

# **Righteous Bloodshed, Matthew's Passion Narrative, and the Temple's Destruction: Lamentations as a Matthean Intertext**

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Jesus' so-called cry of dereliction in Matt 27:46 serves as the climactic finale for a series of clear allusions to and citations of Psalm 22 in Matthew's passion narrative. This psalm's extensive presence throughout Matthew's depiction of the crucifixion often leads scholars to conclude that Matthew's use of the phrase "wagging the head" in 27:39 also derives from Psalm 22 (v. 7). Yet this same derisive idiom occurs at several other points in Jewish Scripture,<sup>1</sup> most notably in Lam 2:15, a verse that contains language remarkably similar to Matt 27:39. While many commentators note the resemblance between Matthew and Lamentations at this point,<sup>2</sup> demonstrating an allusion to Lamentations here has proven elusive.

I wish to express special thanks to Richard B. Hays and Bart D. Ehrman for their encouragement with respect to various stages of this project and their thoughtful critiques of this article. A version of this paper was presented in the Matthew section of the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Antonio, Texas, November 2004. I am appreciative of those attendees who offered encouragement and critical advice. I also want to thank J. R. Daniel Kirk and my wife, Heather, for her support and willingness to employ her editorial skills proofreading versions of this manuscript.

<sup>1</sup> See LXX 4 Kgdms 19:21; Pss 21:8; 43:14; Job 16:4; Sir 12:18; 13:7; Isa 37:22; Jer 18:16; Lam 2:15.

<sup>2</sup> For example, W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison think that an allusion to Lamentations here is "probable" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* [3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997], 3:618). Douglas J. Moo discusses the allusion but thinks that the primary background is Psalm 22. In fact, Moo argues that Psalm 22 aligns so well with the context of Lam 2:15 that Mark's and Matthew's use of the psalm probably led them to include "those who pass by" from Lam 2:15 (*The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* [Sheffield: Almond, 1983], 258).

Relatively few scholars posit any actual influence from Lamentations, and even fewer have attempted to explore the implications of such an allusion.<sup>3</sup>

In this article I will argue that Matt 27:39 does in fact allude to Lam 2:15.<sup>4</sup> I hope to show, moreover, that Matthew explicitly draws on Lamentations in his account of the events leading up to the crucifixion in order to portray Jesus' death as the primary act of righteous bloodshed by the hands of the religious authorities in Jerusalem that results in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. To see this, it will be necessary to demonstrate the way in which Matthew employs Lamentations as an important and relatively pervasive intertext<sup>5</sup> in his depiction of Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, trial, and passion (especially in chs. 23 and 27). If it can be shown that Matthew utilizes Lamentations in this way, then this observation suggests first that the textual variants in Matt 27:4 and 27:24 in which various manuscripts apply the adjective δίκαιος ("righteous") to Jesus need to be reassessed. Second, and more importantly, recognizing Matthew's use of Lamentations in passages related to and including his passion narrative calls into question the commonly held view that these portions of Matthew represent early Christian anti-Judaism and further corroborates the work of those who have

<sup>3</sup> Susan L. Graham suggests that the term "passersby" may be an allusion to Lam 2:15 that calls attention to the "wickedness of those in power [who] caused the [temple's] destruction" ("A Strange Salvation: Intertextual Allusion in Mt 27,39-44," in *The Scriptures in the Gospels* [ed. C. M. Tuckett; BETL 131; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997], 504). Michael Knowles argues more confidently for the Lamentations allusion, claiming that Matthew's use of the allusion "highlights the mocking of Jesus . . . as having ironic reference to the impending fate of the vaticid[al] Jerusalem" (*Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction* [JNTSup 68; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 204). As will become clear, I think Graham and Knowles are correct to see the allusion to Lam 2:15 here, though neither of them presents a sustained argument for the allusion or for the more extensive role Lamentations itself plays in Matthew's passion narrative.

<sup>4</sup> In making this claim I am not suggesting that an allusion to Lam 2:15 excludes the possibility of an allusion to Ps 22:7. Matthew may have skillfully crafted a double allusion. For the purposes of this article, however, I wish to make a case for the generally overlooked allusion to Lamentations.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Graham argues that the term "intertext" goes beyond the term "allusion" in that an intertextual study will note the effects of the recontextualization of an allusion. Methodologically this means that by "thinking intertextually . . . we may be able to see how Matthew appropriates a text, for which Jewish Scriptures provide an important intertext, and turns it to Christian polemical use" ("Strange Salvation," 501-2). This use of the word "intertextuality," as Ulrich Luz has recently pointed out, represents only one of the many ways it can be employed (see especially Luz's very helpful delineation of the various models of intertextual analysis in "Intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew," *HTR* 97 [2004]: 119-37). The kind of intertextual thinking Graham calls for seeks, to use Luz's terms, to identify and analyze "intertexts that are consciously invoked by an author and that are part of the rhetorical strategy of the text" and part of "a specific historical and cultural situation" (p. 122). I will here engage in this kind of descriptive, textually oriented study. Thus, by suggesting that Matthew uses Lamentations as an intertext, I mean to say that his allusions function polemically. That is, Matthew finds in Lamentations scriptural warrant for drawing clear connections between the crucifixion of Jesus, the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple.

cautioned against jumping too quickly to such an interpretation.<sup>6</sup> Rather than anti-Judaism, Matthew's appeal to Lamentations and thus also to Jeremiah to explain the link between the temple's destruction and Jesus' crucifixion is better characterized as an instance of intra-Jewish polemic deliberately modeled on the prophetic tradition in Jewish Scripture.<sup>7</sup>

## II. LAMENTATIONS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM IN 70 C.E.

If Lamentations formed a significant part of the "cultural framework" or "encyclopedia"<sup>8</sup> for the Jewish community during the time that Matthew penned

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 14, Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1988). In a later essay on the subject of Matthew and anti-Judaism, Levine states that while the "Gospel of Matthew need not be . . . read as anti-Jewish," the text's christocentric reorientation of Jewish symbols and its orientation toward both Jews and Gentiles, leads her to conclude that it represents "more than prophetic polemic" and must ultimately, in her reading, be considered "anti-Jewish" ("Anti-Judaism and the Gospel of Matthew," in *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels* [ed. William R. Farmer, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999], 36). As will become apparent, I differ with Levine on this point. In keeping with her persuasive conclusion that Matthew's polemic is aimed primarily at figures in positions of authority (see *Social and Ethnic Dimensions* and, to a lesser degree, "Anti-Judaism," 27–35), I hope to demonstrate that Matthew's constant critique of the religious leadership of his day follows directly from his understanding of prophetic polemic. Jewish prophecy provides him with a scriptural paradigm for criticizing Jewish religious leadership, particularly in the face of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Naturally this critique places him at odds with some forms of Judaism, but it seems to me to make more sense to locate the logic of this polemic within the framework of Jewish prophetic discourse than to suggest that Matthew has moved beyond the bounds of Judaism as he knows it.

<sup>7</sup> E. P. Sanders points out that the *Psalms of Solomon* provides one example of Jews criticizing other Jews, and especially Jewish religious authorities, in the Second Temple period ("Reflections on Anti-Judaism in the New Testament and in Christianity," in *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels*, 268–69). Sanders highlights *Ps. Sol.* 8:9–22 and labels the critique found there "intra-Jewish sectarian polemic" (p. 269). I would also draw attention to *Ps. Sol.* 2, which establishes links between the sins of religious leaders in Jerusalem and the temple's desecration (2:3–4) and, intriguingly, appears to echo Lamentations (compare 2:11, 19–21 with Lam 2:15 and 2:1–4 respectively). In any event, I suggest that Matthew's polemic against the religious leadership, and especially the links he makes between what he takes to be the sins of those leaders and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, makes the most sense when read as a variation on this kind of intra-Jewish polemic.

