

TITLE PAGE

ITEM 1

TITLE: ACCOUNTING FOR ANXIETY: AN ANALYSIS OF AN EARLY FIRST-CENTURY MATERIAL ETHIC FROM MATT 6:19-34

ITEM 2

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch



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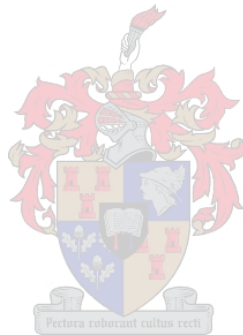
DATE OF AWARD: DECEMBER 2006

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most heartfelt and grateful thanks to:

My beloved wife, Heather, who gave up so much to make this “work” possible;

My involved supervisor, Jeremy, who pushed me hard towards a reasonable “work”;

My personal Lord, Jesus, who is the reason for the “work”.



ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a detailed study of Matt 6:19-34 for the specific purpose of accounting for the unique context and content of the material/financial ethic being articulated here by Jesus. The passage, made up of four pericopes, is located within the first of the five discourses of Jesus recorded in Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus evidently articulates the ethical standards required of the children of the emerging Kingdom of God.

The need for such a study stems from an understanding that the passage, indeed the Sermon as a whole, has been treated by traditional scholarship in a somewhat distanced and abstract manner i.e. it has been read without adequate cognisance being taken of the particular socio-linguistic and socio-historical context in which it was originally formulated and articulated.

Relatively recent social-scientific and socio-historical New Testament scholarship, however, has provided a specific set of interpretive tools that enable a modern reader to make a far more dynamic and context-sensitive interpretation possible.

Accordingly, this paper undertakes a socio-rhetorical analysis of Matt 6:19-34, together with a social-scientific and socio-historic/financial/religious analysis of the eastern Mediterranean world of late Second Temple times. Together these interpretive tools shed new light on the text and provide the opportunity for re-reading that text in a way that, hopefully, more closely articulates the ethic as an original audience might have heard it.

Specifically, the use of these interpretive tools provide insights into why it was that Jesus explicitly prohibited worry, some six times in the passage, amongst the children of the Kingdom concerning the provision of their food, drink and clothing i.e. the tools provide something of an explanation for both the rhetorical force of the ethic and the underlying realities that gave rise to its formulation in the first place. These insights are then applied in an attempt at formulating a dynamically equivalent ethic that might be appropriated and applied by present day children of the Kingdom reading the passage today.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie onderneem 'n in-diepte analise van Matt 6:19-34 spesifiek met die oog op die verklaring van die unieke konteks en inhoud van die materiële/finansiële etiek wat hier deur Jesus verwoord word. Die teks, wat bestaan uit vier perikope, kom voor binne die eerste van die vyf diskoerse van Jesus soos opgeneem in Mattheus se Evangelie, waar Jesus klaarblyklik die etiese verwagtinge van kinders van die opkomende Koninkryk van God uitspel.

Die studie word genoodsaak deur die feit dat hierdie teks, trouens die hele Preek, tot nou deur geleerdes gedistansieerd en abstrak geles is, dit wil sê, dit is geles sonder voldoende inagnome van die spesifieke sosio-linguïstieke en sosio-historiese konteks waarbinne dit oorspronklik geformuleer en verwoord is.

Onlangse sosiaalwetenskaplike en sosio-historiese Nuwe Testamentiese studies het egter 'n spesifieke stel interpretasietegnieke geskep wat 'n meer dinamiese en konteks-sensitiewe interpretasie kan lewer vir moderne lesers.

Gevolgtrek onderneem hierdie studie 'n sosio-retoriese analise van Matt 6:19-34, tesame met 'n sosiaalwetenskaplike en sosio-historiese/finansiële/godsdiensige analise van die oosterse Middellandse wêreld van die laat-Tweede Tempel-tydperk. Die interpretatiewe tegnieke werp gesamentlik nuwe lig op die teks en verskaf die geleentheid vir 'n her-lees van die teks op 'n wyse wat, hopelik, die etiek nader artikuleer soos wat dit vir 'n oorspronklike gehoor bedoel sou gewees het.

