays the temple as the center of the world. God’s Torah will be universalized, and the Gentiles will turn to God in the age to come.

\textsuperscript{295} John Barclay argues that “a King from the sun” refers to the Jewish messiah or king of Israel. See Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE) (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1996), 223-224. However, it is hard to see “a King from the sun” as a Jewish figure, because the text itself does not mention anything about the future Jewish king. Collins instead argues that “a King from the sun” may well designate “the seventh king of Egypt.” This is a viable interpretation since the seventh king of Egypt is portrayed positively, and this equation occurs also in the Egyptian text The Potter’s Oracle. This oracle predicts the eschatological king from the sun, who will bring joy to Egypt. See Collins, The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism, 38-44; Between Athens and Jerusalem, 92-95. While it is correct to identify “a King from the sun” as a Gentile figure, we cannot decisively equate the seventh king with “a King from the sun.” As Buitenwerf notes, the phrase “from the sun” (ἀπ’ ἠελίοιο) could also be translated as “from the East” (Homer, Iliad XII 239; Odyssey IX 26; Phlegon of Tralles, Mirabilia III 8). Buitenwerf argues that this king may well refer to the king from Asia, which is from the East (3:611-615). See Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles, 272-275. Therefore, it is hard to specify the identity of “a King from the sun,” and the best that can be said about this Gentile king is that he will play a critical and positive role in the eschatological age (3:652-656). See Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 117.
3.3.2 The Contents and Nature of the Torah in Sibylline Oracles 3

The Sibyl downplays the ethnic aspects of the law of Moses and highlights the ethical and monotheistic aspects that have a universal nature. I will postpone a more detailed study of the Gentiles’ eschatological participation (3:191-195, 545-550, 556-572, 624-631, 710-723, 732-733, 740, and 762-775) to the next section, where I will deal with the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles. In this section, I will focus on the contents and nature of the Torah for Jews, and then compare these with the laws for Gentiles.

Both in the present age and in eschatological time, the Mosaic law plays an important role in Sibylline Oracles 3. Jews and Gentiles alike should live according to the Mosaic law. The word “law” (νόμος) is mentioned nine times (3:257, 276, 284, 580, 600, 686, 719, 757, 768) and often it refers to the Mosaic law. The Sibyl clearly states that “on the mountain, Sinai, God gives forth the Law (τὸν νόμον) from heaven” to Moses on two tablets (3:255-58). The Israelites did not sincerely obey “the holy law (ἁγνῷ νόμῳ) of the immortal God” but mistakenly worshipped “the idols of mortals.” As a result, they will face the destruction of their land and temple (3:275-281). Yet Israel will be restored “as immortal God decreed (ἐπέκρανε) for you,” and what the Jews are obliged to do is to continually trust in “the holy laws of the great God” (3:282-284). Jews will be eminent insofar as they honor the temple and share “in the righteousness of the law of the Most High” (3:575-580). They reject idolatry, contrary to the Gentile nations.

Meanwhile, the Gentiles are condemned for not keeping the law. The Sibyl points out that the Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Romans, Greek, and many other nations transgress “the holy law of immortal God” (ἀθανάτοιο θεοῦ ἁγνὸν νόμον) (3:597-600). Gentiles are rebuked for their lack of

296 The same phrase ἀθανάτοιο θεοῦ ἁγνὸν νόμον is also in Sib 3:276 and 284. Sometimes it seems that “the law” refers to natural law in Sibylline Oracles 3. In the passages 3:599-600 and 686-687, the law is equivalent to natural
knowledge about the law and judgements of God (3:685-687). God gave the “holy Law to the pious,” who are the Jews (3:768-769, cf. 3:213, 573). And in the age to come, God gives his law to the Gentiles also, and they will come to the God of Israel. Those Gentiles will say, “Let us all ponder the Law of the Most High God (νόμον ὑψίστοιο θεοὶ φραζόμεθα)” (3:719). And then his law will be the only precept for all people. God “will put in effect a common law (κοινόν τε νόμον) for men throughout the whole earth” (3:757-58). The author repeatedly mentions the law of Moses and urges the audiences to obey it.

The content and nature of the Mosaic law is clear. While Sibylline Oracles 3 emphasizes the proper worship of God, the abandoning of idols, and the moral lifestyle, the Sibyl does not show any interest in Jewish customs that separate Jews from Gentiles.297 When the Sibyl mentions the laws that Jews are expected to practice, there is no mention whatsoever about any distinctively Jewish practices. Only once does the Sibyl mention that when Jews live among the pagans, “everyone will be offended (προσοχθίζων ἔσται) at Jewish customs (3:272). But the content of Jewish customs is not specified. In another passage, the Sibyl indicates that Jews always sanctify “their flesh with water” (3:591-593), but this is merely a “vague reference to ablutions” and does not explicitly designate any Jewish custom.298 It seems that the Sibyl simply assumes that Jews

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297 Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem, 164; Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles, 341; Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 123.

298 Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 123. Jews cleanse their hands or body before they pray (Letters of Aristeas 305-306; Judith 12:7). But the passage does not clearly indicate what specific Jewish practice is mentioned. For more detailed explanation of Jewish ablutions see Buitenwerf, Book II of the Sibylline Oracles, 263, n. 45.
practice Jewish customs. There is no mention of Jewish-specific laws such as circumcision, dietary laws, purity regulations, festivals, and Sabbath observance. Both in the present time (3:218-264) and future time (3:573-600) when the law is required of Israelites, the law of Moses is more related to ethical and monotheistic commands. Thus, ethnic injunctions are downplayed. For the Jews, the Mosaic law is mainly about monotheistic worship, avoiding idolatry, and the universal moral code.

For Gentiles, the contents and nature of the law are very similar to those required for the Jews. Worshiping God, abandoning idols, and living a moral life are also the center of piety and righteousness for Gentiles. The Sibyl does not indicate anything about Gentiles keeping Jewish-specific laws. The question remains, therefore, what ethical and monotheistic laws will look like when required of both Jews and Gentiles?

Monotheistic Worship

As Rieuwerd Buitenwerf notes, monotheism matters since God is described as a sole ruler of the world. The Sibyl testifies that God uses the Roman Empire as an instrument to rule the world and terminate the reign of the Greeks. Romans are God’s instrument to punish the impious Greeks (3:171-176). In the same way, God punishes Israel for their sins by using the Babylonians and Assyrians as an instrument (3:265-294). Later, God punishes the Babylonians and Assyrians in turn for their destroying the temple (3:303-304). These chains of events imply that God is the ruler of the world and that nothing happens without God’s intervention.

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299 There is no distinction between Babylonians and Assyrians according to the Sibyl. Cf. 3:160. See Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 368.

The Sibyl continuously emphasizes monotheistic worship. The Sibyl exhorts the Greeks to worship God only (3:545-55, Cf. 3:586-90). Jews are praised for honoring “only the Immortal who always rules” (3:593). The Sibyl states, “for he alone is God and there is no other” (3:629, 760). Temple worship in Jerusalem is important and emphasized many times. Pious Jews live around the “great Temple of Solomon” (3:213-215). The Sibyl predicts that “A new temple of God” will be built by the help of the Persian kings (290-294). Jews are praised because they “fully honor the temple of the great God” with all different types of sacrifices (3:575-79). The temple will be full of riches (3:657-659).

Abandoning Idols
It is foolish for Gentiles to worship idols (3:21-33). Jews should avoid all forms of divination, the astrological predictions of the Chaldeans, astronomy, or the love of money (3:218-235). The Jews were exiled because they “worshiped unseemly idols” (ἐἰδώλοις ἐλάτρευσας ἀεικέσιν) and did not fear God (3:275-279). The Greek kings set up many idols (3:552-554), but the Jews do not honor “either gold or bronze, or silver or ivory, or wooden, stone, or clay idols of dead gods, red-painted likenesses of beasts” (3:586-589). Gentiles will be judged because they “were not willing to piously honor (τιμᾶν)” God but “honored idols made by hand” (3:601-607).

Ethical Life
The author often describes righteous or immoral examples in his presentation of the ethical life. For example, he says that the Romans will experience “a great fall” when they commit “a course of unjust haughtiness,” consisting of evil deeds such as homosexuality, greed, and every kind of

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301 Sibyline Oracles 3 does not support pluralism in worship. While Pseudo-Aristeas holds the stance that worshipping Zeus is equivalent to worshipping the God of Israel, the Sibyl obviously rejects the polytheism. See Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem, 164.
The Romans are involved in “a wretched and unjust life,” and they will be punished by Asia taking revenge on Rome (3:350-361). The Sibyl describes some expected virtues of the future: “temperate concord,” “love,” “faithfulness,” and “friendship even from strangers.” The vices are “bad government,” “blame,” “envy,” “anger,” “folly,” “murder,” “accursed strife,” “grievous quarrels,” “night robberies,” and “every evil” (3:375-380). Jews are depicted as righteous and they are expected to share the harvest with the poor and to fulfil “the word of the great God, the hymn of the law, for the Heavenly One gave the earth in common to all” (3:244-47). Jews are praised since “they are mindful of holy wedlock, and they do not engage in impious intercourse with male children” (3:595-60).

The most significant vices that *Sibylline Oracles* 3 maintains are avarice and sexual immorality. First, avarice is problematic since it results in misery. The Romans are motivated by greed, and they exploit their slaves from Asia; but this results in Asia taking revenge by enslaving Rome (3:350-361, cf. 3:189). Jews are praised because they avoid the love of money which will cause all types of evils, including war and interminable famine (3:235-236). Jews have “just measurements in fields and cities,” do not carry out “robberies,” and respect “the boundaries of neighbor” (3:237-240). In the end-time, wealth will cause strife among people (3:640-642), but Jews give a share to the poor (3:241-245).

Second, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 criticizes sexual immorality including homosexuality (3:185-186). The Greek kings are depicted as “adulterous,” as well as “proud, impious, and wicked in all respects” (3:202-205). The Jews, meanwhile, respect “holy wedlock” and do not “engage in

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302 Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 338. Wealth is treated as a neutral value in *Sibylline Oracles* 3, for in some cases the Sibyl describes “just wealth” (3:783); rich Jews help the poor with corn, wine, and oil, etc. (3:241-245).
impious intercourse with male children” (3:595-596). And the Sibyl explicitly admonishes, “Avoid adultery and indiscriminate intercourse with males” (3:764).

Therefore, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 implies a hierarchy between the primary and secondary types of law. For the Sibyl, the law of Moses is the natural law. The heart of the law for Jews and Gentiles—worshipping God, abandoning the idols, and living a moral life—is emphasized as primary. The Sibyl downplays the Jewish-specific laws such as circumcision, food laws, purity regulations, the Sabbath, and Jewish festivals. The oracles simply assume that Jews will continue to be identified by ethnic-specific behavior (3:272, 591-593). And for Gentiles, there is no indication that they must keep Jewish-specific laws in the present time.

**3.3.3 The Relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in Sibylline Oracles 3**

Does the Sibyl’s primary emphasis on ethical and monotheistic commands continue when the eschatological Gentiles participate in the blessing of God? We now turn to the eschatological Gentile passages, which are most important for the purpose of this study. In this section, I will discuss the question, “Is there one law for Jews and Gentiles alike? Or is the law for the Gentiles different from the law for the Jews?” For the purpose of comparing Matthew and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, it is important to examine the expectations of *Sibylline Oracles* 3 regarding the kinds of law with which Gentiles are to comply in the age to come. In the previous section, we investigated the law for the Jews both in the present time and in the age to come, and we concluded that the law was characterized as a set of ethical and monotheistic commands. Now we investigate passages referring to Gentiles and their fate (3:191-195, 545-550, 556-572, 710-303

Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 164. He mentions that “while the sibyl remains devoted to the law of Moses, she treats it in practice as natural law. There is no reference to the more peculiar dietary laws of Leviticus, or to the laws which separated Jews from Gentile. There is no indication that circumcision was required of converts.” See also Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 339-42; Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 123.
723, 732-33, 740, 762-775). In these accounts, the Sibyl often combines future predictions with present exhortations, so that the Gentiles might obey God’s precepts and live peacefully together with the Jews.

_Sibylline Oracles_ 3:191-195

The immediate context (3:175-195) describes the immoral behavior of the Romans and predicts their collapse. Their oppression, unjust haughtiness, impiety, homosexuality, and greed lead them to a future downfall (3:180-190, cf. 362). And their downfall first comes in the period of the seventh kingdom of Egypt (3:192-193). After that, the Jews will be strong (καρπερὸν) and will take over positions that guide life for all mortals (3:194-195). It is possible to think that the Sibyl envisions Israel’s guidance of all mortals happenings in the present, particularly in the Maccabean revolt.304 Yet this account of Israel’s guidance can better be seen as an eschatological event, for the following reasons. First, the Sibyl almost never mentions the Maccabees or the setting of the revolt.305 Second, the reign of the seventh king of Egypt appears again in verse 318 (“the seventh generation of kings”) and 608 (“the young seventh king of Egypt”). In those passages the seventh reign is closely connected to the arrival of God’s kingdom in the future age. Since 3:192-193 also mentions the reign of the seventh king of Egypt, the Sibyl probably means to predict that the rise of Israel’s dominion over all mortals will happen in the age to come.306

In the future, “the people of the great God” (ἔθνος μεγάλοιο θεοῦ, obviously Jews) “will be guides in life” (βίου καθοδηγοὶ ἔσονται) for all mortals.307 The people in the Gentile world will

305 Collins, _Between Athens and Jerusalem_, 89-91.
307 Sib 3:702 also calls Jews “the sons of the great God” (οἱοὶ μεγάλοιο θεοῦ). Buitenwerf, _Book III of the Sibylline Oracles_, 189.
recognize Israel as the role model for their ethical and religious life-styles (3:194-195). They will also acknowledge the exemption of Israel from God’s judgement. This is the end-time blessing of Israel and should be seen as “Israel’s eschatological vindication.” Therefore, the description “guides of life for all mortals” in 3:195 indicates that in the future age, Gentiles are expected to follow the ethical and religious model of the Jews.

_Sibylline Oracles_ 3:545-50, 556-72, 624-31

This section concerns the Greeks, and again it contains exhortations for the present and predictions for the future. For the present, the Greeks are expected to hear the Sibyl’s admonitions that they should not give “vain gifts” and “sacrifice” to idols and abandon “the face of the great God” (προλιποῦσα θεοῦ μεγάλοιο πρόσωπον, 3:545-549). They are to “revere the name of” God (3:550), and to “turn back” (παλίμπλαγτος στρέψας, 3:625), “sacrifice to God” (3:626), “honor righteousness and oppress no one” (3:630). In the future age, the wrath of God will come upon the Greeks if they do not listen to the admonitions. The admonitions for the future age are very similar to those in the present. The Greeks are expected to “recognize the face of the great God” (3:557), and offer sacrifices “at the Temple of the great God” (3:565) in order to escape wrath and “escape the yoke of slavery” (3:567). This constitutes a prediction of eschatological pilgrimage for the Gentiles into the blessings of God. While the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles is not clearly specified in these eschatological passages (3:556-72), we can see that recognizing God, sacrificing, participating in temple worship, and disregarding the yoke of slavery are important virtues that are required of the Gentiles.