<sup>8</sup> I have taken these terms from Umberto Eco (see *A Theory of Semiotics* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979]). With the word "encyclopedia" Eco attempts to capture the kind of competent signification that occurs in the concrete day-to-day environment of a culturally constructed code of meaning (see pp. 98–100). Competent use of such a code could include, but is certainly not limited to, activities such as making an appropriate utterance in a given language and a given context. In such instances the speaker can rightfully expect others who are also competent in the code to understand the utterance precisely because the code is a cultural convention. That is,

his gospel, then the likelihood increases that Matthew—and those to whom he wrote—could have known this text well enough for meaningful allusions to the book to be recognized and understood. Since Matthew probably wrote his Gospel for Jewish Christians after the momentous events of 70 C.E.,<sup>9</sup> there is good reason to think that Lamentations would have been a prominent part of the “encyclopedia” of Matthew’s community. After the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., one would expect mourning Jews to turn to Lamentations with renewed interest. It would likely be in the religious cultural “air.”<sup>10</sup>

Two observations support this expectation. First, Josephus provides evidence that after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, people connected that event

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the meaning of the utterance is dependent on, among other things, the contextual, circumstantial, and semantic presuppositions that competent users of the code share owing to what are, in terms of statistical probability, the common experiences, events, facts, beliefs, and so on, that make up the culture in which they all participate (pp. 105–12). This “encyclopedia” model or theory of codes envisions the phenomena of signification in terms of a “cultural framework” (pp. 111–14). For example, a competent user of the English language living in America in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century can rightfully expect others in her cultural context to understand her when she speaks of “the events of September the eleventh.” This example helpfully illustrates Eco’s point, since the phrase “September the eleventh” is meaningful in the specified social setting because it occurs within a “cultural framework” shaped, in part, by the events that occurred on that day in 2001. The location or meaning of the phrase within the “encyclopedia” as it exists on September the twelfth, 2001, is radically different from what it was on September the tenth, 2001. In the latter case, the phrase most probably denoted the next day in the calendar year (though within a more localized context it could have denoted the speaker’s birthday, dental appointment, etc.). After September 11, 2001, the place of the phrase “September the eleventh” (or even simply 9/11) in the “cultural framework” shifts such that it takes on all manner of associations with such previously unrelated things as airplanes, terrorism, New York City, the World Trade Center, fear, loss, xenophobia, and so on. The term “encyclopedia,” then, nicely captures what, in terms of statistical probability, a competent individual in a given culture at a given time might be expected to know and thus also to mean when utilizing the code of her social location.

<sup>9</sup> See Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:127–33.

<sup>10</sup> Eco provides a helpful thought experiment that illustrates how this might work (*Theory of Semiotics*, 124–26). He describes a box of magnetically charged marbles, where the box represents the “Global Semantic Universe” (or “encyclopedia”), each marble represents a meaningful unit, and the charges represent the ordered relationships (or “cultural framework”) pertaining among the units. If the box were to be shaken, the relative positions of the marbles would be altered more or less dramatically depending on the force with which the box is shaken. I suggest that Lamentations and the temple are two of the “marbles” that one can rightly expect to have been present within the “box” that existed for most Jews in Matthew’s time (and perhaps for almost any Jew living at any point after Lamentations was penned). These two marbles were likely to have already been strongly attracted to each other and so probably lay relatively close to each other within the imagined box. I suggest that the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. is exactly the kind of event that would have shaken the box in such a way that these marbles would be brought into the closest semantic proximity (along with a good many others—e.g., Rome, Titus, and so on—that were, prior to that point, much “farther away”).

with the writings of Jeremiah. In his *Jewish Antiquities* (10.79), Josephus writes of Jeremiah,

οὗτος ὁ προφήτης καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα τῇ πόλει δεινὰ προεκήρυξεν, ἐν γράμμασι καταλιπὼν καὶ τὴν νῦν ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενομένην ἄλωσιν τὴν τε Βαβυλῶνος αἴρεσιν.

This prophet also publicly proclaimed the sufferings to come to the city [Jerusalem], by leaving behind in writings both the capture [of Jerusalem] that has come about in our time, and the taking [of it] by Babylon. (My translation)

Josephus probably refers here to the book of Lamentations.<sup>11</sup> Yet even if his reference looks more generally to the corpus of Jeremiah, this comment clearly establishes that links were being made between Jeremiah/the first destruction of Jerusalem and the second destruction in 70 C.E.

Second, while dating traditions found in post-70 C.E. Jewish literature (e.g., the Targumim, Talmud) is difficult, it is worth noting that in this literature Lamentations is often connected with both the first and second destructions of Jerusalem. The Targum for Lamentations, for example, identifies clear parallels between Lamentations and the Romans' sack of Jerusalem. In the Targum for Lamentations 1:19 one finds explicit links between the first destruction of Jerusalem and the second.<sup>12</sup> The pertinent section of the verse reads:

When she was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem said, "I called to my friends among the nations, those with whom I had established treaties, to support me. But they deceived me, and turned to destroy me" These are the Romans who came up with Titus and Vespasian the wicked, and erected siege works against Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup>

As with Josephus, the Targum is illustrative of an interpretive move that juxtaposes the first and second destructions of Jerusalem. Additionally, the Targum clearly utilizes Lamentations to facilitate this connection.

Passages such as these exemplify the kinds of readings of Lamentations one would expect after the events of 70 C.E., and while these sources do not allow for a conclusive judgment regarding how early the association was made, it seems reasonable to assume that such a correlation would have arisen during the immediate aftermath of the Romans' razing of Jerusalem. Indeed, it seems likely that neither

<sup>11</sup> In the immediate context Josephus has just spoken of the lament Jeremiah composed concerning the death of Josiah. According to Ralph Marcus, the translator of *Ant* 10 in the Loeb series, this lament is commonly associated with the book of Lamentations (see notes *b* and *c* in *Ant* 10 78–79).

<sup>12</sup> Similar connections between Lamentations/Jeremiah, the first destruction of Jerusalem and the second may be found in *Lam Rab* 39 1 2–4 and *Pesiq Rab* 29.

<sup>13</sup> Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York: Hermon Press, 1976), 65.

Josephus nor the Targum makes original linkages at this point. Rather, both probably reflect a connection made by Jews struggling to understand the fall of Jerusalem relatively shortly after its devastation. In both cases Lamentations provides Jews reflecting on Jerusalem's demise with a scriptural resource for a theological interpretation of these momentous events.

## II. LAMENTATIONS IN MATTHEW'S TEXTUAL UNIVERSE

Having briefly considered the plausibility that Lamentations could have been a significant part of Matthew's cultural encyclopedia, I will now turn to the heart of this project—showing that Lamentations forms a significant part of Matthew's textual "universe."<sup>14</sup>

First, I note that, of all the Synoptics, only Matthew refers to Jeremiah by name.<sup>15</sup> As Michael Knowles has pointed out, this suggests *prima facie* the importance of Jeremiah for Matthew, particularly when one considers that his references to the prophet are unique to his redaction of the Jesus traditions.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, in his book *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction*, Knowles makes a compelling case that one of the many figures Matthew patterns his narrative on is Jeremiah.<sup>17</sup>

The observation that Matthew partially patterns his Gospel on Jeremiah does not by itself prove that he also alludes to Lamentations or uses the book intertextually. Yet the fact that Lamentations was assumed during the Second Temple

<sup>14</sup> Stefan Alkier, developing a concept he finds in the work of C. S. Pierce, describes the "syntagmatics, semantics and pragmatics of a given text as a world for itself, a possible world" ("From Text to Intertext—Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew," *HvTSt* 61 [2005]: 3). He labels this possible world the text's "universe of discourse" (*ibid.*). To speak of Matthew's "textual universe," then, is to make reference to the knowledge of Matthew that one has primarily from a text-internal analysis. The reader of Matthew, for example, can be expected to know, or at least strongly anticipate—even before coming to ch. 28—that Jesus will rise from the dead, because Jesus' resurrection has been predicted at several earlier points in the text (see 16:21; 17:9, 22; 20:18; 26:32). That is, within the universe of Matthew, the reader learns of Jesus' resurrection well before the event occurs in the narrated world of the text.