Die aanwending van hierdie interpretatiewe tegnieke verskaf insigte in die rede waarom Jesus spesifiek bekommernis verbied, tot ses keer in die teks, onder kinders van die Koninkryk, betreffende voedsel, drank en klere; dit wil sê, die kriteria bied 'n verklaring vir beide die retoriese mag van die etiek, sowel as die onderliggende werklikhede wat in die eerste plek aanleiding gegee het tot die formulering daarvan. Hierdie insigte word toegepas in 'n poging om 'n dinamies-ekwivalente etiek te formuleer wat toegepas en aangewend kan word deur hedendaagse kinders van die Koninkryk wat die perikoop lees.

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**TOPIC: ACCOUNTING FOR ANXIETY: AN ANALYSIS OF AN EARLY
FIRST CENTURY MATERIAL ETHIC FROM MATTHEW 6:19-34**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A. SUBJECT OF RESEARCH

I propose to make a detailed study of Matthew 6:19-34 for the specific purpose of accounting for the context and content of the ethic being articulated here by Jesus. The passage, made up of four pericopes, is located within the first of five discourses of Jesus recorded in the gospel. This first discourse, the so-called Sermon on the Mount (largely paralleled in Luke 12:13-43 as the Sermon on the Plain), appears to be the most significant in establishing Jesus' teaching ministry. In this discourse Jesus, pictured by the gospel writer as a type of Moses (see 1.2.2.1 below), appears to unfold the "Manifesto of the Kingdom of God", a Kingdom which has its historical origins in Yahweh's dealings with ethnic Israel, but which is now revealed to encompass, amongst other things, a potentially greater number of people and certainly a more demanding ethic. This ethic - initiated as it is by the entrance requirements of the Kingdom (5:3-12) - deals with the ethical standards required of the children of the Kingdom. Unlike the Mosaic Law that the author has Jesus précis largely in terms of commandments relating to Israel's behaviour (5:17-19), and particularly unlike the oral interpretation and application of that Law that Jesus evidently attributed to the Pharisees and the teachers (5:20-47), the ethic of the Kingdom deals with the inner workings of the hearts of the children of the Kingdom (5:48).

Matt.6:19-34 appears to describe something of the financial/material ethic that was to pertain in the Kingdom community living in the early first century C.E. Given the group nature of the wider society of that time (as described in 2.3.1 below), the first pericope (19-21) deals with a communal attitude toward "treasure" and its selfish or generous accumulation, the second (22-23) speaks of material generosity/meanness towards others in the community, while the third (24) insists on the utter impossibility of serving both God and Money. The balance of the passage (25-34) serves to reassure the children of the Kingdom that, providing they live out this financial/material ethic,

then their collective, very real and very pressing material needs will be taken care of by the heavenly Father. The group nature of this ethic should immediately alert a twenty-first century Western reader to the possibility of radical differences between it and the highly individualistic nature of the material ethics of modernity.

This particular passage, then, will be the focus of my attention and I intend to examine it in its original first century historical context. I will assume (as argued in 1.2.2.4 below) that the gospel writer is detailing an authentic historical teaching by Jesus, and I will attempt to deal with that teaching as it might have been heard by an original audience as opposed to the ideal or actual audience addressed by the writer of the gospel, widely assumed to have been living in Antioch after the destruction of the Second Temple (France 1988:92).

B. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM, THE LIMITS OF RESEARCH AND THE DOMAIN PHENOMENON

The problem, to my mind, relates to the fact that this particular passage, indeed the Sermon as a whole, has been treated by traditional scholarship as if it were dealing with an abstract ethic; an ethic isolated from the actual first century context in which it was formulated and articulated. By this I mean that little attention appears to have been paid to understanding how the Sermon, and this passage in particular, would have been heard by an original and historical audience. The circumstances, specifically, that would have prompted Jesus to declare something of the nature of the Kingdom through these three communal and ethical imperatives, and then to have spoken about anxiety, and indeed to have prohibited it amongst the Kingdom community some six times in ten verses (25-34), does not appear to have been adequately considered. An illustration of this can be found in Tasker (1983:76), who, commenting on the storing up of earthly treasures in Matt. 6:19, says that this refers not just to a manifestation of human covetousness, but also to the outcome of an “undue anxiety as to whether they (humans) will have the means to provide food and clothing for themselves and their dependents”. Tasker is asserting, to my mind, that all storing up of earthly treasure at the time of Jesus stemmed from a fear of being unable to provide for one’s dependents. This assertion, however, does not seem to identify any possible distinction between those who were doing the storing up and those who were doing the worrying within the first century society and audience being

addressed. The vital need to make such a distinction between the two groups, however, will be demonstrated in Chapter Four below.

The issue here, then, appears to be a hermeneutical one. For the best part of the last two centuries, biblical scholarship has adopted a largely historical-critical approach to the Scriptures in general. In terms of this approach the focus of attention has been predominantly on the historical and linguistic aspects of the world behind the Christian texts. So, for example, Elliott (1993:12) notes that historical criticism, “given it’s preoccupation with specificity and detail, has been successful in identifying much of what can be termed ‘that’ or ‘what’ information”. For all such information undoubtedly gained by such an approach, however, the scriptures have still been read from within the world-view of the modern interpreter and not as an articulation of the world-view of the author/s of those texts. The instances of social interaction, for example, which are recorded in the New Testament are inevitably read from the perspective of the modern psychodynamic understanding we have of our own social worlds. Similarly when the scriptures refer to “family” or “city” or “marriage”, our own understanding of social reality is inevitably imposed upon such notions. For all the differences, then, between our world and the New Testament world that historical-critical studies have so painstakingly identified, we have not necessarily deployed a hermeneutical approach that assists us in recovering the unique socio-historical context in which Jesus lived and taught, thereby giving us a more adequate understanding of the texts themselves. We have not, in other words, been asking questions like: “How were attitudes, expectations, values, and beliefs shaped by the natural and social environment?” (Elliott 1993:12).

In addition the New Testament scriptures have not necessarily been accounted for as socio-historical documents. We have, by way of the tools of literary criticism for example, been able to identify the various literary genres employed in the texts and have described their rhetorical features and functions, but we have not adequately taken into account that these texts were produced with the pre-understandings of their audiences already embedded in them. Again we have not been asking questions about how “shared social and cultural knowledge provided the basis for shared meanings and effective communication” (Elliott 1993:12). This implies that concepts, such as Mammon (μαμωνᾶς), which appear in the texts without explanation or comment, have not necessarily been adequately appreciated.

Finally, the traditional view that Matthew's Sermon ("blessed are the poor *in spirit*" 5:5) is more spiritual in nature than Luke's ("blessed are you who are poor" 6:20), has almost certainly given rise to the material ethic contained therein being either ignored or not given the attention it deserves. In any event this ethic needs to be cast within the context of a first century communal and embedded economy and not within a twenty first century context of individuals operating within a free-market economy, as has been the case in much previous scholarship.

This cluster of problems, then, centring on an apparently inadequate interpretive framework, and which to my mind goes a long way in explaining the somewhat distanced ethics of Jesus according to traditional scholarship, is where I would like to focus my attention.

C. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

A solution to this cluster of problems seems to be at hand. Since the early 1980's, and with the incorporation of the social science's literature into the biblical interpreters library, the possibility of addressing such issues and finding a more adequate social and socio-historical context for Jesus' ethical teaching has become a distinct reality. Earlier studies in social anthropology conducted by, amongst others, Max Weber (1864-1920), Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) and Edward Tylor (1832-1917) (Lyon 1988:649), have provided us with the notion of symbolic models relating to how societies function, and these now enable us to understand the first century Mediterranean inter-personal world of Jesus in a way not possible before. As such the models of honour and kinship provide us, respectively and for example, with the very *raison d'être* for the functioning of society and the actual forms in which it did function.