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308 Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 119.
In this section the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles is more clearly depicted than the previous accounts (3:191-195, 556-72). The Sibyl predicts that in the end-time, the “kings of the peoples” will attack the riches in the temple (3:657-668). And then God will intervene and pour out judgement on the people because they knew “neither the law nor the judgement of the great God” but mindlessly invaded the temple (3:686-688). People will see God’s severe punishment and “recognize the immortal God who judges these things” (3:693). And these prophecies will surely be fulfilled (3:699).

The sons of God (the Jews) will be shielded by God from the divine punishment (3:702-709). All the Gentile “islands and cities” will see God’s protection of Israel and will say with delight, “Come, let us all fall on the ground and entreat the immortal king, the great eternal God” (3:710-717). They will bring sacrifices to the temple (πέμπωμεν πρὸς ναόν), ponder the Law of the Most High God, recognize God as sole sovereign, and realize their mistakes, wandering, mindlessness, and idolatry (3:718-731).310 The Sibyl emphasizes monotheistic worship in “the house of the great God,” which is the only place God has appointed (3:773-775). This picture of the future Gentiles gathering into Jerusalem and the temple occurs again in 777-779 and 780-95.

The Sibyl exhorts the Greeks to “desist from proud thoughts” and to serve God so that they “may have a share” in the eschatological blessings (3:732-740).311 At the consummation of this end-time bliss, there will be richness, happiness, and peace throughout the whole earth (3:741-761).

310 Gentiles will probably bring sacrifices to the Jewish temple (3:718, cf. 772). Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 121. Buitenwerf notes that πέμπω “does often occur without an object,” so he also speculates the objects they would bring to the temple would be either “someone,” “people,” or “a letter,” “a message,” “money,” or “valuables.” Among these, the latter options would be plausible. See Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles, 282, n. 107.

311 Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles, 344; Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 121.
God will “put in effect a common law (κοινόν τε νόμον) for men throughout the whole earth.” (3:757-58). The Sibyl exhorts the Gentiles to worship God properly and avoid adultery, homosexuality, and infanticide (3:762-766). And the Sibyl predicts what will happen in the eschatological kingdom (3:767-795). God once gave the holy Law to the pious, which are the Jews (3:769, cf. 3:213, 573), and in the future he will give Israel “the earth and the world and the gates of the blessed and all joys and immortal intellect and eternal cheer” (3:769-771). And the Gentiles are seen again in the eschatological pilgrimage: “From every land they will bring incense and gifts to the house of the great God” (3:772-776). The future bliss will come with perfect peace everywhere and a lack of violence even among the wild beasts (3:777-795).

_Sibylline Oracles_ 3 shares the conviction that God will punish the sinners and exalt the pious and righteous people. Israel is portrayed as pious and righteous; thus they will not be condemned but protected by God in the end time (3:702-709). At the same time, some Gentiles will share the end-time bliss by keeping “the Law of the Most High God” (3:719) and the “common law” set for the people of the whole earth (3:757-758).

The laws that the Gentiles are expected to practice in the future are as follows. They must recognize and worship God, who alone is sovereign (3:557, 693, 710-717, 733, 740, 763; cf. 550) and honor the temple by offering sacrifices (3:565, 686-688, 718, 772-776, cf. 624-629). They should abandon idolatry (722-723, 763, cf. 547-549). They are encouraged to maintain a moral life by honoring righteousness (3:720-721) and by refraining from adultery (3:764), homosexuality (3:764), and infant murder (3:764-766). Therefore, monotheistic worship, abandoning idols, and ethical living continue to be the core of the law for the Gentiles. This

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312 God gives Israel dominance over the Gentiles. See Buitenwerf, _Book III of the Sibylline Oracles_, 289.

313 Buitenwerf, _Book III of the Sibylline Oracles_, 346; Donaldson, _Judaism and the Gentiles_, 121.
“pattern” is summarized most explicitly in 3:762-766: “But urge on your minds in your breasts and shun unlawful worship. Worship the Living One. Avoid adultery and indiscriminate intercourse with males. Rear your own offspring and do not kill it, for the Immortal is angry at whoever commits these sins.”

Regarding the question whether there is one law for Jews and Gentiles, we can conclude that Sibylline Oracles 3 does not make any distinction between the law for Jews and the law for Gentiles. With regard to the Jews, the Sibyl continues to show a pattern in which monotheistic worship, abandoning idolatry, and a moral lifestyle are the heart of the Torah. Jewish-specific aspects of the law are ignored. In the same way, this pattern is applied to the Gentiles both in the present time and in the age to come. The Mosaic law constantly plays a critical role for Gentiles through the whole book. As we have seen, Sibylline Oracles 3 describes the law of God as the foundation of the Gentiles’ piety and righteousness in the end time (3:719, 757-758). Gentiles are exhorted to observe the law in the present (3:246-247, 595-600, 685-687). And the law for the eschatological Gentiles is portrayed as a natural law following the familiar pattern of monotheistic worship, abandoning idols, and the ethical life. Therefore, Sibylline Oracles 3 demands the same set of laws for Jews and Gentiles alike.

One might raise the possibility of the eschatological Gentiles becoming end-time proselytes. Valentin Nikiprowetzky argues for the proselyte view. In his thought, since both Jews and Gentiles are expected to keep the Mosaic law (3:719, 757-58) in the future age, the Gentiles are

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314 Donaldson, “Proselytes or Righteous Gentiles,” 18.
315 See Donaldson, “Proselytes or Righteous Gentiles?” 17. Donaldson concedes the possibility that the Gentiles might practice the full Torah in the eschatological future (3:719), but he also finds that this expectation is not necessary.
required to practice the whole law.\footnote{Valentin Nikiprowetzky, \textit{La troisième Sibylle} (Paris: Mounton Press, 1970), 78, n. 1. See Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 122.} In response to this, we might observe that although the Gentiles’ eschatological participation is clearly evident, nevertheless the Gentiles do not need to become proselytes. The Gentiles may well participate as Gentiles. As Collins notes,

By emphasizing those common traditions the Sibyl does not try to proselytize or persuade the gentiles to abandon their way of life for the Jewish. Rather it claims that the Hellenistic way of life finds its proper fulfillment in Judaism. This type of message makes firm demands on the gentile audience, but also involves an extension of Judaism to a universal religion in continuity with the human cultures around it.\footnote{John J. Collins, \textit{The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism} (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 13; Missoula Montana: Scholars Press, 1974), 54-55.}

While Jews and Gentiles alike practice the same Torah, the content and nature of the Torah, as we have investigated, are equivalent to universal law. Thus, in substance, the Gentiles’ participation is closer to ethical monotheism than proselytism.\footnote{See Donaldson, “Proselytes or Righteous Gentiles?” 19. See also Alan F. Segal, \textit{Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee} (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 90. Segal notes that Gentiles can attain salvation if they “abandon idolatry and offer sacrifice at the temple of the great God in Jerusalem” (3:624-634).} As Donaldson correctly notes, while Gentiles practice the same set of law as Jews do, the Sibyl does not indicate that Gentiles “become part of the ‘race (γένος) of most righteous men’ (3:219) who live around the temple of God.”\footnote{Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 123.} There is no exhortation whatsoever for Gentiles to be circumcised and to become Jews. Ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah are not indicated for end-time Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles alike are required to keep the ethical and monotheistic law. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Gentiles will share end-time blessings as Gentiles and not as proselytes.
3.4 Conclusion

Both Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 have very similar views regarding the Gentiles in the end times. Both texts agree that Gentiles will participate in the blessings of God as Gentiles. They differ, however, on the question of whether there is one law for both Jews and Gentiles alike. Tobit clearly does not expect the Gentiles to be obliged to keep the law, while Jews will continue to follow the full Torah. Tobit is not much interested in how Gentiles will keep the Torah. Any reference to the law is related to Jewish observance. By way of contrast, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 makes no distinction between the law for Jews and the law for Gentiles, both in the present age and the age to come. The end-time Gentiles are obliged to observe the Torah because it is almost equivalent to universal law (ethical and monotheistic). The law is hierarchical, in that it has a primary content (which is emphasized) and a secondary content (which is almost neglected). The primary law, the heart of the Torah, consists of ethical and monotheistic commands, while only the secondary law designates Jewish-specific aspects of behavior that separate Jews from Gentiles.

In the next chapter, I will compare and contrast Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. The goal of the comparison is to discover the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20) does not clearly indicate whether the eschatological Gentile disciples will establish a relationship with the God of Israel by affirming the Torah in full force, or whether they might simply affirm the law that pertains to them.

The interpretations that I have adopted for Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 will be useful in the comparative study. At the same time, the interpretations that I have rejected will also be useful. Both Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 have pertinent texts that lead scholars to different interpretations. These texts will give us the insightful points of comparison for analyzing
Matthew. When discussing Tobit, Herms argues that there will be one new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles. He bases his argument on the fact that similar language is used with reference to Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological era (Tob 13:5-6). In my comparative study, I will investigate whether Matthew uses similar language with reference to Jews and Gentiles, as does Tobit. As Herms fails to recognize the fact that ethnic-specific laws continue to be required for Jews both in the present time and in the age to come, I will investigate whether Matthew as a whole emphasizes ethnic-specific laws as does Tobit. This examination will be helpful for seeing whether Matthew envisions a new law for both Jews and Gentiles in post-resurrection period.

Another interpretation of Tobit involves Egger-Wenzel’s eschatological proselytism. Egger-Wenzel argues that end-time Gentiles will participate in the blessings of God by keeping the Torah in full force (Tob 13:11-14; 14:6-7). Her argument is based on the fact that there is a positive reference to proselytism (Tob 1:8) and that there is strong emphasis on law observance, including Jewish-specific laws in the present time. In my comparative study, I will investigate whether Matthew describes proselytism more positively, and whether Matthew places greater emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than does Tobit. This examination will be helpful for seeing whether Matthew views eschatological proselytism as the case for the new Gentile believers in Jesus.

For *Sibylline Oracles* 3, I rejected Nikiprowetzky’s interpretation, namely that Gentiles will be eschatological proselytes. This interpretation will also be useful in uncovering our options for

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understanding Matthew. Nikiprowetzky’s argument is based on the fact that Jews and Gentiles are expected to keep the Mosaic law (Sib 3:719, 757-758) in the future age. Yet he fails to recognize the distinctive view of the Mosaic law. The law of Moses is presented primarily as an ethical-monotheistic law which applies universally to both Jews and Gentiles in the present time and in the future age. Second, nothing is indicated about Gentiles keeping ethnic-specific laws. And third, the Sibyl seems to simply assume that the Jews will continue to be identified by ethnic-specific behavior. In my comparative study, I will investigate whether these pertinent texts from Sibylline Oracles 3 align well with Matthew’s view of the law. This investigation will help us to unravel whether Matthew believes that the eschatological Gentile disciples will be proselytes.
Chapter 4
Comparative Study

In this chapter, I will return to the aforementioned question about Matthew’s own view of the Torah and the Gentiles. By comparing Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, I will answer the question, “How do the commandments of Jesus that the new Gentile followers of Jesus are to observe (‘everything that I have commanded you’ Mt 28:20) relate to the Mosaic law?” As we have seen in chapter 2, Matthew 28:18-20 is not clear how the eschatological Gentile disciples relate to the God of Israel. Should they affirm the whole Torah?

What we have learnt from the analysis of Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 is that each work of literature has pertinent passages that lead scholars to different interpretations. First, the data from Tobit led scholars to three distinct interpretations: (1) both Jews and Gentiles being bound by one new law (Herms); (2) Gentiles becoming proselytes (Egger-Wenzel); (3) Jews continuing to be righteous according to the Torah, while Gentiles follow a lesser set of requirements (Levine, Donaldson). Similarly with respect to *Sibylline Oracles* 3, some aspects in the texts have led scholars to two different interpretations: (1) the Gentiles become proselytes (Nikiprowetzky); (2) there is a common ethically-centered law for both Jews and Gentiles (Collins, Donaldson). In each case, the interpretations that I have rejected (Herms, Egger-Wenzel, Nikiprowetzky) are perhaps just as interesting and useful as the interpretations I adopt (Levine, Collins, Donaldson).

As scholars identify interesting aspects of Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, they use the pertinent texts as decision-making points for their own interpretations. In the same way, I will uncover the meaning of Matthew by comparing Matthew with the pertinent data from Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, and by identifying my own decision-making passages.
4.1 Attitudes toward Gentiles in Matthew

In this section, we will consider the question, “How does Matthew relate the Gentiles positively to the God of Israel, the law of Moses, and the people of Israel?” In chapter 1, I established that Matthew can be read as a Christ-centered reinterpretation of Jewish restoration eschatology from the Second Temple Period. This is one of the fundamental rationales for my choice of Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3 as companion texts. I will carry out a brief and general comparison between Matthew and the two Jewish works as to the nature of restoration eschatology. With respect to Matthew, I see two things that might be important: (1) reworked Jewish restoration eschatology, and (2) the dichotomy of “this age” and “the age to come.”

4.1.1 Reworked Jewish Restoration Eschatology in Matthew

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jewish restoration eschatology has been reworked and reinterpreted in light of the distinctive belief in a crucified and risen Jewish Messiah. First, I will explain general features of Jewish eschatological texts. Second, I will identify Matthew’s reworked eschatology with respect to the common components of Jewish texts.

Jewish eschatological redemption texts have certain general features. The typical key components are as follows: (1) eschatological events center on Israel itself, (2) the Jews are re-gathered and righteousness is reestablished in Israel, (3) Israel’s enemies are defeated, (4) Jerusalem and its temple are refurbished, (5) Gentiles who have survived during the judgement will gather into Jerusalem, (6) the vindication of Israel and restoration of temple precipitates the Gentiles to ponder the law, abandon their vain worship, and thus share in the eschatological
blessings with Israel.\textsuperscript{323} While eschatological redemption texts are diverse, they share all or most of these typical key components in common.

As we have seen in chapter 3, Tobit and \textit{Sibylline Oracles} 3 share the common features of Jewish eschatological redemption texts. Both texts describe Israel as the focal point of restoration (especially Jerusalem, Zion, or the temple). They also expect that Gentiles will participate in the end-time blessings.

With respect to Tobit, Israel’s restoration is portrayed as the re-gathering of Jews from the Diaspora (Tob 13:5, 13; 14:5, 7). Jews who were scattered will “acknowledge” God and “turn to” him with all their heart (Tob 13:5, 13), and they will gather to the temple in Jerusalem (Tob 13:16-17). Jerusalem and the temple will be gloriously refurbished, and the temple will be the center of the re-gathered Israel (Tob 13:10, 11, 16-17; 14:5, 7). Tobit also mentions that Gentiles will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with gifts (Tob 13:11), will abandon their idols and participate in the end-time blessings (Tob 14:6). In case of \textit{Sibylline Oracles} 3, Israel’s God is portrayed as the God of all nations (“for he alone is God and there is no other” \textit{Sib} 3:629 cf. 3:760), and the focal point of religious worship is the Jerusalem temple in the future age (\textit{Sib} 3:702-708; 772-775). The Gentiles will recognize the God of Israel, worship him alone, gather to the temple, and understand the Law of the Most High (\textit{Sib} 3:715-20). From every land, they will gather with “incense and gifts to the house of the great God” (\textit{Sib} 3:772-773). They will enjoy peace throughout the whole earth (\textit{Sib} 3:785-795).