<sup>15</sup> In fact, Matthew is the only book in the NT to mention Jeremiah by name; see Matt 2:17; 16:14; and 27:9.

<sup>16</sup> In the first chapter of his book, Knowles argues persuasively that these three references to Jeremiah betray a "unitary redactional purpose" (*Jeremiah*, 95).

<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, Knowles discusses several allusions to Lamentations (especially in Matt 27:34 and 27:39). Although his arguments are brief and primarily redaction-critical, his conclusions in favor of the presence of allusions to Lamentations in Matthew 27 agree with my own. Lamentations, though, is only a subpoint to his larger concern—showing that Matthew patterns Jesus' life on Jeremiah in order to portray his death as yet another example of Jerusalem killing the prophets and therefore falling under judgment.

period to be one of several works written by Jeremiah,<sup>18</sup> coupled with Matthew's explicit use of the Jeremian motif, further increases the likelihood that he knew and could have utilized Lamentations in his Gospel.

### III. LAMENTATIONS AS AN INTERTEXT IN MATTHEW: MATTHEW 23 AND 27

With these points in mind, I will now examine some specific texts in Matthew in order to demonstrate that Matthew both alludes specifically to Lamentations and employs the book intertextually in order to establish biblically his conviction that Jesus' crucifixion led to the temple's destruction.

One of Matthew's clearest allusions to Lamentations occurs at the end of his account of Jesus' pronouncement of woes on the religious authorities of Jerusalem in ch. 23. Matthew 23:35 reads:

ὅπως ἔλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πᾶν αἷμα δίκαιον ἐκχυννόμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος Ἀβελ τοῦ δικαίου ἕως τοῦ αἵματος Ζαχαρίου υἱοῦ Βαραχίου ὃν ἐφονεύσατε μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου.

So that all the righteous blood that has been shed upon the land may come upon you from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. (My translation)

The comment πᾶν αἷμα δίκαιον ἐκχυννόμενον ("all the righteous blood that has been shed") is particularly interesting for the purposes of this article. The exact phrase αἷμα δίκαιον occurs three times in the LXX: Joel 4:19; Jonah 1:14; and Lam 4:13. Curiously, the marginal cross reference list for this phrase in the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* fails to note Lam 4:13 as a possible allusion.<sup>19</sup> This is a striking oversight in light of the fact that not only do Matt 23:35 and Lam 4:13 share exact lexical and formal correspondence (i.e., the phrase αἷμα δίκαιον), but both texts also collocate αἷμα δίκαιον with a form of the verb ἐκχέω/ἐκχύννω. Of the three LXX texts I have noted, only Joel 4:19 and Lam 4:13 contain this collocation.<sup>20</sup> If, however, Matthew alludes to the Jewish Scriptures at all in 23:35, one would hope to find more than lexical and formal correspondence with the suspected source of the allusion. Interestingly, of these two passages, Lam 4:13 also shares themes that align closely with the context of chs. 23–24 of Matthew.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., the LXX's explicit identification of Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations, an identification not found in our extant Hebrew manuscripts of Lam 1:1.

<sup>19</sup> All of the prior editions also fail to make any mention in the marginal notes of the similarity between Lam 4:13 and Matt 23:35.

<sup>20</sup> Though see also Prov 6:17, which contains the very similar phrase ἐκχέουσαι αἷμα δίκαιον.

Lamentations 4:13 addresses one of the main issues that the book is so concerned to deal with—the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The answer offered in 4:13 is:

ἐξ ἁμαρτιῶν προφητῶν αὐτῆς ἀδικιῶν ἱερέων αὐτῆς τῶν ἐκχεόντων αἷμα  
δίκαιον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς

because of the sins of her prophets and her unrighteous priests, those who shed  
righteous blood in her midst. (My translation)

By placing the phrase τῶν ἐκχεόντων αἷμα δίκαιον (“those who shed righteous blood”) in apposition to ἀδικιῶν ἱερέων αὐτῆς (“her unrighteous priests”), the Greek translation of Lamentations singles out the act of shedding righteous blood, particularly on the part of the religious leadership, as one of the primary reasons that judgment fell upon Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

In Matt 23:1–24:2 Jesus, while in the temple, pronounces a series of woes upon the religious leaders in Jerusalem that culminate in his declaration that all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zechariah would come upon that generation. That this pronouncement of judgment has the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple behind it becomes clear when Jesus (who, in the context of Matthew, is Immanuel/“God with us”; see 1:23) “laments” over Jerusalem in 23:37, claims that the temple will be left desolate in 23:38, and then embodies the departure of the Shekinah from “that house” by walking out of the temple in 24:1.<sup>21</sup> The import of this episode is immediately explained in 24:2—the temple, and by implication the city in which it sits, will be destroyed.

There are, then, three themes in this context that align remarkably well with Lam 4:13: the condemnation of the religious leadership of Jerusalem, the accusation that the religious authorities have shed righteous blood, and the connection between the shedding of that blood and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This means that Matt 23:35 and Lam 4:13 share not only lexical and formal agreement but also thematic agreement.

Yet, beyond the thematic and lexical similarities, a third factor points to an allusion to Lam 4:13 in Matt 23:35. Specifically, Jewish interpretive traditions of Lamentations also link the story of the murder of Zechariah with the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

For example, *Lamentations Rabbah* makes this association at various places throughout the book of Lamentations. Intriguingly, one of the passages where Zechariah receives special mention is Lam 4:13. At one point (see *Lam. Rab.* 113.i.1–2) the comments on 4:13 center on where in the temple Zechariah was killed. It is important to point out that *Lamentations Rabbah* consistently identifies this Zechariah with Zechariah son of Jehoiada, whose stoning in the temple is

<sup>21</sup> So David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (JSNTSup 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 153.



related in 2 Chr 24:21. At first glance this would seem to be a different individual from the Zechariah mentioned in Matt 23:35, since Matthew identifies him as the υιοῦ Βαραχίου, "son of Barachiah" (an apparent reference to the postexilic prophet of the book of Zechariah, who is identified in the LXX of Zech 1:1 as τὸν τοῦ Βαραχίου υἱόν, "the son of Barachiah"). Additionally, while *Lamentations Rabbah* does at times mention the destruction of both the first and second temples (e.g., *Lam. Rab.* 39.i.2–4), the account of Zechariah's death is always associated with Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the first temple. Thus, *Lamentations Rabbah* appears to refer to a different Zechariah from the one mentioned in Matthew.

Nevertheless, the confusion evident in Jewish traditions surrounding the identity of the Zechariah who was stoned in the temple is well known,<sup>22</sup> and other interpretations of Lamentations that mention Zechariah's death appear to make the same identification of Zechariah as the postexilic prophet that Matthew does. For instance, at one point in the Targum of Lamentations the speaker challenges YHWH to consider whether it is right for him to bring such suffering on his people as has been brought upon them during the siege and sack of Jerusalem (see *Tg. Lam.* 2:20). YHWH's "Attribute of Justice" replies, "Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of YHWH, as you killed Zechariah son of Iddo (זכריה בר עדוה), the High Priest and faithful prophet, in the temple of YHWH on the Day of Atonement, because he reproached you, that you refrain from evil before YHWH?"<sup>23</sup>

The name זכריה בר עדוה is clearly the Aramaic for the postexilic prophet named זכריה בן-עדו (Zech. 1:1). But Zech 1:1 describes this prophet as both the son of Berechiah and the son of Iddo. The Targum of Lamentations, then, apparently identifies Zechariah as the postexilic prophet just as Matthew does.