By examining the notion of honour, and the three streams of power, status and religion that flow into it, it now becomes possible to understand the hierarchical structure of Palestinian society, the roles and rights of everyone in society and the attitudes and behaviour of the powerful towards the powerless and *visa versa*. Similarly by examining the notion of kinship, and its closely allied tributaries of group-personality, limited good and patronage, it becomes possible to describe how families were constituted, how they functioned economically, socially and religiously, and how they sought to maintain and strengthen their social and economic status.

In a similar way recent historical studies along socio-economic lines, for example those conducted by Freyne (1988), Horsley (1995) and Hanson and Oakman (1998), have uncovered vital information relating to the Roman occupation of Palestine, the political economy of Palestine- specifically as it points to the differences between Judea and Galilee- and the religious and social unrest in Palestine at the time of Jesus. From these studies it becomes possible to identify the impact of the *Pax Romana* on Palestine generally, describe the economic and social pressures placed on the bulk of the population there, and thus to account for the religious and economic anxiety and restlessness that was the experience of so many in this period of history.

By combining these advances made by both cultural anthropological and socio-historical studies, within the parameters drawn above, it becomes possible to provide the *Sitz im Leben* in which Jesus declared his “Manifesto of the Kingdom” and its attendant ethic. The radical differences between the socio-economic status quo and the envisioned socio-economic lifestyle of those in the Kingdom can then be compared over against one another and provide an understanding of and explanation for the particular rhetorical stance Jesus takes in declaring this ethic under such circumstances.

I am proposing, then, that the current state of New Testament studies is such that it provides us with the resources to reconstruct a reasonably accurate and adequate socio-economic and socio-religious context in which Jesus formulated the financial ethic of the Kingdom. From such a context it then becomes possible for us to read Matt 6:19-34, phrased as it is with all its assumed pre-understanding, as his polemic against those elements in society, both Roman and religious, who were to blame for the socio-economic and religious calamity overtaking Galilee and Judea at the time. The reassurances given to the children of the Kingdom (viz. that their material needs would be provided by the heavenly Father) were then given, amazingly, even under the traumatic social, political and economic circumstances that prevailed at the time of Jesus.

D. AIM OF RESEARCH PROJECT

My aim is to reap some of the fruits of recent social-scientific and socio-historical New Testament scholarship. By employing some of the theoretical models available through social-scientific criticism it becomes possible to recover not just data from the

text of Matthew's gospel as we have it today, but also something of the dynamics operating in the society of the time of Jesus. With the notions of kinship and honour, for example, we are able to move away from mere descriptions of the institutions of family and village, to the very dynamics by which they actually functioned.

Similarly my aim in employing some of the gains made by recent socio-historical studies is to be able not just to describe the realities of harsh taxation and poverty in the Galilee of Jesus' time, but also to provide the atmosphere in which the teachings of Jesus would have to have been made. I believe that once the socio-economic circumstances of his day are more adequately understood it becomes possible to read a very dynamic account of Jesus' teachings from Matthew's Sermon.