\textsuperscript{323} Terence L. Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)} (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 502-503, 509.
Another common feature of Jewish restoration eschatology in Tobit and *Sibyline Oracles* 3 is that the Gentiles’ eschatological participation is a consequence of Israel’s vindication and redemption. In Tobit, when God restores Jerusalem and the temple, “a bright light will shine to all the ends of the earth,” and “many nations” will make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Tob 13:11). The eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles occurs through “the agency of the mysterious light.” In Tobit’s final word to his sons (14:5-7), after God rebuilds Jerusalem and the temple, “then the nations in the whole world” will worship God in truth (14:6). Thus, the future blessings of the Gentiles depend on the restoration of Israel. In *Sibyline Oracles* 3 as well, the Gentiles’ participation is the result of Israel’s vindication and restoration. The “people of the great God” (the Jews) will become strong and will be “guides in life” for all mortals (*Sib* 3:194-195). This means that the Jews’ piety will be a model for Gentiles (cf. 3:218-247; 573-600). After the restoration of the temple and the salvation of the Jews (*Sib* 3:702-709), “all islands and cities” (the Gentiles) will acknowledge that God has pardoned the Jews and fights for them. As a result, Gentiles will conclude that they should worship God only and ponder his law (*Sib* 3:710-731).

As we have seen in these two texts, the eschatological restoration of the Jews opens the door for Gentiles to participate in the end-time blessings. Can this positive attitude toward Gentiles be

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identified in Matthew’s Gospel? In Matthew, just as in Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, the restoration of Israel is in view. But unlike these two other texts, Matthew’s Gospel views this restoration through the lens of Jesus’ earthly ministry.

In Matthew, Israel’s redemption is the focus of Jesus’ earthly ministry. As Anthony J. Saldarini mentions, Jesus is sent by God as a leader only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:6; 15:24; cf. 2:6). In his ministry, Jesus is the true leader of an Israel that has been misled by her current leaders (Mt 9:36).³²⁸ Jesus’ followers consider themselves to be the faithful remnant of Israel.³²⁹ Yet Matthew’s Jesus is not unconcerned about the Gentiles’ participation in God’s blessings. The Gentile cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom have a more favourable status than the cities of Israel (Mt 11:20-24). Matthew says that Jesus will proclaim justice to the nations, and in his name the nations will put their hope (Mt 12:18, 21). The mission to the Gentiles is in clear view (Mt 24:14; 28:19). So Matthew has a clear expectation that the Gentiles will share in the end-time blessings.

Matthew also assumes that the gathering of the Gentiles is the result of the resurrection and vindication of Jesus (Mt 28:18-20). In Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, the Gentiles’ eschatological participation is the consequence of Israel’s vindication and redemption. But Matthew reinterprets this and articulates the Gentiles’ eschatological participation as a result of God’s vindication of Jesus. By raising Jesus from the dead, God gives him authority and thereby inaugurates the mission to the Gentiles. Only after the resurrection and vindication of Jesus does Matthew

announce the expectation that the Gentiles will join in the eschatological community of disciples: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore (οὖν) and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:18-19).330 Here the particle οὖν “explicitly shows universal mission as the consequence of Jesus’ universal authority.”331 For Matthew, the Great Commission (28:16-20) is the beginning of the new era, as the mission to the Gentiles becomes explicit.

Therefore, Matthew’s Gospel reworks and reinterprets Jewish restoration eschatology in light of the distinctive belief in the crucified and risen Jewish messiah. Jesus’ earthly ministry focuses on Israel’s restoration. Yet he also anticipates the Gentiles’ inclusion in the end times, as a result of the vindication of Jesus (Mt 28:19-20).

4.1.2 Timing: This Age and the Age to Come

All three texts—Matthew, Tobit, and Sibylline Oracles 3—work within the dichotomy of “this age” and “the age to come.” As a result, all three contain different kinds of statements about the Gentiles, some relating to this age, others to the future.

In Tobit, the whole story is divided into two different eras, the present time and the future time. In the present time (chapter 1-12), it is not clear whether Gentiles are obliged to observe the Torah. In Tobit 1:8, Tobit mentions “proselytes” (προσηλύτως) and it would demonstrate that, in author’s view, Gentiles are permitted to become proselytes. If Gentiles wanted to become proselytes, they presumably observe the whole Torah. Yet, there are some other cases in the


331 Konradt, Israel, 285.
present time. The author might not believe that Gentiles must observe the Torah in order to please God. While Gentiles are depicted as sinful, their sins are not described as disobedience to God’s specific commandments. Their evildoing is more related to idolatry (Tob 1:11) and their violent and hostile attitude against people of Israel (Tob 1:18-19; 3:4, 6). In the future age, Tobit gives us an optimistic picture of eschatological Gentile inclusion into the blessings of the God of Israel (Tob 13:11-14; 14:3-7). It is clear that there is no mention about the law for Gentiles (Tob 14:6-7). These two different time periods are also present in *Sibylline Oracles* 3. The Gentiles’ present faults and wickedness (*Sib* 3:300-488, 586-600) will result in divine judgement (*Sib* 3:686-687). In the future age, the Jewish temple will be restored and all the Jews are anticipated to gather around it (*Sib* 3:702-708). Gentiles will recognize the God of Israel, worship him alone, gather to the temple, and understand the Law of the Most High (3:715-720).

This dichotomy of different ages is also recognized in Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew adopts a universalistic posture toward the Gentiles, and he further commands Jews to be actively involved in the mission to the Gentiles (Mt 28:16-20). While active missionary work begins only after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the participation of Gentiles in the community of disciples is already envisioned in the present time. Matthew drops many preliminary hints of Gentile inclusion in the future age. Gentile Magi travel to Bethlehem and recognize Jesus as King of the Jews by giving him gifts (Mt 2:1-12). Some Gentiles recognize Jesus and demonstrate faith (Mt 8:5-13, 15:22-28; 27:54). Gentile cities compare favourably with Jewish leaders and Galilean cities in terms of proper repentance (Mt 11:20-24; 12:38-41). Gentiles will be brought into God’s blessings (Mt 1:3, 5-6; 3:9; 4:15; 5:13-15; 13:38; 21:33-46; 24:14). Therefore, Matthew also has a framework that distinguishes the present age from the future age.
But Matthew divides the ages differently from Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. Matthew’s two different eras are the age before the resurrection and the age after the resurrection of Jesus. In the present time, Jesus’ earthly ministry focuses on Israel (Mt 10:5-6) and the participation of Gentiles into the community of disciples is only foreshadowed. In the future age, the mission to the Gentiles is explicit. Gentiles will gather and share the eschatological blessings with Israel. This end-time participation is the by-product of God’s vindication of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus creates the dichotomy of different ages.

Yet as we have seen in chapter 2, the way in which Gentiles will participate in the community of Jesus’ disciples is not clear. Matthew’s portrayal of Gentile inclusion is clearly in view (Mt 28:18-20), but the relationship between the Gentiles and the Torah is not clear. Since we have seen the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, some aspects of these texts might help us to clarify the case of Matthew.

### 4.2 The Contents and Nature of the Torah in Matthew

By comparing Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3, in this section I will investigate the question, “What is the nature of the Torah for Matthew’s Gospel? Is it distinctly Jewish (with ritual purity, festivals, food, circumcision, and the like) or universal (ethical and monotheistic)?” The contents and nature of the Torah in all three texts are comprised of both ethnic and ethical commands, but emphasis on them is varied in each text.

#### 4.2.1 Matthew’s Torah in comparison with Tobit

The Torah is important for Tobit and his family to maintain their family-based religious piety under the influence of the Gentiles’ evildoing in the diaspora. It is crucial for Tobit to educate his children with the Torah so that they practice the law wholeheartedly in the diaspora setting. And
the formal teachings in the book of Tobit are related to the whole Torah, including ethical and monotheistic commandments and Jewish-specific injunctions. On the one hand, the ethical and monotheistic teachings include filial duties (Tob 4:3-4), charity (Tob 4:8-11), love of neighbours (Tob 4:13), worshiping God (Tob 12:6-7), and avoiding sexual immorality, pride, idleness, and drunkenness (Tob 4:13-16, cf. 12:6-10; 14:9-11). On the other hand, the book of Tobit also emphasizes Jewish-specific injunctions that separate Jews from Gentiles. Both Tobit and Raphael mention important Jewish-specific laws in their exhortations. While Tobit never talks about circumcision and the Sabbath observance, he lists other Jewish-specific laws such as endogamy (Tob 1:9; 3:15; 4:12; 6:11-13, 16; 7:10-12), almsgiving (Tob 1:3, 16-17; 2:2, 14), proper burial (Tob 1:17-19; 2:3-8; 4:3-4; 6:15; 14:10-13), festivals (Tob 1:6; 2:1-2), purity laws (Tob 2:5, 9), dietary laws (Tob 1:10-12), tithes (Tob 1:6-8), and possibly fasting (Tob 12:8). When it comes to the contents and nature of the Torah, the book of Tobit mentions both Jewish-specific and ethical-monotheistic commands.

Just as in Tobit, the contents and nature of the Torah in Matthew are related to both Jewish-specific and ethical commands. Matthew seems to maintain all the details of the Torah (5:17-19). On one side, Matthew deals with fasting (6:16-18), purity regulations (8:4; 15:1-20; 23:25-26), the Sabbath (12:1-4; 24:20), the Passover (26:17-19), the tithes (23:23), though he does not mention circumcision. On the other side, he mentions ethical and monotheistic laws, such as love (22:37-40; 25:31-46), justice, mercy, faith (23:23), generosity (7:12), repentance (3:2-12; 4:17; 11:20-24; 12:38-41), worship (2:1-12; 12:21), and faith (8:5-13; 15:28; 27:54).

The difference between Tobit and Matthew is found in the relativization of the law. Tobit values and emphasizes the whole Torah, both ethical and ethnic, and it seems that the book of Tobit does not downplay or relativize any type of law. While Tobit and Raphael hardly mention
circumcision and the Sabbath, they do indicate that there are Gentile proselytes (προσηλύτοις), who presumably needed to be circumcised (Tob 1:8).\(^{332}\) There is no case of “Sabbath day” observance in Tobit. There is only one implicit case of a “Sabbath year” observance. “Six years” (Tob 1:7) are mentioned during which Tobit wants to save up a second tenth in money, and this implies that on the seventh year—a sabbatical year—Tobit takes a rest by not tithing (cf. Lev 25:4-7).\(^{333}\) So it is not necessary to conclude that Tobit downplays the Sabbath law.\(^{334}\) Tobit emphasizes family-centered religious piety and thus mentions practices that would produce a borderline between Jews and Gentiles. Tobit emphasizes the written Torah, and he practices almsgiving and proper burial for his kinsmen, which is a way of establishing Jewish identity.\(^{335}\) Ethical and monotheistic instructions are also important formal teachings that are never downplayed in the book of Tobit.

Unlike Tobit, Matthew downplays and relativizes Jewish-specific laws in certain cases. While Matthew does not downplay the ethical and monotheistic aspects of the laws, Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel sometimes breaks or criticizes the Jewish-specific injunctions. Compared with Tobit, Matthew sees a certain part of the Torah as de-centered or disregarded when it collides with the values of love and mercy. Even though Torah observance is an important theme in Matthew (he seems to endorse the whole law, down to the most significant detail, in 5:17-19; he endorses

\(^{332}\) Fitzmyer, Tobit, 111; Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 42.

\(^{333}\) Carey A. Moore, Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (The Anchor Bible 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 109; Fitzmyer, Tobit, 110. Moore translates Tob 1:7 as “except for the sabbatical year [lit. ‘For six years’].” Leviticus 25:4-7 says, “In the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land … for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food.” So on the Sabbath year, there were no tithes. And presumably, Tobit did not tithe on the sabbatical year.


purity law in 8:4, and tithes in 23:23), Matthew views some aspects of the Torah as transgressible or relativizable. Sabbath is mentioned in Matthew (Mt 24:20, cf. Tob 1:7) but at the same time Jesus and his disciples break Sabbath regulations (Mt 12:1-14) when they conflict with mercy. Matthew also downplays the ritual purity system (Mt 15:1-20). Jesus says that the things that defile people are those which come out of the human heart. Such things include evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander—all related to moral concepts. Breaking the purity regulations (eating with unwashed hands) does not defile anyone (Mt 15:1-2, 10-20). Again, Jesus disregards the allowance for divorce in the law of Moses because Jesus is concerned for women’s inferior condition (Mt 19:3-9). Further, Matthew assumes the validity of the food laws (Mt 15:10) but never explicitly deals with food regulations (cf. Mt 23:23; 28:19-20). In comparison with Matthew, Tobit observes dietary laws and does not touch the food of the Gentiles (Tob 1:11). While Tobit values the whole Torah in full force, Matthew presents the possibility that the Torah can be disregarded in certain circumstances. An examination of how Matthew uses the term “mercy” especially offers an understanding of how Jesus loosens the strict observance of the Torah at several points in the narrative.

4.2.2 Matthew’s Torah in Comparison with Sibylline Oracles 3

Both Matthew and Sibylline Oracles 3 present a hierarchy of primary and secondary types of law. Both characterize the heart of the Torah as ethical and monotheistic. As we have seen in


337 Food laws and circumcision were widely recognized as marking off Jews from other peoples. See E. P. Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 102.

chapter 3, the law in *Sibylline Oracles* 3 is almost equivalent to natural law, and its primary emphasis falls on ethical and monotheistic commands: worshiping God (*Sib* 3:171-176, 265-294, 303-304, 545-555, 593, 629, 760), abandoning idols (*Sib* 3:21-33, 218-235, 275-279, 552-554, 586-589, 601-607) and living a moral life (*Sib* 3:182-191, 202-205, 256-257, 350-361, 595-596). Yet the author does not show any interest in Jewish-specific laws. For example, there is almost no mention of circumcision, food law, and the Sabbath. The Sibyl tersely refers to the “Jewish customs,” but she does not specify their content (*Sib* 3:272). At one point she vaguely mentions “ablutions,” but it is not clear what kind of cleansing the Sibyl has in mind (*Sib* 3:591-93). The Sibyl does not clearly state that Jews should keep the ethnic-specific injunctions. The most that can be said with confidence is that what is important for all humans is not the Jewish-specific law but the righteous lifestyle which is characterized by obedience to ethical and monotheistic commands. Therefore, there is a hierarchy in the law. Jewish-specific laws such as circumcision, food laws, purity regulations, the Sabbath, and Jewish festivals are downplayed. We conclude that they have secondary importance, because they are vaguely described or virtually absent in the texts.