Based on the way the Targum conflates the first and second destructions of the Jerusalem temple (*Tg. Lam.* 1:19), it likely refers here to the destruction of the second temple, since Zechariah son of Iddo was a postexilic prophet. If this is the case, then both Matthew and the Targum of Lamentations connect the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. with the death of the same Zechariah, the postexilic prophet.

Yet, regardless of whether the Targum has 586 B.C.E. or 70 C.E. in mind, the main point of interest is that its interpretive tradition exemplifies the same connections between the death of a Zechariah, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the book of Lamentations that are also evident in *Lamentations Rabbah*. Although dating the traditions in this literature is difficult, it seems likely that these links go back at least to the first century C.E., since the connection

<sup>22</sup> Davies and Allison point out that Zechariah the priest (2 Chronicles 24) and Zechariah the prophet (Zech 1:1) tend to be conflated in Jewish tradition (*Matthew*, 3:318–19).

<sup>23</sup> Levine, *Aramaic Version*, 68.

between the motifs of Zechariah's death and the destruction of the temple also finds attestation in the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover, it seems unlikely that the linkages made in the Targum of Lamentations and in *Lamentations Rabbah* stem from a dependence on the Gospel of Matthew. It is more probable that the Targum, *Lamentations Rabbah*, and Matthew give incidental witness to a tradition of Jewish exegetical commentary that linked Lamentations, the story of Zechariah's death, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple prior to and independently of all of them.

If this is the case, then the combination in Matt 23:35–24:2 of the mention of Zechariah's death; the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; and the lexical, formal, and thematic links with Lamentations make it virtually certain that Matthew is actually alluding to Lam 4:13 in 23:35.

This is significant, given that in the context of chs. 23–24 of Matthew, the allusion to Lamentations serves to provide scriptural warrant and general justification for the predicted judgment—namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple—that will come upon the religious authorities of Jerusalem whom Jesus addresses. Yet, as Matthew's story develops (especially in ch. 27), he clearly uses Lam 4:13 as an intertext to further this broader agenda. He employs the themes introduced by the Lamentations allusion in 23:35 to frame the crucifixion of Jesus so as to present this moment as the act of righteous bloodshed par excellence.

At three key points in ch. 27, Matthew clearly uses language reminiscent of 23:35 and the allusion to Lam 4:13. In this way, Matthew employs the themes and warnings evoked by the Lamentations allusion to portray Jesus as a righteous individual whose death, by implication, will bring judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple.

The first of these points occurs in Matt 27:19 when Pilate's wife urges him to have nothing to do with τῷ δίκαιῳ ἐκεῖνῳ ("that righteous man"). Here Jesus is explicitly described with the same terms used to describe Abel and the blood that was shed in 23:35—δίκαιος ("righteous"). Through his account of Pilate's wife's dream, Matthew informs his readers that Pilate's wife saw more than those calling for Jesus' crucifixion—shedding the blood of this righteous man will have disastrous consequences.

The second point in ch. 27 that echoes 23:35 occurs during Pilate's show of washing his hands in order to distance himself from the act of crucifying Jesus. Here Pilate claims, ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου ("I am innocent of the blood of this man" [27:24]). Again the idea of Jesus' blood, particularly in a context where Jesus has been described as "righteous," effectively brings 23:35 back to the reader's mind.

The third point in ch. 27 that looks back to 23:35 is found in the people's response to Pilate in 27:25. While Pilate claims no responsibility for Jesus' death, Matthew comments that all the people replied, τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν ("his blood be upon us and upon our children"). The language

of "blood" coming "upon" those who are in Jerusalem seems to echo plainly the language of Matt 23:35. The reader who has already perceived the resonance of 23:35–24:2 earlier in ch. 27 cannot fail to see the point here—Jesus' death is the kind of act that Lamentations suggests brings God's judgment against Jerusalem and its temple. Thus, the statement of Matt 27:25 brings to a climax a motif that has run right through this chapter<sup>24</sup>—Jesus' death is an act of shedding righteous blood. With the background of Lamentations in mind, it is clear that this act will result in the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple. The point is driven home when, in what in this context must prefigure the coming judgment, the temple veil is ripped in two when Jesus dies (Matt 27:51).<sup>25</sup>

By portraying Jesus as a righteous man in ch. 27, Matthew recalls the themes of 23:35–24:2. In this way he further employs his earlier allusion to Lamentations in 23:35 to suggest that the shedding of Jesus' blood at the crucifixion becomes the primary reason for the temple's destruction. It is within this framework that Matthew's account of the crucifixion occurs. With this in mind, I propose that Matthew introduces two more allusions to Lamentations during his passion account—one in 27:34 and another in 27:39.

The common understanding of Matt 27:34 takes the comment that the soldiers offer Jesus gall to drink as an allusion to Ps 69:22 (LXX 68:22). Joel Marcus provides a good example of the way the case is argued when he speaks of Matthew "embellishing" Mark's account.<sup>26</sup> Here, for instance, Matthew shows his awareness of the broader context of Psalm 69 by "doubling" the allusion to the psalm introduced in Mark's passion narrative in 15:36.<sup>27</sup> In other words, Matthew understands that Mark's comment that Jesus is offered vinegar to drink (Mark 15:36) alludes to Ps 69:22. This leads him to flesh out Mark's reading by changing the Marcan wine mixed with myrrh (Mark 15:23) to wine mixed with gall (Matt

<sup>24</sup> Following Donald Senior, David Garland suggests that "innocent blood" is the theme of ch. 27 (*Intention*, 185). The only point at which I would quibble with this assessment is the deference shown to the form of the text found in NA<sup>27</sup> by favoring ἄθωος ("innocent") over δίκαιος ("righteous"). I believe it would be more accurate to speak of the chapter's theme as that of "righteous blood."

<sup>25</sup> Raymond E. Brown also links the rending of the veil with the judgment pronounced in Matt 23:37–38, though he does not draw attention to the Lamentations allusion in Matt 23:35 (*The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave; A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* [2 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994], 2:1102).

<sup>26</sup> Joel Marcus, "The Old Testament and the Death of Jesus: The Role of Scripture in the Gospel Passion Narratives," in *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (by John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, with Robert E. Van Voorst, Joel Marcus, and Donald Senior; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 226. Similarly, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:612–13; and, Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 569.

<sup>27</sup> Marcus, "Death of Jesus," 226–27.

27:34). Matthew thereby adds yet another allusion to Ps 69:22 to his passion narrative.

This is a compelling argument, particularly in light of the fact that Matthew makes similar embellishments of Mark's citations of Psalm 22. For example, the words of the onlookers in Matt 27:43, "he trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him" (RSV), are not found in Mark and are clearly an additional Matthean citation from Psalm 22. Thus, Matthew undoubtedly does at times embellish Mark's account by adding additional scriptural citations from passages Mark cites.