Along these lines my aim is to demonstrate that, for all its brevity, this teaching of Jesus had a far greater relevance and tangible applicability to the people of his day than is initially suggested by the somewhat cryptic nature of the sayings recorded in Matt. 6:19-34, and as they have been read in the last several centuries. This is an ethic that deals with the vital practicalities of a particular community's attitude towards and employment of the very material and economic realities that made physical life possible for them. Of the utmost importance, I hope that by employing the tools of social-scientific criticism and socio-historical analysis it will render untenable the notion that Jesus was uninvolved in a resistance against the material and economic status quo of his day. Given the particular nature of the socio-economic and socio-religious status quo Jesus had to have been involved in resisting it, particularly in light of the nature of the Kingdom he was advocating. Equally, given that attitudes towards and employment of material resources in the present time often evidence remarkable similarities to those of the time of Jesus, as this paper will show, I hope that an understanding of his ethic in its original setting will lead to the articulation and application of an equivalent ethic for today, particularly amongst those who claim to be a part of his Kingdom community, and are thus presumably expected to resist the status quo when it evidences the same, or similar, injustices as were present in the society in which Jesus lived.

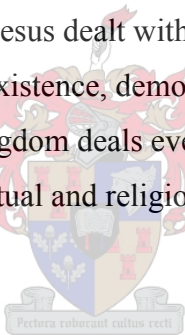
E. MOTIVATION FOR PROJECT

As an evangelical Christian I have spent the past sixteen years pastoring an international, interdenominational church in Gaborone, Botswana. What the pastorate

has taught me is that there is the most profound desire in the hearts of Christians of all races and economic circumstances to know what the Bible teaches about the “nuts and bolts” issues of life, so that such teachings can be applied in the world in which we live. To be able to demonstrate Jesus teaching such an ethic in a real-world situation, in many ways not dissimilar to our own, can only be an encouragement and challenge to us. Of particular importance here is the attempt to reach back to the historical occasion of this teaching in order to try and hear these words as the first audience might have heard them. This would then hopefully facilitate, as indicated above, the formulation of a dynamically equivalent ethic for today, thereby informing Christians concerning Jesus’ expectations for conducting our material lives today in a manner that is faithful to his original motivations.

On a broader level I am also challenged that many evangelical pastors – perhaps even theologians – have limited their readings of the Scriptures to apply only to the so-called spiritual dimensions of our faith. I am encouraged to pursue such a study in the hopes that it will demonstrate that Jesus dealt with the entire socio-political and socio-economic realms of humankind’s existence, demonstrating that the material ethic declared for the children of the Kingdom deals every bit as much with human spirituality as does a so-called spiritual and religious ethic.

F. PRELIMINARY STUDIES



As indicated in C. above, social-scientific criticism made its way into biblical studies in the early 1980’s. Pioneered by scholars including Willy Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann, Gerd Theissen, and John Elliott (Elliott 1993:19), all of whom explored the possibility of employing the findings of the social sciences in biblical studies, considerable momentum seems to have been gained in 1981 with a publication by Bruce Malina that employed exactly these findings. (I will be employing the third edition of this work i.e. Malina 2001a). This momentum was accelerated in 1989 by the establishment of the so-called Context Group, as an offshoot of the Society of Biblical Literature and the Catholic Biblical Association of America (Elliott 1993:29), consisting of biblical scholars who promoted the use of the social sciences in biblical interpretation, and resulting in the establishment of this approach as a recognized interpretive methodology.

The principle difference between social-scientific criticism and historical criticism, as it relates to interpreting the biblical text, concerns the issues of generalization and specificity (Rohrbaugh 1996:10). Historical criticism has traditionally sought to describe biblical societies in terms of the specific differences between such societies and those of today, and then to account for those differences as they occurred over time. Social-scientific criticism, on the other hand, maintains that core values in a particular society change very slowly over time and thus it becomes possible, by studying today's eastern Mediterranean social world, to recover many of the core values that would have pertained to the first century world. These generalized core values, expressed in terms of cross-cultural models, then become the means by which to describe the social world at the time of Jesus.

Criticism of this methodological approach has not been lacking (Garrett 1992:89-99). The relevant sources for constructing the sociological models and building up the larger patterns in society are held to be sparse and fragmentary. When these models are constructed, they are done so in terms of Western thought patterns and phraseology (e.g. "witchcraft" and "deviance") and are thus considered to be ethnocentric and subjective. Finally, this particular analysis is seen to reduce theological statements in the text to mere expressions of sociological interaction and hence to eliminate the religious/spiritual dimensions of the writings.