Matthew is not significantly different from *Sibylline Oracles* 3. The “weightier matters” of the law in Matthew are similar to the ethical and monotheistic commands in *Sibylline Oracles* 3. Matthew presents a hierarchy of laws focusing on ethical and monotheistic commands.

Matthew’s Jesus highlights the heart of the law, loving God and neighbour (Mt 22:34-40), which


341 Buitenwerf also recognizes that there is almost no mention of Jewish-specific laws in the third book of Sibyl. Mentioning Jewish customs in detail may be regarded as “superfluous” since people would naturally keep “the standard Jewish customs” by conforming to “the law of nature in its Mosaic shape.” Still, there is the possibility that “the author belonged to a Jewish group which did not, or did not strictly, observe these practices.” Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 365.
is more fundamental than purity regulations (Mt 15:17-19) or sectarian traditions (Mt 15:3-6, 20). In this respect, the law and prophets “hang on” the love commandment (22:40). The love commandment has priority and urgency over Jewish-specific laws. In the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, blessings come to “the merciful” (Mt 5:7) and to those who are devoted to “justice” (δικαιοσύνη Mt 5:6, 10). Justice, mercy, and faith are weightier commandments than tithes (Mt 23:23). The emphasis lies on loving one’s neighbours and even one’s enemies (Mt 5:43-48; cf. 7:12). Two citations of Hosea 6:6 (“I desire mercy, not sacrifice” Mt 9:13; 12:7) also show that ethical law is primary. The weightier aspects of the law take precedence over Jewish-specific law, which has secondary importance. Therefore, just like Sibylline Oracles 3, Matthew presents a hierarchy: there are primary and secondary types of law.

While both Sibylline Oracles 3 and Matthew downplay Jewish-specific laws, Matthew shows more interest in them than does Sibylline Oracles 3. The Sibyl shows almost no interest in Jewish-specific injunctions; thus, her description of Jewish-specific laws is vague (Sib 3:272, 591-593) or absent (circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath). But in Matthew, there are instances of secondary laws such as purity regulations (Mt 8:4; 15:1-20; 23:25-26), the Sabbath (12:1-14; 24:20), and the Passover (26:17-19). Further, Matthew clearly mentions that one should not neglect the less important laws—such as tithing mint, dill, and cumin (Mt 23:23). While Sibylline Oracles 3 does not say anything about Jewish-ethnic injunctions, Matthew clearly has the notion that secondary laws should not be revoked, and thus he presents relatively more

342 Saldarini, Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community, 162-63.

343 Sim, The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism, 137; and Robert K. McIver, “The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew: A Paradigm for Understanding the Law in Matthew?” Andrews University Studies 33/2 (1995), 234. McIver argues, “In observing the Sabbath, at times one law must be breached in the keeping of another law. Some laws and principles of action are more important than others. It is good to be so scrupulous in observing the Sabbath that one refrains from plucking even a few ears of grain to eat them, but it is better to place the alleviation of even trivial human need above such scrupulosity.”
injunctions that deal with Jewish-specific laws. In *Sibylline Oracles* 3, it is hard to ascertain whether any specific Jewish custom is required to be kept, but in Matthew, Jewish-specific laws can continue to be practiced.

In conclusion, comparing Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 can give us an idea of the content and nature of the Torah in Matthew’s Gospel. The law in Matthew is more about ethical and monotheistic commands than Jewish-specific laws. While both Tobit and Matthew refer to Jewish-specific laws and universal laws, Matthew is unlike Tobit insofar as he relativizes or downplays Jewish-specific laws. In comparison with *Sibylline Oracles* 3, however, Matthew shows more interest in Jewish-specific laws. While *Sibylline Oracles* 3 has almost no interest in the Jewish-specific laws, Matthew deals with more instances of Jewish-specific laws and even supports the notion that Jewish laws may well continue to be practiced (Mt 23:23). Yet we have also noted that both Matthew and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 emphasize ethical and monotheistic commands which are at the heart of the Torah. We can infer from this comparison that both Matthew and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 present us with a hierarchy of laws. Ethical and monotheistic commands have primary importance, and Jewish-specific injunctions have secondary importance. Therefore, Matthew’s law is more related to universal law (ethical and monotheistic) than distinctly Jewish-specific law (ritual purity, festivals, food law, circumcision, and the like).

### 4.3 The Relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in Matthew

In this section, I will examine the question, “Is there one law for Jews and Gentiles, or is the law applied to Gentiles differently from how it is applied to the Jews?” As we have seen in chapter 2, Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20) raises a question about the relationship between Jesus’ commandments for the new Gentile disciples and the law of Moses. One of the tasks of Jesus’ disciples is to teach the new Gentile followers of Jesus to obey “everything I have commanded
you” (Mt 28:20). Jesus’ reference to his commandments is reminiscent of his teaching of the law, so the new Gentile believers are expected to observe the law as it is interpreted by Jesus. Matthew believes that the end times have already begun with Jesus; therefore, the distinction between the present age and the eschatological future is not very significant for the status of the Gentiles. By comparing Matthew with Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3, we will investigate whether Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel gives two different sets of laws. Specifically, I will ask whether Jewish believers are expected to follow all the regulations of the Torah while the Gentile believers are bound by a lesser set of regulations, or whether both Jewish and Gentile disciples are required to keep one set of laws, which Jesus emphasizes as ethical and monotheistic rather than ethnic.

In the sections that follow, I will investigate the results of my analysis of Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3 from chapter 3. And then I will compare them with Matthew to identify the similarities and differences. And then, finally, I will use the similarities and differences to locate Matthew with respect to Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3.

4.3.1 Gentiles and the Torah in Matthew: Comparison with Tobit

As we have seen in chapter 3, the book of Tobit provides scholars with several important points that lead to various interpretations. In addition to the interpretation I favour—namely, that Jews

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344 Donaldson connects Isaiah 2:2-3 (“the law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” in Isaiah 2:3) with Mt 28:18-20, and recognizes that in the eschatological age the nations will gather to mount Zion and will learn God’s ways and walk in his path. In Mt 28:18-20, “there is a Torah emphasis reminiscent of Jesus’ command that the Gentiles become disciples and be taught to observe his commands” (Donaldson, Jesus on the Mountain, 183).

continue to be righteous according to the Torah and Gentiles follow a smaller set of requirements in the future time (Levine, Donaldson)—I will return to two other interpretations we have already seen. One is that there is a new law for both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Herms; Tob 14:7c); and the other is that the Gentiles become proselytes (Egger-Wenzel).

4.3.1.1 Some of the Pertinent Data from Tobit

The following are a few aspects of Tobit that serve as decision-making points for scholarly interpretation.

(1) Similar language is used with reference to Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological period. The book of Tobit uses the same words for both Jews and Gentiles. First, both Jews (Tob 13:6) and Gentiles (14:6) are said to “turn” (ἐπιστρέφω) to God. Jews are required to turn to God with all their heart and with all their soul in the end time (Tob 13:6). Gentiles will turn and worship God truly (Tob 14:6). Second, “righteousness” is used of both Jews (Tob 13:9, 13) and Gentiles (Tob 14:7). Third, “Praise God” (εὐλογέω) is used for both Jews (Tob 13:6, 10, 15, 17) and Gentiles (Tob 14:7). Fourth, there is a possibility that Tob 14:7b (“those who sincerely love God”) refers to both Jews and Gentiles.

(2) Tobit emphasizes the observance of the law for Jews in the present period, including ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah. In the present time, the book of Tobit places a great deal of emphasis on Jews observing the full Torah. Torah observance is important for Jews maintaining a life of piety as the covenant people of God under the adverse conditions of the Diaspora setting. Tobit and Raphael exhort Tobit’s family to give alms, bury their kinsmen, and marry endogamously (Tob 4:3-21; 12:6-10; 14:9-11). Tobit also
teaches his son Tobias about the exemplary cultic observations that will maintain his Jewish identity and separate him from the Gentiles. Those Jewish-specific practices include festivals (Tob 1:6-8; 2:1), purity regulations (Tob 2:9), food laws (Tob 1:10-11), and the offering of the first fruits and tithe (Tob 1:6-8). Adherence to the Torah, including its ethnic-specific aspects, creates a Torah piety which produces a sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles.  

(3) In the present period, Jews are in exile because of their disregard of the commandments. Tobit understands his exile to be closely linked with Israel’s exile as a whole. Israel has not been faithful to the Torah, and as a result Israel has been exiled (Tob 1:2-5, 10). While his kinsmen are involved in idolatry (Tob 1:5), Tobit alone is faithful in keeping the festivals (Tob 1:6, 2:1-2). Tobit emphasizes the importance of the Torah, and at the beginning of his story he shares how he has been faithful to God’s commandments and temple worship (Tob 1:3-13). Since he has been mindful of the Torah, God has granted him favor and good standing with Shalmaneser (Tob 1:12-13). In his agonizing prayer (3:1-6), Tobit understands that his hardship is connected with his own sins and also to the sins of his own ethnic group, who have disobeyed God’s commandments. As a result, God has given Israel “over to plunder, exile, and death, to become the talk, the byword, and an object of reproach among all the nations” (Tob 3:4).

(4) There is a positive reference to proselytes in Tob 1:8. Tobit mentions that circumcision is required of Gentile proselytes in the present time (Tob 1:8). Tobit gives a
third tenth to the orphans and widows, and to the converts who had attached themselves to Israel.\footnote{Fitzmyer, \textit{Tobit}, 111; Donaldson, \textit{Judaism and the Gentiles}, 42.} So circumcision and conversion are live issue for Tobit and his family.

(5) Tobit is not very interested in how Gentiles keep the law. Both in the present time and the future time, the author is not much concerned about Gentiles keeping the Torah.\footnote{Faßbeck, “Tobit’s Religious Universe,” 193-94.} Gentiles are depicted as sinful because they are idolatrous, and their food presumably has been offered to idols.\footnote{In Tob 1:10-12, Tobit does not eat Gentile food even when his kinsmen do. Jews are prohibited from eating Gentile food since this activity involves “pursuing false deities” (Hos 9:3). Gentile food is prohibited for several reasons: “because of its preparation (Ezek 4:12-15) or its having been sacrificed to false gods (Exod 34:15; Deut 32:37-38)” (Moore, \textit{Tobit}, 116-17).} But their sins don’t seem to be depicted as disobedience to God’s commandments. Their evildoing is more related to idolatry (Tob 1:11) and to their violent and hostile attitude toward God and the people of Israel (Tob 1:18-19; 3:4, 6). While Tobit says that God will give good counsel to Gentiles in the future (Tob 4:19), it is not clear whether Gentiles are required to keep the Torah in the present time. Further, it is striking that in the future age there is no mention of commandments or laws for Gentiles.\footnote{Terence L. Donaldson, “Proselytes or ‘Righteous Gentiles’? The Status of Gentiles in Eschatological Pilgrimage Patterns of Thought.” \textit{Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha} 7 (1990), 20.} Abandoning idols and worshiping the God of Israel seem to be the only requirements for eschatological Gentile participants (Tob 13:11-14; 14:6-7). There is no clue that Gentiles will practice the full Torah in the eschatological era.

\subsection*{4.3.1.2 Different Interpretations of Tobit}

As we have seen in chapter 3, these five pertinent points from Tobit have led scholars to different interpretations with respect to the status of Gentiles who turn to God in the eschatological future. I have mentioned three main scholarly positions, namely proselytism (Egger-Wenzel), a new
eschatological law (Herms), and a distinction between Torah-observant Jews and righteous Gentiles (Levine, Donaldson). While I have rejected proselytism (Egger-Wenzel) and a new eschatological law (Herms) for the status of eschatological Gentiles, I have argued for the distinction between Torah-observant Jews and righteous Gentiles in the future age (Levine, Donaldson). Yet for our comparison between Tobit and Matthew, the interpretations that I have rejected (Egger-Wenzel, Herms) are perhaps just as interesting and useful as the interpretations I have adopted (Levine, Donaldson).

First, Renate Egger-Wenzel argues that Gentiles must become proselytes to be incorporated into the eschatological blessings of the God of Israel. In supporting her argument, she investigates Tobit’s hints about Gentile proselytes in future. Her emphasis lies on law observance for Jews in the present period (our second decision-point above), including ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah in the present time. She acknowledges the positive reference to proselytes in Tob 1:8 (our fourth decision-point). From these two aspects of Tobit, Egger-Wenzel infers that the eschatological Gentiles will be proselytes.351

Second, Ronald Herms argues that a new eschatological law will be applicable to both Jews and Gentiles. His argument is based on the similar call to repentance directed at both Jews (“children of Israel” Tob 13:5-6) and Gentiles (“you sinners” Tob 13:6). (This is the first decision-point above.) Herms finds that the eschatological text does not explicitly mention the law or

commandments with respect to either Jews or Gentiles. Herms finds only “repentance” as the element of piety required for both Jew and Gentile alike.352

Third, Levine and Donaldson argue that there will be the distinction between Torah-observant Jews and righteous Gentiles in the future age. I have argued in chapter 3 that this is the most probable interpretation.353 The basis for this argument is that Tobit emphasizes law observance for Jews in the present period, including ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah (the second decision-point above). Jews are in exile because of their disregard of the commandments (the third decision-point), and Tobit is not much interested in how Gentiles keep the laws (fifth decision-point). While there is an emphasis on commandments for Jews in the present time, there is none for Gentiles.

As we have seen, the assignment of different weights to the five decision-making points above has led scholars to different interpretations of Tobit, with respect to the status of Gentiles in the eschatological future. Tobit gives us pertinent information for at least three different interpretations. With respect to Matthew, these three interpretations of Tobit (end-time proselytes, new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles, continuing distinction between Jews and Gentiles in eschatological age) correspond quite well with the range of options for Matthew. Egger-Wenzel’s end-time proselytism is similar to Sim’s argument about Matthew 28:18-20. New Gentile believers in Jesus are obliged to be circumcised in order to become full


members of the people of Israel.\textsuperscript{354} Herm’s argument about the new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles corresponds well with Meier’s view of Matthew 28:18-20, where πάντα τὰ ἔθνη includes both Jews and Gentiles. For both Jews and Gentiles a “new law” is required.\textsuperscript{355} Levine and Donaldson’s argument about the continuing distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological age sounds close to Saldarini’s understanding of Matthew 28:18-20, where he distinguishes the law pertaining to the Jews from the law pertaining to Gentiles.\textsuperscript{356} While these interpretations of Tobit correspond closely to those of Matthew, there is a difference. The positions taken by Egger-Wenzel (proselytism) and Herm’s (new eschatological law) have much less scholarly support than the similar positions with respect to Matthew. While Sim’s interpretation (proselytism) and Meier’s position (new law) are broadly supported among Matthean scholars, Egger-Wenzel and Herm’s interpretations do not garner much support. Examining why the interpretations of those scholars are unlikely will give us insight when we assess the similar set of interpretations with respect to Matthew. These negative arguments would be helpful to clarify the relationship between the Torah and the Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20).