Yet good reasons may be adduced for concluding that Matthew does not here primarily bring Mark's account more closely in line with Psalm 69, but rather further alludes to Lamentations. First, while Ps 68:22 LXX does use the word *χολή*, or "gall," it is interesting that this same word occurs twice in Lamentations (3:15, 19). Second, it is perhaps noteworthy that the form of *χολή*, in Lam 3:15 and 19 is the same as the form in Matthew (i.e., genitive singular). Psalm 68:22, on the other hand, uses the accusative singular form. Matthew may well have composed his text in such a way that, from a visual and auditory perspective, the very form of the word used in 27:34 would resonate with those who knew the Greek translation of Lamentations well. Third, although such arguments would do little by themselves to establish an allusion, the fact that Lamentations has played such a significant role in the context of Matthew just prior to his passion account suggests that this lexical and formal correspondence is indicative of another allusion to Lamentations.<sup>28</sup> Fourth, the case for this allusion grows stronger in light of the fact that there appears to be yet another allusion to Lamentations just four verses later in 27:39.

In the introduction to this article I drew attention to the scholarly consensus that Matt 27:39 alludes to Ps 22:7. The general arguments in favor of this conclusion are (1) there are three other very clear references to Psalm 22 in Matthew's

<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the fact that Matthew may have already alluded to ch. 3 of Lamentations earlier in his Gospel should be considered. Lamentations 3:30 reads: *δώσει τῷ παίοντι αὐτὸν σιαγόνα χορτασθήσεται ὀνειδισμῶν* ("he will give the cheek to the one who strikes him, he will be sated with insults"). Matthew 5:39 advances a similar idea when Jesus exhorts: *ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει εἰς τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα [σου], στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην* ("[if] anyone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him also the other"). Davies and Allison point out that the parallel between these two texts was noted at least as early as Origen (*Matthew*, 1:543). If this is an allusion to Lam 3:30, then it strengthens the case for an allusion to 3:30 at Matt 27:34 in two ways. First, it shows that Matthew is aware of at least part of Lamentations 3 and, particularly in light of his knowledge of Lam 4:13, it is safe to conclude that he knows more of the chapter. Second, as with Lam 4:13, Lam 3:30 may be echoed again later in Matthew when Jesus stands before the Sanhedrin. Matthew's description of Jesus being hit, especially in the face (26:67–68), is highly evocative of Matt 5:39 and thus also of Lam 3:30 (interestingly, both Lam 3:30 and Matt 26:68 use a form of the verb *παίω*). If Lam 3:30 is echoed here, then there is yet another instance of Lamentations playing a role in the context immediately prior to the passion account.

passion narrative (Matt 27:35, 43, 46), and (2) Ps 22:7 contains the derisive idiom *κινεῖν κεφαλὴν* ("to wag the head"). Several factors, however, suggest that Matthew alludes primarily to Lam 2:15 in v. 39, rather than to Ps 22:7 (21:8 LXX).

First, Matt 27:39 has more verbal overlap with Lam 2:15 than with Ps 22:7. In the following comparison, exact agreements between Matthew and Lamentations are underlined in both texts. Similarities between Matthew and Lamentations are italicized. Exact agreement between Lamentations and LXX Psalm 21 are italicized and underlined.

*Matthew 27:39**Lamentations 2:15**Psalm 21:8*

οἱ δὲ  
παραπορευόμενοι  
ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτὸν  
*κινούντες τὰς κεφαλὰς*  
αὐτῶν

ἐκρότησαν ἐπὶ σὲ  
*χεῖρας πάντες οἱ παρα-*  
*πορευόμενοι ὁδόν*  
ἐσύρισαν καὶ  
*ἐκίνησαν* τὴν *κεφαλὴν*  
*αὐτῶν* ἐπὶ τὴν θυγα-  
τέρα Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἥ  
αὕτη ἡ πόλις ἦν ἐροῦσιν  
στέφανος δόξης εὐφρο-  
σύνη πάσης τῆς γῆς

*πάντες οἱ* θεωροῦντές  
με ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με  
ἐλάλησαν ἐν χεῖλεσιν  
*ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν*

By placing these passages side by side, one can see clearly that Matt 27:39 has far more in common with Lam 2:15 lexically and formally than with Ps 21:8 LXX. Specifically, both use the plural participle οἱ παραπορευόμενοι ("those who pass by"), as well as a form of the idiom *κινεῖν κεφαλὴν* ("to wag the head"), where *κεφαλὴ* ("head") is modified by both the article and the plural pronoun αὐτῶν ("their").<sup>29</sup>

Second, beyond mere verbal agreement, the contexts of Matt 27:39 and Lam 2:15 share a theme that is not found in Psalm 22—the destruction of the temple. The book of Lamentations tends to speak generally about the destruction of Jerusalem. There are, however, a handful of places that specifically address the temple's desolation. Lamentations 2 contains two such passages (cf. Lam 2:7, 20). For example, 2:7 reads:

ἀπόσωτο κύριος θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ ἀπετίναξεν ἀγίασμα αὐτοῦ συνέτρι-  
ψεν ἐν χειρὶ ἐχθροῦ τείχος βάρεων αὐτῆς φωνὴν ἔδωκαν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου ὡς  
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐορτῆς.

<sup>29</sup> The verbal agreement between Lam 2:15 and Ps 21:8 LXX (note *ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν*) may suggest that Lamentations may allude to Psalm 22 (the Hebrew is also nearly identical). Thus, if there is any cross-pollination between Matt 27:35 and Ps 22:7, it may well be present via an allusion to Psalm 22 on the part of Lam 2:15.

The Lord rejected his altar, he cast off his sanctuary, he shattered the wall of her palaces by the hand of an enemy, they made a sound in the house of the Lord as on a festival day. (My translation)

In short, while 2:15 speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem in general, the temple's demise is clearly in the immediate context.

Additionally, the comments spoken in Matt 27:40 by "those who pass by" and "wag their heads" do not derive from Psalm 22. This is somewhat strange, since Ps 22:7–8 appears to provide a ready-made unit that would fit the context of Matt 27:39–40 perfectly. Those who are mocking, hurling insults, and "wagging their heads" in Ps 22:7 are the very ones who immediately go on in 22:8 to say, "he trusted in God, let God now rescue him if he desires him." Matthew clearly does quote Ps 22:8, but this citation comes three verses later in Matt 27:43, where he places the words of Ps 22:8 in the mouths of the chief priests, scribes, and elders. If Matthew alludes to Psalm 22 in 27:39, it is odd that he de-couples this allusion from his obvious quotation of Ps 22:8. It would seem more natural to have those who "pass by" and "wag their heads" in 27:39 say in v. 40 exactly what those who "wag their heads" in Ps 22:7 say in 22:8.

On the other hand, what the "passersby" do say in Matt 27:40 picks up the very theme present in the context of Lam 2:15—the destruction of the temple. Those who pass by and wag their heads at Jesus state:

ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτὸν, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ [καὶ] κατὰβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ.

The one who destroys the temple and in three days rebuilds [it], save yourself, if you are the son of God, and come down from the cross. (My translation)

This comment, which shares nothing with Psalm 22, coheres perfectly with the context of Lam 2:15.

Finally, one should consider that the theme of the temple's destruction fits together well both with the role the allusion to Lam 4:13 played in Matt 23:35–24:2 and with the Matthean context immediately prior to the account of Jesus' crucifixion. Earlier I argued that Matthew uses the theme of righteous bloodshed, and especially the shedding of Jesus' blood, to link the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with the crucifixion of Jesus. Here the allusion to Lam 2:15 reinforces the same point. Unbeknownst to "those who pass by" and "wag their heads" at Jesus, his death, from Matthew's point of view, will lead to the temple's destruction.

When the texts are taken together, the overlap of language between Matt 27:39 and Lam 2:15, the shared theme of the temple's destruction in the contexts of these verses, and the role Lamentations plays in Matthew just prior to his passion narrative establish the presence of an allusion to Lam 2:15 in Matt 27:39.