I intend to employ a social scientific approach without accepting this particular presupposition. The New Testament writings are the religious and spiritual articulations of various Christian communities' whose worldview accepted without question the transcendent nature of God, His covenant involvement with the people of Israel, and His physical presence now with them through incarnation. Furthermore, the theoretical nature of the models employed will be recognized to be such, but will be used since they provide considerable assistance in reconstructing a very plausible overarching social reality for the first century C.E. From within that world the text of Matthew 6:19-34 should be able to make itself heard.

G. RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

The project requires both a socio-rhetorical analysis of Matt. 6:19-34, together with a social-scientific and a socio-historic/financial/religious analysis of the eastern Mediterranean world of late Second Temple times. In terms of the text itself I will

employ a socio-rhetorical criticism as described by Vernon Robbins (1996a), albeit in a truncated form. Particular attention will be given to the inner texture of this passage with its repetitive- progressive, opening-middle-closing, argumentative and sensory-aesthetic dimensions. The intertexture components will include oral-scribal, cultural, social and historical intertextures. The social and cultural texture will provide the bulk of the data and will therefore be more fully examined in Chapter Two in a social-scientific analysis, since it relates to both the entire pre-understanding embedded in the text and the implicit references to social and cultural realities found within the text. The ideological texture will then be briefly investigated, while the religious texture will locate the passage in its Judeo- Christian context.

In terms of the socio-historical dimensions of the topic, existing literature dealing with the cultural-anthropological and socio-economic dimensions of the Palestine of Jesus' day will provide the bulk of the data for identifying the context in which these words were first heard. As alluded to in C. above, analysis of the cultural-anthropological sources will provide a description of the macro-world of Mediterranean Palestine, while the socio-historical sources will give understanding of the micro-world of Jerusalem/Judea/Galilee at the time of Jesus. A combination of these sources will provide the dynamic context in which to locate Jesus' ethical injunctions.

Overarching this methodology I intend to adopt B.W.Bacon's suggestion that the overall structure of Matthew's gospel can best be accounted for by viewing it as a "pentateuchal" construct (Emerton, Cranfield & Stranton 1988:53). In terms of this construct the five discourses of Jesus in the gospel (5:1-7:27; 9:36-10:42; 13:1-52; 17:22-18:35; 23:1-25:46 –all ending with "And when Jesus finished these sayings/instructions/parables") are placed between blocks of narrative, and stand in counterpoint to the five books of Moses that similarly alternate between narrative and discourse. Bacon's approach has been adopted, in preference to those detailed in Emerton et al above and the more recent literary approach of David Bauer (1988), for the simple reason that the existence of the five discourses and their accompanying narratives are universally recognized as being present in the gospel.

G. POSSIBLE VALUE OF RESEARCH FOR FIELD

This work, I hope, will give added impetus to the further incorporation of the recent findings of social-scientific studies as they relate to biblical interpretation. Along with

all of the authors of this particular discipline with which I am familiar, I do not mean to suggest that this approach is anything other than one further heuristic aide in seeking to recover a more accurate and dynamic interpretation for the New Testament scripture's, but an important aide it certainly is. As Elliott (1993:13) maintains, social-scientific criticism moves beyond the gains made by historical-critical methodologies and provides

A way of envisaging, investigating, and understanding the interaction of texts and social contexts, ideas and communal behaviour, social realities and their religious symbolization, belief systems and cultural systems and ideologies as a whole, and the relation of such cultural systems to the natural and social environment , economic organization, social structures, and political power [of a society].

My focus in particular on Jesus' financial/material ethic will hopefully draw attention once more to the need for biblical scholars to be addressing the issue of wealth (it's creation, employment and distribution) in a first century context, in the light of Jesus' own insistence on the need for it to be ethically managed, in order that a dynamically equivalent ethic might be configured and applied in our twenty first century Christian communities, for the good of the wider society.