4.3.1.3 Significance for Matthew as Compared with Tobit

In this section, I will compare results of my analysis of Tobit with Matthew to identify similarities and differences. And then I will see whether these similarities and differences shed any light on Matthew as compared with Tobit. The comparison will help to clarify the status of Gentiles in the eschatological age (Mt 28:18-20).


\textsuperscript{356} Saldarini, \textit{Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community}, 70-71.
In comparison with Tobit, Matthew provides more ample evidence for seeing Jews and Gentiles as occupying the same status in the eschatological era. Just as Tobit uses similar language for Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological period (e.g., “turn” in Tob 13:6; 14:6 and “righteousness” in Tob 13:9, 13; 14:7), Matthew uses similar language for Jews and Gentiles. First, Matthew calls both Jews and Gentiles “disciples” and says that both are to follow Jesus’ commandments (“teach them [Gentiles] to observe everything that I have commanded you [Jewish disciples]” Mt 28:20). Second, in several other places in Matthew, Jews and Gentiles alike are called to demonstrate the requirements for the righteousness of the eschatological era. Jews and Gentiles are bound by the same set of laws. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus teaches about the end-time judgement and exhorts “all the nations” (including Jews and Gentiles) to treat “one of the least of these brothers of mine” with mercy (Mt 25:40). Anyone belonging to the sheep is called “righteous” (Mt 25:37, 46). Love, compassion, and care for the vulnerable are the requirements for the righteous (Mt 25:31-46). Justice as ethical conduct is expected of both Jews and Gentiles (Mt 12:18, 20, cf. 12:41-42).\(^\text{357}\) Accepting Jesus (Mt 12:21; 26:13), repenting (Mt 11:20-24), and bearing fruits in keeping with repentance (Mt 21: 34, 41, 43, cf. 3:9) are required for both Jews and Gentiles. In the future age, one set of laws is applied to Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, Matthew gives us more explicit examples than Tobit regarding the status of Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological age. Both are bound by the same set of laws.

This fact could lead us in two different directions regarding the status of end-time Gentiles. Either (1) the Gentiles are proselytes, or (2) there is a new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles. By a new eschatological law I mean ethical monotheism law which focuses on the

weightier matters of the law presented as universal. These aspects of the law deal most directly with loving God and loving neighbor as Jesus teaches them for life in the eschatological kingdom. One the one hand, some cases in Matthew’s texts might lead us to believe that Matthew understands the end-time Gentiles as proselytes. One the other hand, other Matthean material provides us with reasons to believe that the new eschatological law applies equally to Jews and Gentiles in the end time.

Regarding the idea of proselytism, does the comparison between Matthew and Tobit support the interpretation that Matthew understands the end-time Gentiles as proselytes? To be sure, Jesus’ commandments are linked with the law of Moses (e.g., Mt 5:17-20), and this might suggest that the eschatological Gentiles are to practice the whole Torah. Matthew 28:20 voices an expectation for Gentiles to keep Jesus’ commandments as found within the law of Moses. So does the comparison of Matthew with Tobit suggest proselytism as the case for Matthew 28:18-20?

The interpretations that I have rejected for Tobit might be useful in answering this question. One is Egger-Wenzel’s eschatological proselytism. She argues that Gentiles should become proselytes to participate in the end-time blessings of the God of Israel (Tob 13:11-14; 14:6-7).

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359 The commandments (ἐντολή) are linked with the law of Moses in Matthew as a whole (Mt 5:19; 15:3; 19:17; 22:36, 38,40). To be sure, Matthew’s Jesus mentions that the whole law of Moses should be kept even to “one stroke of a letter” (Mt 5:17-19). Matthew connects the commands of God (Mt 15:4) with honoring one’s parents (Mt 15:4, cf. Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16). Jesus was asked by a rich young man what good thing must he do to obtain eternal life; and he answers, “If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments (τὰς ἐντολάς)” (Mt 19:17). And Jesus connects the commandments with the second table of the Decalogue (Mt 19:18-19, cf. Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20). Jesus also summarizes the greatest commandment in the law as loving God and loving neighbours (Mt 22:34-40, cf. Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18). So Jesus’ commandments are found within the law of Moses.
Her argument is based on the fact that there is strong emphasis on law observance, including ethnic-specific laws, and that there is a positive reference to proselytes in Tob 1:8. In this comparative study, I will investigate whether Matthew places a similar emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah as does Tobit, and whether Matthew’s description of proselytism is equally positive. This negative argument would be helpful for seeing whether proselytism is the case for Matthew 28:18-20.

As compared with Tobit, some materials in Matthew do not provide reasons for believing proselytism to be the case for end-time Gentile disciples. First, Matthew puts less emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than Tobit does. Matthew’s Gospel simply seems to assume them as part of the Jewish context. Tobit explicitly enjoins Jews to observe Jewish-specific laws, but often in Matthew the same requirements for Jews are implicit. In several specific cases of Jewish injunctions, such as the Sabbath, food laws, and purity regulations—all important for separating Jews from Gentiles—Matthew’s Jesus does not directly order Jews to keep each ethnic law. Even more, some ethnic injunctions can be breached in certain cases, when they collide with more primary laws. The gospel merely assumes that the Jewish-specific laws are not fully revoked, so Jews may continue to practice the Jewish-specific laws.

For example, Matthew’s Jesus does not emphasize the observance of the Sabbath. Matthew simply assumes that Jews continue to practice the Sabbath regulations. The disciples’ plucking grain (Mt 12:1-8) and Jesus’ healing of a withered hand (Mt 12:9-14) on the Sabbath day seem to be temporary breaches, insofar as mercy takes precedence over Sabbath regulations.\footnote{David Hill, “On the Use of and Meaning of Hosea VI. 6 in Matthew’s Gospel,” \textit{New Testament Studies} 24 (1978): 107-119; Ulrich Luz, \textit{Matthew 8-20} (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 182; Saldarini, \textit{Matthew’s Jewish-Christian Community}, 126-34. As Saldarini notes, “In Matthew’s view the principle of mercy overrides the Sabbath rest enough to allow the disciples to pick some grain to alleviate the hunger. The clash of laws is decided in favor of mercy” (131).}
Matthew’s quotation of Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Mt 12:7), and Jesus’ question, “How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Mt 12:12), show that mercy and compassion have primary value when they conflict with Jewish customs. Mercy and compassion ought to be shown to the needy and the suffering even on the Sabbath day. Jesus as the “lord of the Sabbath” (Mt 12:8) has the right to loosen the Sabbath regulations to show mercy to the needy.

We need not conclude, however, that Jesus revokes the Sabbath law for the Jews. The gospel assumes that Sabbath law can continue to be practiced.\(^{361}\) As we see in two later passages dealing with Sabbath (Mt 24:20; 27:57-28:1), the text assumes that Jews can and indeed will continue to practice the Sabbath law. Matthew’s Jesus hopes that his disciples’ flight “may not be in winter or on a Sabbath” (Mt 24:20).\(^{362}\) Presumably, this means that the Sabbath law continues to be practiced in Matthew’s community.\(^{363}\) But there is no explicit commandment about keeping the Sabbath under life-threatening circumstances or “great distress” (Mt 24:20-21). In the last passage where the Sabbath is dealt with (Mt 27:57-28:1), Matthew portrays Joseph of Arimathea (27:57) as a faithful Jew who cares for the proper burial of Jesus’ body; but this burial occurs on the feast of Passover before the arrival of the Sabbath. Joseph wants to remove Jesus’ body in order to avoid defiling the land (Deut 21:22-23), and he also wants to

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\(^{362}\) Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 179.

perform this burial before the Sabbath day, when he should not pursue any work. And “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (28:1, cf. 27:55-56) are portrayed as pious Jews who go to the tomb after the Sabbath; thus, they wait until the Sabbath day ends. So Matthew portrays Joseph and the women continuing to respect the Sabbath law, and thus refraining from burying and caring for Jesus’ body. These Jewish practices implicitly portray how pious Jews continue to observe the Sabbath regulations.

It is same for dietary regulations. Matthew almost never mentions food laws. In Matthew 15:1-20, the text deals with the issue of hand-washing before eating; but this is a Pharisaic practice (Mt 15:2) rather than a part of the food law (Lev 11). It seems that Matthew restricts the discussion to hand-washing before the meal, and he ends this account with the concluding words, “to eat with unwashed hands does not defile” (Mt 15:20). It is assumed that the food law is never condemned. Matthew changes Mark’s radical account, where Jesus says that “there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile” (Mk 7:15), to “it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person” (Mt 15:11). So Matthew avoids “nothing” and “can” and makes his account more “acceptable to Jewish Christians” who value the food law. Further, Matthew 15:17 omits Mark’s decisive phrase, “Thus he declared all foods clean” (Mk 7:19). Matthew downplays

364 Oliver notes in Mt 27:57-28:1 that there is an unusual case of two successive holy days, the Passover and the Sabbath (Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 147-169). Jesus’ death happens on Passover, a holy day which is followed by another holy day, the Sabbath. On the day of the holy feast of Passover, Joseph should not bury a dead body (cf. *B. Mo’ed Qat. 20a; M. Yom Tov 5:2; m. Meg. 1:5; b. Shabb. 139a-b*), but Joseph hurries to bury Jesus’ body on Passover before the Sabbath day arrives. “By exceptionally breaking Passover, Joseph can at least properly observe the upcoming Sabbath and prevent the land from becoming desecrated. Furthermore, the rest of the many Jews gathered in Jerusalem can resume their Passover and Sabbath keeping without enduring the shame of seeing of one of their fellow compatriots hanging dishonorably on a cross” (Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 159).

365 Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 163-165.


Mark’s radical approach to the food law, and the ongoing validity of the food law is simply assumed.

Matthew 23:24 mentions a gnat and a camel, both of which are prohibited in food law (Lev 11:4, 20; Deut 14:7). Jesus says, “You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!” He criticizes the Pharisees for doing the less important things of the law, as they strain out small insects from their drinks, and neglecting the weightier matters of the law, namely the practice of justice, mercy, and faithfulness (cf. Mt 23:23). This “woe” against the Pharisees might presuppose that the Jews understand Jesus to be affirming their ongoing observance of Jewish food law. Yet the food law is only indirectly spoken of and simply presupposed.

It is also the same with ritual purity. Matthew 23:25-26 uses the purity regulations as an analogy for the purification of utensils and cups that are used for eating and drinking. Leviticus 11:29-35 deals with similar purity issues regarding swarming creatures that can defile bowls and dishes. If their corpses fall into any vessel, it is regarded as unclean (Lev 11:33-34). Jesus compares the scribes’ and Pharisees’ hearts to the inside of a cup, and says they are full of greed and self-indulgence (Mt 23:25). They only focus on externals, and their effort to clean the outside of their vessels is condemned. External purification has secondary value compared to internal moral purity; thus, hypocrisy is problematic. But this does not necessarily nullify the regulations in

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369 Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 287-288. Oliver notes that the gnat and camel “point to a real disgust shared by Matthew and his readers toward consuming such creatures. At the very least, Matthew employs imagery of animals forbidden by the Jewish dietary system in order to draw analogies that he thinks his audience will find meaningful.”

370 Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 288-93.
It is still probable that Matthew accepts the purity regulation about swarming creatures defiling vessels (Lev 11:33-34).

Similarly, on the following analogy (Mt 23:27-28), the scribes and Pharisees are like whitewashed tombs. Internally, they are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Yet Matthew is not attacking the “white washing of tombs” or “attention of externals.” Rather, Matthew uses the Jewish cultic practice as a metaphor, because by reflection Matthew “still holds onto Jewish notions concerning corpse impurity.” External ritual matters are simply assumed and not explicitly argued for or against.

Therefore, compared with Tobit’s explicit emphasis on ethnic-specific laws for the Jews, we can see that Matthew assumes Jewish-specific laws a part of the Jewish context but does not emphasize them. In Tobit, Jewish observance of the Torah is an important issue, but in Matthew, though Jews may well continue to observe ethnic laws that separate Jews from Gentiles, the Jewish observance of the ethnic-specific law is simply an assumption. There are no cases in which Matthew explicitly exhorts Jews to keep the Jewish-specific laws. I have searched for cases that might indirectly support Jewish observance of the ethnic injunctions such as the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-14; 24:20; 27:57-28:1), food law (Mt 15:1-20; 23:24), and purity law (Mt

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372 Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law*, 242. See also Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 290-91.

373 Oliver, *Torah Praxis after 70 CE*, 291. Further he mentions, “Matthew is certainly not openly refuting the necessity for Jews to purify vessels defiled by the dead bodies of impure vermin. He deploys such imagery only to blame his opponents for focusing on external (ritual) matters while overlooking the weightier, inner (or moral) commandments of the Torah.”

374 For this reason, Egger-Wenzel argues that Tobit 13:13 and 14:6 should be read as end-time proselytism. Tobit emphasizes numerous markers of Jewish-specific injunctions and these religious practices maintains his Jewish identity. Therefore, when Gentiles want to be accepted into Jewish community, they should become proselytes and circumcision is necessary for male Gentiles. Egger-Wenzel, “Acceptance into the Jewish Community,” 109.
23:25-28). But Matthew consistently places less emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than does Tobit. And this comparison gives us less reason to expect the end-time Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20) to keep the Torah in full force and become proselytes.

Secondly, Matthew portrays proselytism much more negatively than does Tobit. In Tobit, there is a positive reference to Gentile proselytes who need to be benefited just as orphans and widows do (Tob 1:8). This is one of the reason that Egger-Wenzel argues for eschatological Gentile proselytes. Matthew also specifically mentions a full convert to Judaism, but the portrayal is very negative about this idea; the scribes and Pharisees make him “twice as much a child of hell” (Mt 23:15). It seems unlikely that Matthew thinks positively of the idea that the Gentiles will become full observers of the law in the end time (Mt 28:18-20).

In conclusion, compared with Tobit, Matthew probably does not see the end-time Gentiles as proselytes. Matthew puts less emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than Tobit. He assumes ethnic law as part of the Jewish context, but does not emphasize it. He also holds a negative view of proselytism.

Then can it be the case that Matthew views the new eschatological law as ethical and monotheistic, applying equally to Jews and Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20)? This interpretation is in a way analogous to Herms’s reading of Tobit (Tobit 13:11-14; 14:6-7). As we have seen in chapter 3, Herms’s interpretation is unlikely for Tobit. But examining why Herms’s view is unlikely in the case of Tobit might help us to examine the status of eschatological Gentiles in Matthew (Mt 28:18-20). I opposed Herms’s view since Tobit places great emphasis on Jewish-specific laws that produce a borderline between Jews and Gentiles. Almsgiving, burial of kinsmen, endogamy,

and the portrayal of cultic observances show that the nature of the Torah is Jewish-specific and not merely ethical and monotheistic. Thus, it is more probable to conclude that Jews are expected to maintain the whole Torah continually in the end time, while Gentiles follow a smaller set of requirements. In Tobit (Tob 13:11-14; 14:6-7), there is continuing distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the eschatological age.