## IV. REEXAMINING THE TEXTS OF MATTHEW 27:4 AND 27:24

Thus far I have been laying out a case that Matthew anticipates (see 23:35–24:2) and frames his account of Jesus' passion (27:19, 34, and 39) with allusions to Lamentations in order to make the point that Jesus' death at the instigation of the religious establishment stands as the act of righteous bloodshed that becomes the cause of the disastrous events of 70 C.E.

If this case is generally sound, then the presence of variants in the manuscript tradition that use language amenable to the overall argument Matthew has constructed is tantalizing. Indeed, a reference to αἷμα δίκαιον ("righteous blood") at the very beginning of the passion account would serve Matthew's polemic perfectly, since it would effectively recall to his readers' minds the ominous predictions that were made in chs. 23–24, predictions mediated through the connection in Lamentations of righteous bloodshed by the religious leadership with God's judgment on Jerusalem and the temple.

I have previously highlighted the fact that δίκαιος language indisputably appears in this portion of Matthew's narrative (see 27:19). This observation, particularly when taken together with the presence of other allusions to Lamentations throughout his passion account and the echo of 23:35 in the language of 27:24–25, suggests that Matthew effectively reminds his readers of the earlier allusion to Lamentations and encourages them to connect that allusion with the death of Jesus. It would not, then, be surprising to find him explicitly again using language that would connect the passion narrative with Matt 23:35–24:2 and thus with Lamentations. In fact, the manuscript tradition contains two more instances in Matthew 27—v. 4 and v. 24—where language highly evocative of Matt 23:35 occurs.

In Matt 27:4 the NA<sup>27</sup> and UBS<sup>4</sup> texts have Judas state, ἥμαρτον παραδούς αἷμα ἄθῳον ("I have sinned by handing over innocent blood"). There is an interesting variant, however, in which Judas says, ἥμαρτον παραδούς αἷμα δίκαιον ("I have sinned by handing over righteous blood"). Explaining the choice of the UBS<sup>4</sup> committee to favor ἄθῳον over δίκαιον, Bruce Metzger comments, "[T]he weight of the external evidence here is strongly in support of ἄθῳον."<sup>30</sup> He goes on to add that on transcriptional terms a scribe would be more likely to make a change in the direction of harmonizing Matt 27:4 with 23:35 and thus change ἄθῳον to δίκαιον, rather than shift away from δίκαιον to ἄθῳον.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 55.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; so also Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33b; Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 811.

Metzger is correct that the bulk of the external evidence supports the UBS<sup>4</sup> reading. In fact, the only majuscules that support the presence of δίκαιον are the first corrector of B, L, and Θ. These are joined by five of six quotations by Origen,<sup>32</sup> the Latin versions, several Latin fathers<sup>33</sup> and a handful of other versions all of whose renderings suggest that the Greek *Vorlage* on which their translations were based read αἷμα δίκαιον. On the other hand, numerous majuscules (e.g., Ⲑ, A, B, C, W, Δ, E, F, G, H, and Σ), minuscules, versions, and Greek fathers<sup>34</sup> attest ἄθωον. In short, while δίκαιον seems clearly to have prevailed in the Latin tradition, ἄθωον has much broader and stronger support in terms of numbers of manuscripts and of geographic distribution.

Yet in spite of this external evidence, good reasons can be adduced in support of reading δίκαιον instead of ἄθωον at Matt 27:4. First, Origen's *Contra Celsum* provides the earliest external attestation, and it is clear that, in this text at least, Origen knows αἷμα δίκαιον in Matt 27:4.<sup>35</sup> This places the reading in Palestine not later than the middle of the third century. When coupled with the attestation of the Latin witnesses, the reading is shown to carry some significant support both in terms of age and geographic distribution.

Second, it should be noted that Matthew uses δίκαιος with relative fre-

<sup>32</sup> I found six instances where Origen clearly quotes or alludes to Matt 27:4. The verse is referenced twice in *Contra Celsum*, and the quotations support αἷμα δίκαιον both times (see Marcel Borret, *Origène Contre Celse* [SC 132; Paris: Latour-Maubourg, 1967], 312). The Latin version of Origen's commentary on Matthew contains four quotations of the verse. Three of these are attested only in Latin and read *iustum* (thereby supporting δίκαιον), while the fourth is found in both the Latin translation and in a Greek fragment. This latter quotation is particularly interesting, since the Latin translation reads *iustum*, while the corresponding Greek fragment reads αἷμα ἄθωον (see Erich Klostermann, *Origenes Matthäusevangelium: II, Die lateinische Übersetzung der Commentariorum Series* [Origenes Werke 11; GCS 38; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933], 247). Given that lemmata are frequently subject to scribal alteration, the discrepancy between the Latin and the Greek is almost certainly indicative of a shift toward a known and preferred reading of the scriptural text in the transmission history of Origen's commentary. It would be difficult to say with certainty whether the shift occurred in the Latin or the Greek version of the commentary. Yet, given the total dominance of the δίκαιον variant (in the form of *iustum*) in the Latin tradition (see n. 34 below for more information), one would be justified in being more suspicious of the Latin translation here than of the Greek fragment.

<sup>33</sup> The Latin fathers who clearly quote or allude to Matt 27:4 (see Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, Novatian, Hilary of Poitiers, and Jerome) along with the Latin versions unanimously read *sanguinem iustum*. This suggests that the Latin tradition is based on a *Vorlage* that read δίκαιον rather than ἄθωον.

<sup>34</sup> The UBS<sup>4</sup> apparatus lists Origen 1/4, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Hesychius, and Maximus. I was unable to find any reference to the verse in Hesychius, but I have personally confirmed the presence of ἄθωος in the other fathers listed in the UBS<sup>4</sup> apparatus (the four references in Origen, however, should be modified to six, where δίκαιος is attested twice in Greek and four times in Latin with the corresponding Greek fragment of one of the Latin citations reading ἄθωον—see n. 33 above).

<sup>35</sup> See n. 33 above.



quency.<sup>36</sup> Excluding 27:4, ἄθῳς only occurs once in Matthew (27:24). Matthew, then, is more likely to have used δίκαιος than ἄθῳς.

Third, when one stops to consider what a scribe might have been likely to do, it is surely significant that the collocation of a form of αἷμα and a form of ἄθῳς is more common biblical language than the collocation of αἷμα and δίκαιος. Both phrases occur in the LXX, but the former collocation outnumbers the latter by more than five to one.<sup>37</sup> Given the relatively low number of occurrences of αἷμα together with δίκαιος, it seems more likely that a scribe familiar with biblical language would gravitate toward the more common phrasing of αἷμα plus ἄθῳς.

The probability that this happened in Matt 27:4 increases dramatically when one considers the attribution to Jeremiah of the account of Judas's returning the money with its biblical citation in Matt 27:9–10. Davies and Allison point out that there are a number of points of contact between Matt 27:3–10 and passages such as Zech 11:12–14 as well as chs. 18, 19, and 32 of Jeremiah.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, of the twenty-one instances of the collocation of αἷμα and ἄθῳς in the LXX, six of them occur in Jeremiah (2:34; 7:6; 19:4; 22:3, 17; 33:15). In view of the attribution of the biblical quotation in Matt 27:9 to Jeremiah, it seems entirely possible that a scribe might attempt to harmonize the relatively rare αἷμα δίκαιον of 27:4 with the better known and more frequent language in Jeremiah. Since the entire story of Judas returning the money to the religious authorities is attributed by Matthew to Jeremiah, one can well understand why an early scribe might gravitate toward the more common phrasing in Jeremiah (i.e., αἷμα ἄθῳν) and effectively bring the account more closely in line with the language of the Matthean attribution.

Fourth, bearing all these points in mind, it is surely significant that the presence of δίκαιος language at exactly this place in Matthew's narrative makes excellent sense in the light of the connections I have shown above between Lamentations, righteous bloodshed by the hands of the Jewish religious leadership, Jesus' crucifixion, and the temple's destruction.