Finally, perhaps this work will reinforce the growing notion amongst traditionally conservative scholars and pastors, such as myself, that the idealistic notion of Jesus being a purely spiritual teacher and saviour is just that. Spirituality, as the New Testament scriptures portray Jesus demonstrating, relates to the physical and economic dimensions of our human condition every bit as much as it does to our relationship to God and other human beings. Within the religious environment in which I have hitherto been embedded, these scriptures have been interpreted to portray a Saviour from heaven who was almost exclusively concerned with the notions of sin and salvation in as much as they have consequence for eternity. That sin and salvation have social, political, and economic dimensions and implications for the present time, as well as for eternity, is being increasingly recognised by conservative evangelical Christians. This study will hopefully add some impetus to that growing recognition.

CHAPTER 1:
A SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 6:19-34

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Matt. 6:19-34, as part of the so-called Sermon on the Mount, is an integral part of Matthew's gospel. This genre takes the form of an account of the life of Jesus in ways resembling the *βίος* (life) of Greco-Roman biographies of the time (Link 1976:475). Fundamentally this gospel is a proclamation of good news concerning God's saving activity on earth through the person of Jesus Christ. Specifically this passage is a record of some of the sayings attributed to Jesus by the author of the gospel as part of the Sermon as a whole.

The key to the overall structure of Matthew has long been argued (Emerton et al 1988:58). What is agreed is that the gospel follows a roughly chronological sequence from the birth, baptism and ministry of Jesus in Galilee to his journey to Jerusalem and his passion, death and resurrection there. Interspersed within the narrative are five major discourses of Jesus, which have given rise to B.W. Bacon's "pentateuchal" theory to account for the structure (Emerton et al 1988:59). In terms of this theory, just as the Mosaic Torah consists of five books, so too does Matthew's gospel. In Matthew the Mosaic books are represented by the five discourses of Jesus, and Jesus is thus portrayed as the giver of a New Law. The significance of this format relates to the particularly Jewish character of the gospel that many scholars have identified. So, for example, Harrington (2001:67) writes that in "it's historical setting – the crisis facing all Jews in the late 1st century – Matthew's Gospel was a Jewish book. In it's content it is also Jewish". The pentateuchal format of the five discourses in the gospel is thus a further reflection of the particularly Jewish nature of the writing. The first discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, starts with the words: "and he began to teach them, saying"(5:2) and ends with the words: " And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." (7:28-29). Found among these sayings is the passage I have chosen to study.

The passage consists of four consecutive pericopes within the overall Sermon. Following the general orientation of the Sermon concerning entrance into the

Kingdom of God (5:3-12) and discipleship amongst the children of the Kingdom (5:13-18), the first three pericopes (Treasures in Heaven (19-21), The Lamp of the Body (22-23) and God and Mammon (24)) contrast the attitudes towards the accumulation and employment of worldly wealth with the accumulation and enjoyment of true wealth. The final pericope (The Heavenly Father's Care (25-34)) introduces an element of reassurance viz. if the disciples will pursue the accumulation of true wealth, then they need have no anxiety about their material needs in the here and now since they will be met by the heavenly Father.

1.2 A SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Socio-rhetorical criticism is “an approach to literature that focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live” (Robbins 1996a:1). The “socio” element of this designation refers to the knowledge gleaned by the employment of the academic disciplines of anthropology and sociology as they seek to describe the functioning of human beings in society. The “rhetorical” element focuses on “the subject and topics a text uses to present thought, speech, stories, and arguments” (Mack in Robbins 1996a:1) i.e. it analyses the employment of the language of the text as it articulates its own particular interpersonal relationships and agendas. Together socio-rhetorical criticism then “integrates the ways people use language with the ways they live in the world” (Robbins 1996a:1). In terms of this form of literary analysis, language is viewed as “a means of negotiating meaning” as an interpreter seeks to bring their own “social location and personal interests” towards the “social location and personal interests the text embodies” (Robbins 1996a:2). Implicit in the methodology is the notion that texts are multi-dimensional tapestries that, like woven tapestries, require each of the many dimensions present to be examined individually before the full significance of the entire work can be appreciated. What follows below is an analysis of many of the textures present in the text of Matt 6:19-34, an analysis that will assist in recovering and appreciating something of its meaning in a first century context.