What does this tell us about how Matthew emphasize the ethnic-specific laws? I will investigate whether Matthew as a whole emphasizes for Jews to observe ethnic-specific laws than does Tobit. Matthew seems to take the ethnic-specific aspects for granted as well. Jesus mentions that Jews should respect the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees (Mt 23:2-3) and should not neglect tithing mint, dill and cumin (Mt 23:23). Further, Jewish regulations are maintained in several different cases in Matthew, and this fact accordingly at least raises questions about the new eschatological law as ethical and monotheistic applying equally to Jews and Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20). When Jesus meets with Gentile characters, Matthew portrays Jesus as a Jew who maintains Jewish customs. For example, the Gentile centurion (Mt 8:5-13) keeps Jesus from coming under his roof, so Jesus does not enter into the Gentile’s house (Mt 8:8). So the text shows that Jesus as a Jew keeps Jewish regulations (Mt 8:8, cf. John 18:28; Acts 10:28; m. Ohol. 18:7). In the Canaanite woman’s case (Mt 15:22-28), Matthew’s Jesus continues to practice Jewish customs, again not entering a Gentile’s house (Mt 15:25), though this is different from Markan account (Mk 7:24). These accounts of the Gentile centurion and Canaanite woman do not abolish Jewish distinctiveness. Jews can continue to maintain their boundaries and practices.

Compared to Tobit, Matthew takes the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles for granted, and he does not eliminate the distinction. Therefore, comparing Matthew with Tobit at least raises
questions about the view that the new eschatological law applies equally to Jews and Gentiles in the end time.

Overall, the comparison of Matthew with Tobit gives stronger evidence for seeing Jews and Gentiles as occupying the same status in the post-resurrection period. Matthew uses stronger and more explicit language about both Jews and Gentiles (“disciples,” “commandments” Mt 28:19-20) than does Tobit, and he gives the same set of laws for both Jews and Gentiles (Mt 11:20-24; 12:18, 20-21; 21:34, 42, 43; 25:31-46; 26:13). Matthew has more material than Tobit suggesting that Jews and Gentiles share the same status in the end time, and that both are bound by the same set of laws for participation in the community of disciples. This result then leads us to two different interpretations: (1) the end-time Gentiles are proselytes, or (2) there will be a new eschatological law as ethical and monotheistic for both Jews and Gentiles in the end time.

As we attempt to clarify the status of end-time Gentiles by using a comparative study of Matthew with Tobit, however, the comparison itself does not resolve the two interpretations. Both interpretations can be opposed by the comparison of Matthew with Tobit. On the one hand, regarding the interpretive option of proselytism, there is enough material in Matthew to provide reasons to believe that Matthew does not regard the end-time Gentiles as proselytes. On the other hand, regarding the interpretive option of the ethical monotheism law for both Jews and Gentiles, there is material in Matthew that raises questions about the content of such a law. As compared with Tobit, Matthew seems to maintain Jewish-specific laws for Jews (Mt 23:2-3; 23) and does not eliminate the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles (Mt 8:8; 15:25).

Therefore, a comparison of Matthew with Tobit itself does not remove the tension between the two interpretive options of proselytism and the new eschatological law. Both interpretive
options, as we have seen, can be opposed by the comparative study. This means that we must turn to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 for further elucidation. Can *Sibylline Oracles* 3 help us to resolve the tension between the two different interpretations regarding the status of eschatological Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20?

4.3.2 Gentiles and the Torah in Matthew: Comparison with *Sibylline Oracles* 3

As we have noted in the previous section, the results of our comparative study of Matthew with Tobit do not resolve the interpretive tension. In this section, I will perform a comparative study of Matthew and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. Comparing Matthew with *Sibylline Oracles* 3 will clarify the status of the Gentiles in the eschatological age (Mt 28:18-20). In chapter 3, we saw that *Sibylline Oracles* 3 does not make any distinction between the law for Jews and the law for Gentiles, and that there is one set of laws for both Jews and Gentiles. They share the same eschatological status in the end time. By comparing Matthew with *Sibylline Oracles* 3, I will look into the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in Matthew’s Gospel and evaluate whether there is one law for both Jews and Gentiles in Matthew, just as *Sibylline Oracles* 3.

*Sibylline Oracles* 3 voices a clear expectation that Jews and Gentiles alike should live according to the Mosaic law in the present age and in the future age. The term “law” (νόμος) is mentioned nine times (*Sib* 3:257, 276, 284, 580, 600, 686, 719, 757, 768) and often it refers to the Mosaic law. Jews are expected to keep the Mosaic law both in the present time (*Sib* 3:218-264) and in the age to come (*Sib* 3:573-600). Gentiles are condemned for not keeping the law in the present. The Sibyl notes that many Gentile nations transgress “the holy law of immortal God” (*Sib* 3:597-600) and that they are rebuked for their lack of knowledge of the law and judgement of God (*Sib* 3:685-687). In the age to come, Gentiles are to live according to “the Law of the Most High
God,” and they need to follow the “common law” (Sib 3:719, 757-58). So the texts clearly show that Gentiles should keep the Mosaic law in the present age and the age to come.

The law has a hierarchy, however, in which the primary laws are emphasized and the secondary laws are almost neglected. The primary law, the heart of the Torah, is ethical and monotheistic, and its commands are characterized by three major elements: monotheistic worship, abandoning idolatry, and the moral lifestyle. The secondary laws are Jewish-specific laws which are important for separating Jews from Gentiles.

Jews are expected to maintain monotheistic worship (Sib 3:213-215, 575-579, 593), to abandon idols (Sib 3:218-235, 275-279, 586-589), and to live a moral life (Sib 3:235-236, 237-240, 241-247, 595-596). Yet the Sibyl does not mention circumcision, food law, the Sabbath law, or Jewish festivals, all of which are important for separating Jews from Gentiles. Ethnic-specific aspects of the law have secondary importance, and they are only vaguely described in the texts. Only exceptionally does the Sibyl indicate Jewish customs, and even then she does not state the specific contents of the law (Sib 3:272). There is a vague reference to “ablutions,” but it is not clear what kind of Jewish customs the Sibyl means by this (Sib 3:591-593).

For Gentiles, there is no exhortation whatsoever to be circumcised and to become proselytes. Gentiles need to worship God only (Sib 3:545-555, 629, 760), and to reject idolatry (Sib 3:21-33, 552-554, 601-607), murder, sexual immorality, and avarice (Sib 3:182-191, 202-205, 350-361, 375-380, 640-642, 764). The Sibyl’s distinctive view of the Mosaic law is that it is equivalent to universal law.376 So Gentiles should practice the law like Jews, but the law is not related to

376 To be sure, the law in Sibylline Oracles 3 denotes the Jewish law, presented at Sinai (Sib 3:254-58); but the nature of Torah observance itself shows that the law of Moses functions as a natural law. See John J. Collins, The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 13; Missoula Montana: Scholars Press, 1974), 54-55; Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles, 123.
anything Jewish-specific. Gentiles continue to be *Gentiles* as they participate in end-time blessings.

Therefore, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 is a clear example of ethical monotheism. Ethical and monotheistic commands have primary importance, and Jewish-specific laws have secondary importance. Both Jews and Gentiles are expected to keep ethical and monotheistic laws such as worshiping God, abandoning the idols, and living a moral life. If there is still a place for the ethnic-specific aspects of the law, they are de-emphasized in favor of the aspects of the law that are universal (ethical and monotheistic).

Nikiprowetzky insists that the eschatological Gentiles will be proselytes.377 His argument is based on the fact that Jews and Gentiles are required to keep the Mosaic law (*Sib* 3:719, 757-758) in the future age. However, as we have discussed in chapter 3, the Gentiles’ full proselytism in the end time is unlikely. Nikiprowetzky fails to recognize the distinctive view of the Mosaic law in *Sibylline Oracles* 3. (1) The Mosaic law is presented primarily as an ethical and monotheistic law which applies equally to both Jews and Gentiles in the present age and in the future age. (2) There is no indication that the Mosaic law for Gentiles includes ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah. The law for Gentiles is equivalent to universal law. (3) It seems that the Sibyl simply assumes that Jews practice Jewish customs (*Sib* 3:272, 591-593), but she never commands Jews to practice ethnic-specific laws. In favour of the universal (ethical and monotheistic) laws, ethnic laws are de-emphasized.

Examining why Nikiprowetzky’s argument is unlikely in the case of *Sibylline Oracles* 3 might clarify Matthew’s view of Gentile disciples in the eschatological age, especially if we keep in mind

mind the previous comparison between Tobit and Matthew as well. This negative examination will help us to choose one of the two interpretive options, either proselytism or the new eschatological law for Gentiles.

Matthew is closer to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 than to Tobit in that he portrays proselytism more negatively than Tobit does (compare Mt 23:15 and Tob 1:8) and, like the Sibyl, emphasizes the ethical monotheistic. Even more, *Sibylline Oracles* 3 emphasizes ethical and monotheistic laws as one set of laws presented to both Jews and Gentiles in the end time. The Sibyl de-emphasizes ethnic-specific laws. Quite similarly, Matthew emphasizes the weightier matters of the law, characterized as justice, mercy, and faith. These laws apply equally to Jews and Gentiles. And the ethnic-specific aspects of the law have secondary importance. Therefore, it might be thought that Matthew is closer to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 than to Tobit.

*Sibylline Oracles* 3 gives the same set of ethical and monotheistic laws, for both Jews and Gentiles. Similarly, when Matthew gives the same set of laws for both Jews and Gentiles, it is always ethical and monotheistic. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Matthew emphasizes love, compassion, care, and acceptance in practical actions for both Jews and Gentiles in the end time (Mt 25:31-46). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that the disciples should be salt and light to all the people on earth (Mt 5:13-16). Here the term “earth” (γῆς) in verse 13 includes both Jews and Gentiles.378 The disciples’ lifestyle is based on mercy, purity, righteousness, and peace even under fierce persecution (Mt 5:7-12), and their good deeds are based on the love commandment (Mt 22:37-40).379 Their good works are supposed to lead others, both Jews and

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378 This inclusion is implicit but is supported by the following term “world” (κόσμος), which is clearly universalized to include Jews and Gentiles. “World” refers to the entire creation (Mt 24:21; 25:34), or to humanity in general (Mt 4:8; 13:38; 16:26; 18:7; 26:13). See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:371; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 138.

Gentiles, to praise God (Mt 5:16. Cf. Mt 7:12). Repentance is also required for both Jews and Gentiles (11:20-24; 12:38-41). In the Parable of the Tenants (Mt 21:33-46), there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in terms of “bearing fruit,” which is the mark of true discipleship (Mt 3:8-10; 7:15-21; 12:33-37; 13:18-23).380 Therefore, when Matthew gives the same set of laws to both Jews and Gentiles, he always mentions ethical and monotheistic laws.

Matthew’s emphasis on ethical and monotheistic laws for Jews is similar to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 (Sib 3:218-264, 573-600). Loving God and neighbor (Mt 22:34-40), justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Mt 23:23) are the requirements for Jews. The command to love one’s enemies (Mt 5:43-48) and the two citations of Hosea 6:6 (“I desire mercy, not sacrifice” Mt 9:13; 12:7) are both directed at Jews and show that ethical law has primary importance. Further, repentance (Mt 3:2-12; 4:17) and bearing fruit (Mt 7:15-20; 12:33; 13:18-23) are required for Jews.

Matthew also speaks clearly about ethical and monotheistic laws for Gentiles. Justice as ethical conduct is expected of Gentiles (Mt 12:18). Further, the only requirements for several Gentile characters in Matthew seem to be that they recognize Jesus and obey the monotheistic aspects of the law. The Gentile Magi recognize the king of the Jews and worship him (Mt 2:1-12). The Gentile centurion (Mt 8:5-13) and the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:22-28) have faith in Jesus and recognize his power. The Roman centurion and the soldiers with him also recognize the identity of Jesus as the Son of God (Mt 27:54).

The ethical and monotheistic parts of the laws are also implicit as requirements for Gentiles when Jesus makes anti-Gentile statements. Jesus’ negative references to Gentiles indicate by reflection those ethical and monotheistic commands that apply to Gentiles. Jesus’ somewhat judgmental references to Gentiles show the need for the Gentiles’ enlightenment. Gentiles must love strangers and enemies (Mt 5:46-47), pray genuinely (Mt 6:7-8), and live a carefree life based on God’s provision (Mt 6:32). They also should have a generous attitude toward Jesus and his disciples (Mt 10:18, 22; 20:19, 25; 24:9). The Gadarenes were expected to recognize Jesus (Mt 8:28-34). In the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds, the criteria for escaping from eschatological judgement involve not doing evil (Mt 13:38-43). These ethical and monotheistic expectations for Gentiles are quite similar to the love commandment (Mt 22:33-44) and to Jesus’ language about the weightier matters of the law (Mt 23:23).

Therefore, like Sibylline Oracles 3, Matthew also advances the idea of the “weightier” matters of the law, characterized as ethical and monotheistic commands. Matthew’s Jesus de-emphasizes Jewish-specific laws in favour of the aspects of the law that are universal; and Jesus gives to both Jews and Gentiles the same set of laws, which are the heart of the Torah. Matthew’s treatment of the Torah aligns readily with the ethical monotheism in Sibylline Oracles 3. Thus, these similarities between Matthew and Sibylline Oracles 3 might suggest that the Gentiles can participate in the community of disciples as Gentiles, not as proselytes in the eschatological age (Mt 28:18-20).

However, Matthew differs from *Sibylline Oracles* 3 and is closer to Tobit in that he has more to say about the ethnic-specific parts of the law. Matthew deals with specific instances that are never mentioned in *Sibylline Oracles* 3, such as the Sabbath, food laws, and purity regulations. Further, Jesus mentions that Jews should respect the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees (Mt 23:2-3), and should not neglect tithing mint, dill and cumin (Mt 23:23). Matthew also indicates that Jesus himself keeps the Jewish customs. He does not enter a Gentile’s house but remains outside of it (Mt 8:8; 15:25, cf. John 18:28; Acts 10:28; m. *Ohol.* 18:7). Therefore, in Matthew there are more instances of Jewish-specific laws than in *Sibylline Oracles* 3.

But does this lead to a proselytism view? Nikiprowetzky’s argument for full proselytism in the end time is similar to that of David Sim, since the Sibyl invokes “the law” with respect to the eschatological Gentiles (Sib 3:719, 757-758). In a manner similar to Nikiprowetzky, Sim argues that in Matthew the ethnic-specific aspects of the law apply to Gentiles as well. In support of such an argument, appeal is made to Mt 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) and Mt 23:23 (“without neglecting the others”). In Sim’s view, Jesus’ commandments are linked with the law of Moses; and the reader might be expected to conclude that the Gentiles will need to adopt the whole law and become proselytes in the eschatological age (Mt 28:20).