In Matt 27:1–9 Judas seeks to return the money he received from the religious leaders for betraying Jesus. The mention of blood in 27:4, the emphasis placed on the religious leadership, and the reference to Jeremiah in 27:9 all serve to bring the warnings of chs. 23–24, and especially the allusion to Lamentations in 23:35, back to mind. Given this apparent echo of 23:35, it seems on the whole more likely that the harmony evident between the variant reading αἷμα δίκαιον

<sup>36</sup> In addition to the verses in question, Matthew uses the adjective seventeen times: 1:19; 5:45; 9:13; 10:41(3x); 13:17, 43, 49; 20:4; 23:28, 29, 35(2x); 25:37, 46; 27:19.

<sup>37</sup> The collocation of αἷμα and ἄθῳς shows up a total of twenty-one times in the following LXX texts: Deut 27:25; 1 Sam 19:5; 25:26, 31; 1 Kgs 2:5; 2 Kgs 21:16; 24:4 (2x); 2 Chr 36:5 (2x); Esth 8:12; 1 Macc 1:37; 2 Macc 1:8; Pss 93:21; 105:38; Jer 2:34; 7:6; 19:4; 22:3, 17; 33:15. As previously noted, the collocation of αἷμα and δίκαιος occurs only four times in the LXX: Prov 6:17; Joel 4:19; Jonah 1:14; and Lam 4:13.

<sup>38</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:558–59.

of 27:4 and the αἷμα δίκαιον of 23:35 was in fact what Matthew wrote and, contra Metzger, not the result of scribal ingenuity.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, it would make good sense in 27:4 for Matthew to have Judas use the very language of 23:35. The presence of αἷμα δίκαιον in 27:4 would serve at least two functions. First, since this is toward the beginning of the passion narrative, it provides a clear point of contact between the warning given in chs. 23–24 and the act of killing Jesus. Since Matthew continues to make references to Lamentations throughout his passion narrative, such a move prompts readers to begin thinking again of 23:35 and thus also of Lamentations. Second, Judas's comments would serve as an obvious warning to the religious leaders that the course they are embarking upon will bring about the temple's destruction. In other words, this is a polemic. Such a warning, with its implicit appeal to the very themes from Lamentations that Matthew has previously stressed, leads the reader to view the leaders as being without excuse. Yet, instead of taking this warning seriously, Matthew has them curtly respond to Judas, σὺ ὃν ᾶ (‘‘you see [to it]’’).

In sum, when viewed in light of the case I have laid out in support of Matthew's use of Lamentations as an intertext to portray Jesus' death as the shedding of righteous blood par excellence, the evidence from intrinsic probability strongly suggests that, in spite of the external evidence, good warrant exists for concluding that the variant attested by the corrector of B, L, Θ and the Latin tradition is the original reading of Matt 27:4. Given that (1) the effect of the variant is both to connect the death of Jesus with the prediction/warning of Matt 23:35–24:2 and thus with the allusion to Lamentations and to implicate the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem in the shedding of this righteous blood and thus lay the blame for the temple's destruction at their feet; and that (2) these effects cohere perfectly with the broader argument Matthew is constructing both before (see 23:35) and during his passion narrative (see 27:19, 25, 34, and 39), it seems much more likely that this variant belonged to Matthew's original text than that a scribe modified the text in such a way that these connections were further emphasized.

<sup>39</sup> This point is bolstered somewhat by the lack of evidence that the fathers were making connections between Matt 23:35 and 27:4, or between Matthew 27 and Lamentations. I found no references to Lam 4:13 in relation to Matthew 27 in the *Biblia Patristica*. Nor did any of my work in the fathers' quotations of Matthew suggest that they were making links to Lamentations. I found only one instance in which a father connects chs. 27 and 23 of Matthew. Hilary of Poitiers—whose text is among the few that, like L, demonstrably attests the presence of δίκαιος/*iustus* in Matt 27:4 and 27:24 (see also Ambrose and Jerome)—links Matt 27:24 and 23:35 while commenting on Psalm 57. Hilary writes: Adeo autem hi uiri sanguinum sunt, ut omnium ab Abel usque ad Zachariam interfectorum ab his sanguis sit reposcendu et ablucende manus suas Pilato super se suosque esse iusti sanguinem sint professi (see Antonius Zingerle, *S. Hilarii Episcopi Pictauiensis: Tractatus Super Psalmos* [CSEL 22; Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1891], 180). The mention of Pilate's hand washing as a testimony regarding Jesus' just blood (found only in Matt 27:24) and the collocation of the just blood of Abel and Zechariah (found only in Matt 23:35) demonstrates that Hilary is reading these two texts together.

Similar points may be made with respect to the variant found in Matt 27:24. Here the NA<sup>27</sup> and UBS<sup>4</sup> texts have Pilate respond to the request that Jesus be crucified by stating, ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε ("I am innocent of the blood of this one, you see [to it]"). There is, however, solid manuscript evidence for Pilate's reply, ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ δικαίου τούτου· ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε ("I am innocent of the blood of this righteous one, you see [to it]").

As with 27:4, the editors of the NA<sup>27</sup> and UBS<sup>4</sup> chose not to include the variant for two main reasons. First, some early and strong external evidence excludes the phrase τοῦ δικαίου. For example, B, D, and Θ, as well as some of the Latin manuscripts and other versions exemplify a text without this variant. Additionally, the earliest witnesses such as Eusebius and Novatian, as well as several later fathers like Ambrosiaster, Basil the Great, and Chrysostom show no knowledge of the qualifier δίκαιος.<sup>40</sup> Metzger also points out that "the best representatives of the Alexandrian and Western texts" do not attest the variant.<sup>41</sup> Second, at the transcriptional level, Metzger judges that the textual plus is probably "an accretion intended to accentuate Pilate's protestation of Jesus' innocence."<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, several points can be put forward that, especially when taken together, tip the balance in favor of the original status of τοῦ δικαίου in Matt 27:24.

First, this longer variant is not without strong external support. The phrase τοῦ δικαίου τούτου is read in the majuscules Ɑ, L (the only majuscule to have a form of δίκαιος in both v. 4 and v. 24), W, E, F, G, H, and Σ. Multiple minuscules including f<sup>1</sup>, f<sup>13</sup>, 33 and a host of representatives from the majority text also support its presence. Additionally, several Greek and Latin fathers such as Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Maximus of Turin, and Hilary of Poitiers attest this variant.<sup>43</sup> Finally, a similar variant involving a simple transposition reads τούτου τοῦ δικαίου and is attested by A, Δ, and some Latin witnesses.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> For Eusebius, see Joannes Baptista Pitra, *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solemensi Parata* (III; Venice: Mechitartistorum Sancti Lazari, 1883; repr., Farnborough: Gregg Press Ltd., 1966), 415; for Novatian, see G. F. Diercks, *Novatiani Opera* (CCL 4; Turnholt: Brepols, 1972), 269; for Ambrosiaster, see Heinrich Joseph Vogels, *Ambrosiastri Qui Dicitur Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas: In Epistulas ad Corinthios* (CSEL 81.2; Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky Kg., 1968), 25; for Basil, see Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile: Lettres*, vol. 3 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1966), 64; for Chrysostom, see PG 58:765.

<sup>41</sup> Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 56–57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>43</sup> For Ambrose, see M. Petschenig, *Sancti Ambrosii Opera: Explanatio Psalmorum XII* (CSEL 64; Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1919), 393; for Cyril of Jerusalem, see W. C. Reischl and J. Rupp, *Cyriilli Hierosolymitarum Archiepiscopi Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), 54; for Jerome, see D. Hurst and M. Adriaen, *S. Hieronimi Presbuteri Opera*, 1.7 (CCL 77; Turnholt: Brepols, 1969), 266; for Maximus of Turin, see Almut Mutzenbecher, *Maximi Episcopi Taurinensis* (CCL 23; Turnholt: Brepols, 1962), 228; for Hilary of Poitiers, see Zingerle, *Hilarii*, 180.