However, despite Matthew 5:19 and 23:23, Matthew might not lead us to believe that he holds a proselytism view on eschatological Gentile believers in Jesus (Mt 28:19-20). There are four

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382 See section 4.2.2, “Matthew’s Torah in Comparison with *Sibylline Oracles* 3.”


things that we can consider. (1) When ethnic-specific laws come into view in Matthew, there is no indication that they are binding on Gentiles. Likewise, when Gentiles come into view, there is no indication that they are expected to observe these laws or that they are denounced because they do not observe them. Matthew seems to believe that full adherence to the Torah on the part of the Gentiles is of little value. For the several Gentile characters in Matthew’s Gospel—the Magi (Mt 2:1-15), the centurion (Mt 8:5-13; 27:54), the Canaanite Woman (Mt 15:21-28), etc.—Jewish-specific law is not a concern. Faith and worship seem to be the only requirements.\(^{385}\)

For example, the Gentile Magi are portrayed as recognizing the King of the Jews and worshiping Jesus by bowing down and presenting gifts (Mt 2:1-12). The Gentile centurion has faith in Jesus and recognizes the healing power that will cure his servant (Mt 8:5-13). Yet Matthew does not specify what kind of Jewish law the centurion should keep. The Canaanite woman recognizes Jesus as “Lord” and “son of God” (Mt 15:22, 25, 27), has faith in Jesus (Mt 15:28), and acknowledges his power and authority (15:22-28). Yet the text does not specify whether the Canaanite woman should keep the Jewish law when she comes to have faith (Mt 15:21-28). The Roman centurion and soldiers recognize the identity of Jesus as “the Son of God” (Mt 27:54). Therefore, recognizing, believing, and worshiping Jesus seem to be the only requirements for the Gentile characters. There is no example whatsoever of Gentile characters adhering to the Jewish-specific laws. Gentiles are not portrayed as keeping any Jewish-specific injunction such as circumcision, food laws, the Sabbath, purity regulation, festivals, etc. In this way, Matthew downplays the Jewish-specific laws for Gentiles. This approach aligns straightforwardly with

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\(^{385}\) While several Gentile characters are examples for the present time, they foreshadow eschatological Gentile participation in the community of Jesus’ disciples. They also give us information regarding the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the final commission (Mt 28:18-20).
Sibylline Oracles 3, where the Sibyl never mentions the Jewish-specific laws for Gentiles. Therefore, just like Sibylline Oracles 3, Matthew does not indicate that Gentiles should keep ethnic laws.

(2) Although ethnic-specific laws come into view in Matthew more than Sibylline Oracles 3, this does not necessarily lead us to the proselytism view, since Matthew makes a sharp distinction between the weightier commandments (which seem to be binding on Gentiles as well) and “the others.” As we have noted, the weightier matters of the law in Matthew are similar to the ethical and monotheistic commands in Sibylline Oracles 3. Ethnic laws are downplayed and thus produce a Torah hierarchy both in Matthew and Sibylline Oracles 3. This law hierarchy in Sibylline Oracles 3 effectively casts doubt on Nikiprowetzky’s view of proselytism for eschatological Gentiles. In the same way, the law hierarchy in Matthew suggests that the proselytism view is unlikely. Further, Matthew makes this hierarchy explicit, whereas in Sibylline Oracles 3 it is at best implicit. First, Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel highlights the heart of the law as loving God and neighbour (Mt 22:34-40; 15:4), which takes priority over Jewish-specific laws. Jesus sometimes breaks or criticizes Jewish-specific injunctions; thus, the ethnic commands are downplayed and relativized in certain cases (Mt 12:1-14; 15:3-6, 17-20). Second, justice, mercy, and faith are weightier than tithes (Mt 23:23). Third, two citations of Hosea 6:6 (“I desire mercy, not sacrifice” Mt 9:13; 12:7) also show that ethical law is primary. In Matthew, we find an explicit difference between the weightier and the lighter aspects of the

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386 See Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 122. While Gentiles are expected to offer sacrifices to God (Sib 3:624-629) at the Jerusalem temple (Sib 3:772-775), the Sibyl never mentions any sacrifices “that were distinctively Jewish in character” (Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 122, n. 82).

387 See chapter 4, section 4.2.2. “Matthew’s Torah in Comparison with Sibylline Oracles 3.”


law, but *Sibylline Oracles* 3 does not contain any analogous ranking. Law hierarchy in *Sibylline Oracles* 3 is at best implicit. Matthew, then, perhaps provides greater clarity than does *Sibylline Oracles* 3. It provides us more reason to believe that the proselytism view is not the case for eschatological Gentiles (Mt 28:19-20).

(3) Like *Sibylline Oracles* 3, Matthew seems simply to assume that Jews will observe the ethnic-specific laws; they are not commanded. In Matthew 23:23, observation of the weightier is expressed in terms of command (“ought”); observation of “the others” is expressed in lighter terms (without neglecting). *Sibylline Oracles* 3 assumes that Jews practice Jewish customs, and in the same manner Matthew also assumes that Jews can continue to practice ethnic-specific laws. *Sibylline Oracles* 3 presents very few accounts of Jewish customs, even for Jews. The Sibyl shows almost no interest in Jewish-specific laws. If there is still a place for the ethnic-specific aspects of the law, that place is simply the assumption that the Jews keep them. The Sibyl’s description of Jewish-specific laws is vague (*Sib* 3:272, 591-593) or absent, especially on matters like circumcision, food laws, Festivals, and the Sabbath. Like *Sibylline Oracles* 3, Matthew does not clearly exhort the Jews to keep each ethnic injunction. While Matthew has more to say about Jewish-specific regulations than *Sibylline Oracles* 3, he simply assumes that the Jews continue to observe ethnic laws such as the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-14; 24:20; 27:57-28:1), food laws (Mt 15:1-20; 23:24), and purity regulations (23:25-28). Further, in Matthew 23:23, the “weightier matters” of the law (τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου) such as justice, mercy, and faith are expressed in terms of exhortation (ἔδει), but “the other” is expressed in lighter terms (without

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neglecting, μὴ ἀφιέναι). Here Donald Hagner rightly notes, “Jesus accordingly sanctions” the ethnic-specific laws, so “if the Pharisees wish to tithe even the smallest herbs, well and good—let them.” So it appears to be permission or assumption rather than commandment.

Both Matthew and the Sibyl similarly assume that Jews can continue to be identified by ethnic-specific behaviour. This distinction between an “assumption” and an “exhortation” would be helpful with respect to the phrase “teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you” (ἐνετειλάμην, Mt 28:20). While Matthew assumes that Jews will continue with ethnic-specific observances, Jesus’ commands have to do with the weightier, ethical aspects of the law that are incumbent on both Jews and Gentiles. In the eschatological future, Jews may maintain their own ethnic lifestyle. But that lifestyle is not emphasized in Matthew or Sibylline Oracles 3.

(4) While the language of Mt 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) might seem on the surface to imply that “the others” are commanded as well, this is not borne out in the rest of the Gospel. In the antitheses of Matthew 5:21-48, the precepts of the law are radically transcended or superseded by the weightier matters of the law, which are characterized by “love.” While the validity of the law is not cancelled, Jesus’ demand breaks what the law requires. For example, the fifth antithesis about retaliation (5:38-43) shows a contrast between Jesus’ teaching and the law. The lex talionis (“an eye for an eye,” etc.) introduces limits on revenge (Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:19-21), but Jesus simply says, “Do not resist an evil person” (Mt 5:39). Snodgrass mentions, “Whereas the lex talionis is concerned with legal rights,

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393 Snodgrass, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 374. Snodgrass mentions that the point in every case of antitheses is to “go beyond a surface level to the intention of the will of God underlying the command. What is required is an integrity of being that is characterized by love, mercy, and truth” (p. 374).
Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom asks that people give up rights and legal satisfaction in favor of love and mercy.” The law of retaliation is superseded by the “weightier matters” when the disciples follow the requirements of merciful deeds (Mt 5:39-42). Thus, on the surface it seems that the “weightier matters” break or supersede the literal precepts of the Torah.

There are some other places in Matthew where the “weightier matters” seem to supersede or cancel out some of the specific injunctions. When Matthew uses “mercy” (ἐλεήμον, Mt 5:7, ἐλεος, Mt 9:13; 12:7; 23:23) and describes Jesus’ merciful ministry (ἐλεέω, 5:7; 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 18:33 [two times]; 20:30, 31), the weightier matters of the law take priority over the Jewish-specific laws, and thus Jesus breaks certain requirements of the Torah. Matthew’s attention toward loving one’s neighbor works together with his attention to mercy. An examination of how Matthew uses the word “mercy,” not only in this story as a whole but also in Jesus’ sayings and ministry, suggests that the “weightier matters” supersede or cancel out some of the specific injunctions.

In Jesus’ healing acts of mercy, Matthew frequently emphasizes the term ἐλεέω (“have mercy on”) in the petition of those who desire healing (Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30, 31). Jesus in mercy frequently breaks the Jewish ritual purity system to heal people. In healing a leper, Jesus stretches out his hand and touches him (Mt 8:3). Jesus’ touching the leper is a very surprising action. Moses’ law describes lepers as “unclean” (Lev. 13-14). Jesus does not have to touch the leper to heal him. He has power to heal by words (Mt 8:13, 8:16) or even from a distance (Mt 8:8). His touch is not a way to heal but an expression of mercy. In response to the centurion’s

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396 Hagner, Matthew 1-13, 198-99.
request, Jesus intends to go into the Gentile’s house (Mt 8:7). The centurion’s response, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof,” clearly demonstrates Jesus’ intention (Mt 8:8). Entering into a Gentile’s house causes ritual defilement, which Jews try to avoid. In healing Peter’s mother-in-law who has a fever, Jesus touches her (Mt 8:15). Jesus is also touched by a woman suffering from a hemorrhage (Mt 9:20); he also touches a corpse to raise a girl from the dead (Mt 9:25) and two blind men (Mt 9:29). This initial healing ministry shows that the “weightier matters” supersede or break some of the Jewish-specific injunctions. Jesus breaks at least some parts of the Torah when he performs his mighty acts of mercy.

Jesus twice cites Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (ἐλεος θελω και ου θυσιαν), to Pharisees who are questioning his or his disciples’ carefulness over what is lawful (Mt 9:13; 12:7). In Matthew 9:9-13, Jesus has dinner with tax collectors, sinners, and disciples who “had forsaken the covenant and were despised by most pious Jews.” Jesus’ merciful association with sinners in the table fellowship violates the ritual expectation of the Pharisees. In Matthew 12:1-8, Jesus stresses that Sabbath regulations are subordinate to human need. Breaking the Sabbath legislation is possible when mercy is required. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (Mt 12:9-14). Further, the divorce certificate in the law of Moses is cancelled out because Jesus is concerned about women’s inferior condition (Mt 19:3-9). In Matthew, there are places where the “weightier matters” of the law, which are characterized as love and mercy, seem to supersede or cancel out some of the specific injunctions of the law.

397 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:22; and Luz, Matthew 8-20, 10. Both of them offer examples: Acts 10:28; 11:12.
398 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:101.
399 Snodgrass, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 369; Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:101. Davies and Allison mention that Jesus gives “a new opportunity to the outcast” and he also cuts “the old religious moorings of the ‘righteous’” (101).
While the language of Matthew 5:19 might seem on the surface to imply that “the others” (Mt 23:23) are commanded as well, this is not borne out in the rest of the Gospel. The antitheses show that Jesus’ demands supersede the law requirements in favor of love and mercy (Mt 5:21-48). It is also important to note that Matthew’s Jesus seems to supersede or cancel out certain Jewish-specific injunctions at several points particularly in Matthew’s use of love and mercy.

In conclusion, a comparative study with *Sibylline Oracles* 3 clarifies Matthew’s view of Gentile disciples in the eschatological age, especially if we keep in mind the previous comparison between Matthew and Tobit as well. On the one hand, Matthew is closer to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 than Tobit, in that Matthew betrays a much more negative view of proselytism (Mt 23:15) than does Tobit (Tob 1:8), and in that Matthew emphasizes the weightier matters of the law, characterized as love and mercy as one set of laws presented to both Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, Matthew differs from *Sibylline Oracles* 3 and is closer to Tobit in that he has more to say about the ethnic-specific aspects of the law. One might appeal to Matthew 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) and Matthew 23:23 (“without neglecting the others”) to argue that the whole Torah is to be imposed on Gentile participants (Mt 28:18-20). Yet Matthew might not lead us to believe proselytism to be case for end-time Gentile believers. First, just like *Sibylline Oracles* 3, when Matthew deals with ethnic-specific laws, there is no indication that they are binding on Gentiles. In the same way, when Gentiles come into view, there is no indication that they are expected to keep Jewish-specific laws or that they are denounced because they do not observe them. Second, although Matthew mentions ethnic-specific laws more often than *Sibylline Oracles* 3, Matthew makes an explicit difference between the weightier commandments (which seem to be binding on Gentiles as well) and “the others.” Third, like *Sibylline Oracles* 3, Matthew seems simply to assume that Jews will observe the
ethnic-specific laws; they are not commanded. In Matthew 23:23, while weightier matters of the law are commanded as expressed in terms of exhortation (“ought’), the observation of “the others” is expressed in lighter terms (“without neglecting”). Fourth, while the language in Matthew 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) seems on the surface to imply that one must not break “the others” (Mt 23:23), this is not borne out in Matthew as a whole. In the antitheses (Mt 5:21-48) and in the accounts where mercy is emphasized, Jesus breaks certain requirements of the Torah. The “weightier matters” seem to supersede or cancel out some of the specific injunctions.

The outcomes of our comparative study have led us to conclude that proselytism is not the case for Matthew 28:18-20. Rather, Jews and Gentiles are obliged to follow ethical and monotheistic laws in the end time. The new Gentile believers participate in the community of disciples as Gentiles, not as proselytes in the eschatological age.

4.3.3 Gentiles and the Torah in Jesus’ Final Commission (Mt 28:18-20)

With the outcomes of our comparative study, we can locate Matthew somewhere in between Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3. The comparison of Matthew with Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3 gives us ample reason to see Jews and Gentiles as occupying the same status in the post-resurrection period. The comparison with Tobit is helpful for seeing that Jews and Gentiles are bound by the same set of laws (Mt 28:18-20). Yet it does not resolve the problem of whether the same set of law is comprised of (1) the whole Torah in full force or (2) ethical and monotheistic aspects of the Torah. Thus our comparison with Sibylline Oracles 3 becomes significant. This

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400 Contra Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 123-39. The reader might believe that the eschatological Gentiles are proselytes, since Jesus’ commandments are linked with the whole Mosaic law (e.g., Mt 5:17-19), but Matthew does not necessarily say that.
latter comparison gives strong reasons for thinking that Gentiles will participate in the end-time community of disciples as Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles are bound by the same set of laws, which are characterized as ethical and monotheistic.

In this concluding section, I will relate these findings to Matthew 28:18-20 and restate Matthew’s theological focus in the Great Commission. The findings of comparative study help us to locate Matthew somewhere in between Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3. Jesus’ final commission does not picture the eschatological Gentile disciples as proselytes but shows that Gentiles might be associated with the blessings of God as Gentiles by affirming the law that pertains to them. Gentile followers of Jesus are not required to keep the ethnic injunctions of the law, which in any case are less important. This fact means that Matthew wants the Gentile disciples to follow the law as it pertains to them in Jesus’ interpretation. Yet Matthew does not eliminate the distinction between the Jews and Gentiles. He assumes that it is simply appropriate for Jews to continue to be Jews; but they are not obliged or required to keep the Jewish-specific laws. The emphasis lies elsewhere. Matthew’s emphasis for both Jews and Gentiles is on the requirement to keep the universal (ethical and monotheistic) laws, not ethnic laws. Both Jews and Gentiles are obliged to practice the ethical way of life and to worship Jesus. Matthew makes a distinction between the weightier aspects of the law and the less important aspects, thus producing a hierarchy within the Torah. Christ as the Son of God and as the end-time redeemer has revealed that those ethical and monotheistic aspects (i.e., piety, justice, temperance, and the other virtues) stand above the Jewish-specific aspects, such that he interprets the Mosaic law through the commandment to love. Jesus came to fulfil the heart of the law, loving God and loving neighbors; and that heart equally applies to Jews and Gentiles.
Therefore, when Jesus sends his disciples out to teach πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Jews and Gentiles) to observe “everything that I have commanded you,” the phrase is best interpreted as referring to universal (ethical and monotheistic) laws, not Jewish-specific laws (Mt 28:20). In addition, Matthew does not draw a sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Of course, he does not eliminate the distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the end times; Matthew assumes that it is possible for Jews to continue to be Jews. But they are not explicitly commanded or obliged to practice ethnic-specific laws. We could picture the end-time community of Jesus’ disciples as one in which Jews may continue to be identified by ethnic-specific behavior, while the larger community of both Jews and Gentiles focuses on Jesus’ teaching about the weightier aspects of the law. While Matthew’s text does not explicitly mention circumcision, it is hard to paint a conclusive picture concerning the question of Gentile circumcision in the eschatological age (Mt 28:18-20). On the basis of our comparative study, we may well argue that Matthew did not think circumcision was necessary for the Gentiles.401

Rather, in the end times, both Jews and Gentiles are obliged to practice the ethical way of life and to worship Jesus; and there is only one set of laws, which are ethical and monotheistic in character. Jewish followers of Jesus may continue to be Jews, but they are not explicitly ordered or obliged to observe ethnic-specific laws. In the anticipated restoration of the community of Jesus’ disciples, the Jews may be assumed to keep the ethnic-specific laws, but the larger community of both Jews and Gentiles focuses on Jesus’ teaching about the weightier aspects of the law.

401 Davies and Allison suggest something similar. “Matthew, despite his insistence on upholding the Jewish law, never mentions circumcision. That he expected Jewish Christians to circumcise their male children is plausible; but he evidently did not think such necessary for Gentiles” (Davies and Allison, Matthew, 3:685). Konradt also similarly notes that, “Furthermore, the weight that Matthew has given to the programmatic statement about the disciples’ active missionary ministry to all nations on the basis of the universal ἐξουσία of the exalted Lord (28.18-20) makes little sense if the Matthean community simply continued the normal Jewish practice of conversion to Judaism. In short, unlike the ‘scribes and Pharisees’ in 23.15, the ecclesia does not seek proselytes but seeks, rather, to make disciples and integrate them into the ecclesia of Jesus through baptism.” Konradt, Israel, 320.
community of Jews and Gentiles would be unified by their adherence to the weightier matters of the law.
Conclusion

This project is an attempt to answer the question, “How do the commandments of Jesus that Gentile disciples are to observe (“everything that I have commanded you” Mt 28:20) relate to the law of Moses?” Matthew 28:18-20 with its reference to making disciples of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη is ambiguous in its attitude towards Gentiles and the Torah. The text can be read as implying that Gentiles will be incorporated into the people of God by affirming the Torah in full force, or that Gentiles might become associated with the blessings of God as Gentiles by affirming the law that pertains to them. Given the Jewish orientation of Matthew’s Gospel and its Jewish influence, I suggest that the various options of attitude towards the Torah and Gentiles within Second Temple Judaism provide the basic framework for understanding Matthew’s view on the law and Gentiles.

In searching for Matthew’s own view on the relationship between the Torah and Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20), we should investigate Matthew from within his Jewish milieu. The most recent major contribution to our understanding of the options within Second Temple Judaism regarding the Torah and the Gentiles is the work of Terence L. Donaldson. Donaldson classifies these options into four distinct streams within Jewish universalist thought: (1) a spectrum of sympathizers, (2) converts, (3) ethical monotheists, and (4) participants in eschatological redemption. Specifically, the fourth stream is the best for comparison with Matthew 28:18-20. In Second Temple Judaism, some Jewish texts talk about the Gentiles following God’s commandments in the eschatological age. These texts represent the place of Gentiles in the future, and the widespread expectation among Jews was that Gentiles would turn to God. In the same way, Matthew 28:18-20 has
eschatological aspects when it mentions the commandments that the Gentiles will follow as they participate in the end-time blessings of God. Therefore, comparative study is in order.

In this project I have compared Matthew’s Gospel with Jewish literature that represents a range of perspectives regarding the Gentiles’ observance of the Jewish law in the eschatological era. In chapter 2 I examined Matthew with respect to three Gentile questions concerning (1) attitudes towards Gentiles, (2) the contents and nature of the Torah, and (3) the relationship between Gentiles and the Torah in the eschatological age. After investigating Matthew’s Gentile passages, I concluded that Matthew provides material enough for several different interpretations of Matthew 28:18-20. First, Matthew seems to apply the whole Torah to both Jews and Gentiles. Second, it seems that only the weightier matters of the law (ethical and monotheistic laws [Mt 23:23]) apply equally to Jews and Gentiles. Third, it may be the case that the law applied to Jews is different from the law applied to the Gentiles. Given the ambiguity in Matthew, I argued that comparing Matthew with Jewish texts would help us to clarify the options that Matthew’s Jesus sets up for Gentile believers. How might they keep the Jewish law in the community of disciples?

In chapter 3, I investigated Jewish patterns of universalism that also struggle with the same Gentile questions. Since Matthew 28:18-20 deals with the law, Gentiles, and eschatology, I argued that we should focus on Jewish literatures that deal with the Jewish restoration eschatology of Second Temple Judaism. Most eschatological redemption texts in Judaism do not clearly describe the future status of Gentiles with respect to the Torah. In other words, it is not easy to find material that clearly envisions the future status of Gentiles either as eschatological proselytes, eschatologically righteous Gentiles, or end-time monotheists. Not all eschatological redemption literature is ambiguous, however. Some texts clearly describe the relationship
between the Gentiles and the law. One is the book of Tobit. Tobit does not mention the law per se as being observed by Gentiles (Tob 13:11-14; 14:5-7). Tobit clearly expects the Jews to continue to follow the full Torah, though the Gentiles will not in the end-time. The other eschatological redemption text is *Sibylline Oracles* 3. The Sibyl mentions the law explicitly with respect to Gentiles. She places ethical and monotheistic laws above Jewish-specific laws, thereby creating a hierarchy in the Torah. Jews and Gentiles practice the same set of laws which lie at the heart of the Torah: worshiping God, abandoning the idols, and living a moral life. It seems that the Sibyl simply assumes that Jews practice Jewish customs as well (*Sib* 3:272, 591-593).

The conclusion that I adopted laid the groundwork for the comparison of Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 in chapter 4. At the same time, the interpretations of Ronald Herms and Renate Egger-Wenzel (for Tobit) and of Valentin Nikiprowetzky (for *Sibylline Oracles* 3), which I rejected, were also helpful for carrying out the comparative study. Examining why the interpretations of those scholars are unlikely in the case of Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3 gave us insight into the case of Matthew. These negative arguments helped to verify the relationship between the Gentiles and the law in Jesus’ final commission (Mt 28:18-20).

In chapter 4, to discern Matthew’s view on the Gentiles and their relationship to the Torah, I compared Matthew with Tobit and *Sibylline Oracles* 3. In comparison with Tobit, Matthew gives strong evidence for seeing Jews and Gentiles as occupying the same status in the eschatological era. Both Jews and Gentiles are called disciples, and both are to follow Jesus’ commandments (“teach them [Gentiles] to observe everything that I have commanded you [Jewish disciples]” Mt 28:20). Both are bound by the same set of laws in the eschatological era: love (Mt 25:31-46), justice (Mt 12:18, 20. Cf. 12:41-42), accepting Jesus (Mt 12:21; 26:13), and repentance (Mt 11:20-24; 21: 34, 41, 43, cf. 3:9). Taken by itself, this fact could lead us in two different
directions regarding the status of end-time Gentiles. We could conclude either that (1) end-time Gentiles will be proselytes, or (2) a new eschatological law will pertain to both Jews and Gentiles.

A comparative study of Matthew with Tobit did not resolve the two interpretations. Both interpretations were opposed by the comparison with Tobit. On the one hand, our comparison of Matthew with Tobit did not support the view that end-time Gentiles will be proselytes. Egger-Wenzel contends that proselytism is the case for end-time Gentiles in Tobit (Tob 13:11-14; 14:6-7). Her argument is based on the fact that Tobit refers positively to proselytism (Tob 1:8) and emphasizes law observance, including Jewish-specific laws in the present time. But does Matthew indicate proselytism more positively than Tobit? Does Matthew place greater emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than does Tobit? First, Matthew places less emphasis on ethnic-specific aspects of the Torah than Tobit does. Matthew simply assumes Jewish-specific laws as part of the Jewish context, but he does not emphasize them for Jews. Second, Matthew portrays proselytism much more negatively (Mt 23:15) than does Tobit (Tob 1:8). So the comparison with Tobit does not lead us to believe proselytism to be the case for the end-time Gentile participants in the community of disciples.

On the other hand, our comparative study with Tobit also raised question against the view that there will be a new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20. Herms insists on one new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles in Tobit; however, he fails to recognize the fact that ethnic-specific laws continue to be required for Jews both in the present time and in the age to come. Does the same apply to Matthew? Does Matthew as a whole emphasize ethnic-specific laws for Jews, as does Tobit? As compared with Tobit, Matthew seems to take the ethnic-specific aspects for granted. Although Matthew does not place as much
emphasis on the ethnic laws as Tobit does, Matthew maintains Jewish-specific laws for Jews as well (Mt 23:2-3, 23) and does not eliminate the demarcation between Jews and Gentiles (Mt 8:8; 15:25). And this at least raises a question about the view that the new eschatological law applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, the comparison with Tobit does not resolve the question of whether (1) end-time Gentiles will be proselytes or (2) there will be a new eschatological law for both Jews and Gentiles in Matthew 28:18-20.

Turning to *Sibylline Oracles* 3, our comparative study helped us to resolve the tension between the two different interpretations regarding the status of Gentiles in the end time. *Sibylline Oracles* 3 presents a clear expectation that Jews and Gentiles alike should live according to the Mosaic law in the present age and in the future. For this reason, Nikiprowetzky insists on eschatological proselytism as the case for end-time Gentiles (*Sib* 3:719, 757-758). Yet he fails to recognize the distinctive view of the Mosaic law in *Sibylline Oracles* 3. That distinctive view is visible in three of the text’s features. (1) The Mosaic law is presented as a universal (ethical and monotheistic) law which applies equally to both Jews and Gentiles. The ethnic-specific laws are de-emphasized in favour of the universal laws. (2) Nothing is said about Gentiles keeping ethnic-specific laws. (3) The Sibyl seems to simply assume that Jews will continue to be identified by ethnic-specific behavior.

Granted these features in *Sibylline Oracles* 3, a comparative study with *Sibylline Oracles* 3 clarifies Matthew’s own view of the Torah and the Gentiles in the eschatological era, if we continue to keep in mind the previous comparison between Matthew and Tobit as well. One the one hand, Matthew is more similar to *Sibylline Oracles* 3 than Tobit for its emphasis on ethical monotheism law and for its negative portrayal of proselytism (Mt 23:15, cf. Tob 1:8). On the other hand, Matthew differs from *Sibylline Oracles* 3 for its frequent instances of ethnic-specific
aspects of the law. Further, Matthew 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) and Matthew 23:23 (“without neglecting the others”) might suggest a proselytism view for end-time Gentile participants (Mt 28:18-20). However, Matthew does not lead us to believe that the whole Torah should be imposed on eschatological Gentile believers in Jesus.

First, just as in Sibylline Oracles 3, there is no indication that Matthew expects Gentiles to keep ethnic-specific laws, and there is no indication that these laws are binding on Gentiles. Second, while Matthew refers to ethnic-specific laws more often than Sibylline Oracles 3, this does not lead us to the proselytism view. There is an explicit law hierarchy between the weightier commandments and “the others” (Mt 23:23), and this suggests that the proselytism view is unlikely. Ethical and monotheistic laws apply equally to both Jews and Gentiles. Third, like Sibylline Oracles 3, Matthew seems simply to assume that Jews may continue to practice the Jewish-specific laws. Yet Jesus’ commandments have to do with weightier matters of the law that bind both Jews and Gentiles. Fourth, while Matthew 5:19 (“whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments”) seems to imply that “the others” are commanded as well, this is not borne out in the rest of the Gospel. Jesus breaks or cancels out some of the specific injunctions in the antithesis (Mt 5:21-48) and in the accounts where mercy is emphasized (Mt 8:3, 15; 9:13, 20, 25, 29; 12:7; 19:3-9). Therefore, proselytism is not the case for Matthew 28:18-20. Both Jews and Gentiles are bound by ethical and monotheistic laws and the new Gentile believers in Jesus will participate in the community of disciples as Gentiles, not as proselytes in the end time.

With these outcomes from our comparative study, we can locate Matthew between Tobit and Sibylline Oracles 3. Matthew does not eliminate the distinction between the Jews and Gentiles in the end times. He also does not draw a sharp line of demarcation between Jews and Gentiles. He
simply assumes that Jews might continue to be Jews, but they are not obligated or required to keep Jewish-specific laws. The emphasis lies elsewhere. Both Jews and Gentiles are required to keep the universal (ethical and monotheistic) law; but they are not required to keep ethnic laws. Both are obligated to practice virtues and the ethical way of life, which stand above the Jewish-specific laws. When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Jews and Gentiles) to observe “everything that I have commanded you,” the phrase is best interpreted as referring to ethical monotheism law, not Jewish-specific laws (Mt 28:20).

Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel interprets the Mosaic law by the commandment to love. Loving God and loving his neighbors applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. The future restored community of Jesus’ disciples will therefore be structured in such a way that Jews may keep the ethnic-specific laws. But the larger community of Jews and Gentiles together will live in obedience to the “weightier matters” of the law of love.
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