<sup>44</sup> The fuller list of witnesses found in the NA<sup>27</sup> apparatus shows the reading supported by Ɑ

Second, the omission of τοῦ δικαίου in Matt 27:24 can be easily accounted for as an instance of parablepsis occasioned either by homoioteleuton or homioarcton. If the original text read ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ δικαίου τούτου, one can see how the string of genitive endings in τοῦ δικαίου τούτου might have led to the accidental loss of τοῦ δικαίου by way of homoioteleuton. On the other hand, one can just as easily see how the presence of the initial τοῦ and the τούτου might have led a scribe to skip the phrase inadvertently by way of homioarcton. In either case, the shorter reading adopted by NA<sup>27</sup> (i.e., ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου) is easily explained. Indeed, such a hypothesis would well explain the data one finds in the manuscript tradition. The longer reading found in  $\aleph$  and L more readily explains the existence of both the manuscripts that contain the elements τοῦ δικαίου and τούτου in inverted order and the manuscripts that read only τοῦ δικαίου,<sup>45</sup> than does the hypothesis that the shorter reading is original.

Third, a few points regarding internal evidence stand in favor of the presence of τοῦ δικαίου in Matt 27:24.<sup>46</sup> As previously noted, the term δίκαιος is not uncommon in Matthew.<sup>47</sup> Yet this point proves even more poignant here, since the term fits the immediate context so well. In 27:19, Pilate's wife has just described Jesus as "that righteous man." There is, then, good internal justification for Pilate to refer to Jesus in the same terms, that is, as τοῦ δικαίου τούτου, "this righteous man."

Fourth, intrinsic probability once again suggests that this variant is not, contra Metzger, a scribal accretion heightening Jesus' cachet, but rather an original part of Matthew's Gospel. In 27:24 Pilate washes his hands to indicate his innocence with regard to Jesus' death. He then lays the responsibility for crucifying Jesus squarely on the religious authorities by using the very words they spoke to Judas in 27:4 against them, ὑμεῖς ὥρεσθε ("you see [to it]"). In view of the connection made in ch. 27 between v. 4 and v. 27 by having Pilate mimic the words of the Jewish religious authorities, and the larger argument linking righteous bloodshed and the temple's destruction in Matthew, it would make perfect sense for Matthew to have Pilate describe Jesus as "δίκαιος." If Matthew originally did have Pilate speak of Jesus as a "righteous" man, then, in light of Matthew's allusions to Lamentations, the implication of Pilate's comments is perfectly clear—Jesus' death will result in the temple's destruction. Again, such a warning serves to heighten the culpability of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem in the eyes of the reader.

L W f<sup>1,13</sup> 33 M lat sy<sup>p,h</sup> sa<sup>mss</sup> mae bo. Additionally the reading τούτου τοῦ δικαίου occurs in A Δ pc aur f and h, while τοῦ δικαίου is read in 1010 pc and bo<sup>ms</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> See n. 45 above for a summary of the manuscript tradition for these readings.

<sup>46</sup> Garland comments that the internal evidence is strong enough to conclude that the phrase is original, though he fails to mount an argument (*Intention*, 185).

<sup>47</sup> Gundry, who also thinks that δίκαιος belongs in the text sums all this up nicely when he states, "Matthew has a penchant for δίκαιος" (*Matthew*, 565).

I would add that it is surely no accident that in the face of this second warning Matthew presents the response of the people in 27:25 not only in terms reminiscent of 23:35 and the allusion to Lamentations found there but also in terms of full culpability in the death of Jesus.<sup>48</sup>

To summarize: if, as I have tried to show, Matthew employs Lamentations to construct an argument that (1) links the shedding of righteous blood on the part of the religious leaders with the destruction of the temple, and (2) presents Jesus' crucifixion as the act of shedding righteous blood par excellence, then it would make perfect sense for him to utilize "δίκαιος" language precisely at points like 27:4 and 27:24, where one or more of these very elements is being emphasized.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

In this article I have argued that Matthew alludes to Lamentations three times in chs. 23 and 27 of his Gospel (23:35; 27:34; and 27:39). The fact that these allusions come from chs. 2, 3, and 4 of Lamentations, that the allusion to Lam 4:13 resonates throughout the scenes that immediately precede the crucifixion (see Matt 27:19, 24-25), and that the allusion to Lam 2:15 is so closely related thematically to the way Matthew uses Lam 4:13, all suggest that Matthew has employed Lamentations as a significant intertext. The allusions to Lamentations function as scriptural warrant for interpreting certain historical events theologically and polemically—namely, for understanding Jesus' crucifixion as the act of righteous bloodshed par excellence that directly results in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

If these arguments are basically sound, I suggest further that the variants in the textual tradition in Matt 27:4 and 27:24 that contain δίκαιος should, mainly on the grounds of intrinsic probability, be considered original and thus be restored to our eclectic text. The reading of L, while singular among the majuscules, attests

<sup>48</sup> One might object that Matthew has all Jews in view here, not only the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The link, though, between 27:24 and 27:4, coupled with the fact that Matthew explicitly blames the religious leaders for agitating the crowd (27:20) suggests that even here Matthew still has the leaders squarely in mind. On this point see especially Amy-Jill Levine, who argues persuasively that the key contrasts and tensions in Matthew's Gospel run along the social axis and not the ethnic axis. She points out, for example, that the common people are described as being like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36). Part of the tension in the Gospel, then, turns on who will be the rightful shepherd of the people. Thus, one of the main points of conflict in Matthew is between the leaders, who are attempting to lead the people, and Jesus, who, as the Messiah, is the one appointed by prophecy (Matt 2:6) to shepherd the people (*Social and Ethnic Dimensions*, 94–104, 215–22, and 261–71).

the reading that both coheres well with Lamentations' role in Matthew's passion narrative and best explains the existence of the variants in 27:4 and 27:24.

More significantly, though, it follows from my argument that Matthew's link between Jesus' crucifixion and the temple's destruction cannot simply be assumed to reflect anti-Judaism in Matthew. Too often Matthew has been read anachronistically such that later uses of this Gospel in anti-Jewish polemic are simply assumed to be in keeping with the original meaning of the text. Yet Matthew's intertextual use of Lamentations, particularly as his appeal to this text both focuses the blame for the shedding of Jesus' righteous blood on the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and provides a scriptural paradigm for interpreting and explaining the events of 70 C.E., suggests that one cannot simply assume that Matthew's claims are anti-Jewish. Matthew's appeal to Lamentations makes it far more likely that he envisions himself speaking a prophetic word. In chs. 23 and 27, Matthew engages in intra-Jewish conversation and polemic patterning his critique of the Jewish religious leadership in Jerusalem on the Jewish prophetic tradition—an interpretive move that bears remarkable resemblance to the one made in the Targum for Lamentations.

Matthew's claim that the death of Jesus at the instigation of the religious leaders led to the temple's destruction is no more an invective against Judaism than is the similar accusation made in the Targum. Like the Targum, Matthew has creatively applied a theological paradigm for interpreting the destruction of the temple provided in Jewish prophetic Scriptures (specifically, that the sin and failure of Jewish religious leadership have catastrophic results for Jerusalem and the temple) to a contemporary situation he finds strikingly similar to the one found in Lamentations. In this way, Matthew, albeit in light of his conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, is, like so many of the prophets before him, calling his kinsfolk to repent if they would truly possess the kingdom.

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