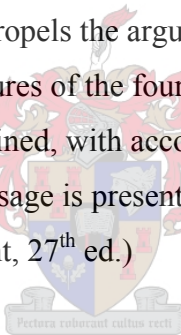
1.2.1 INNER TEXTURE

Inner texture refers to the language of any text i.e. to the words themselves as tools of communication. As Robbins (1996a:7) explains, the purpose of analysing this dimension of a text is to “gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structural devices, and modes in a text, which are the context for meanings and meaning-effects”.

1.2.1.1 Repetitive- Progressive Texture

Repetition in a text, whether of particular words, grammar, syntax, or topics “provide initial glimpses into the overall rhetorical movements in the discourse” (Robbins 1996a:8), while progression in the form of an alternating sequence of words, a progressive sequence of steps (I, I...they, they...us, us), or a chain of words expressing similar ideas, actively propels the argument forward.

The repetitive and progressive textures of the four pericopes that constitute Matt. 6:19-34 are now individually examined, with accompanying comments, before a structural synopsis of the entire passage is presented. (The text employed below is the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th ed.)



1.2.1.1.a) 19-21

19(a). Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν **θησαυροὺς** ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

(b) **ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει**

καὶ **ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν.**

20(a). θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν **θησαυροὺς** ἐν οὐρανῷ,

(b) **ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει**

καὶ **ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν.**

21. **ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου,**

ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου.

Repetition occurs here in four forms. (1) The negative command in 19(a) is paralleled by a positive one in 20(a). In both cases the present imperative “θησαυρίζετε” (do/do not store up) indicates an action that is, or ought to be, already underway. (2) The local clauses following these commands are repeated – this time antithetically to their main clauses. This immediately strengthens the comparison between the respective treasures being spoken about. (3) The personal pronouns “ὑμῖν / σου” (yourselves/your) appear twice each. (4) The link between the orientation of “ἡ καρδιά” (the heart) towards “ὁ θησαυρός” (the treasure) is made more dynamic by the present “ἔστιν/ ἔσται”.

Progression is provided by the conjunction “γὰρ” (for) in 21 that signals the explanatory conclusion. In all three verses the subject “θησαυρούς/ός” (treasure/s) is qualified by the plural personal pronouns “ὑμῖν /σου” (yourselves/your), which in 21 occurs twice, emphasising the closeness between a person’s attitude towards wealth and their affection thereof.

1.2.1.1.b) 22-23

22(a). Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὄφθαλμός.

(b) ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ὁ ὄφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς,

(c) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται.

23(a). ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὄφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ᾖ,

(b) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται.

(c) εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν,
τὸ σκότος πόσον.

The thesis statement of the pericope has “Ὁ λύχνος” (the lamp) in an emphatic position, followed by “ὁ ὄφθαλμός” (the eye) as the subject of the sentence.

Repetition then occurs as follows: (1) There is the introduction of a parallel between both the antithetical conditional clauses of 22(b) and 23(a), referring back to “ὁ ὄφθαλμός” (the eye) in the thesis statement, and an antithetical parallel between the

consecutive clauses in 22(c) and 23(b), referring back to “τοῦ σώματός” (the body) in the thesis statement. Structured this way the qualitative contrast being drawn is strengthened. (2) There is a fivefold repetition of the personal pronoun “σου/ σοὶ” (your/you).

Progression is provided in three ways. (1) The repetition of “ἐάν” (if) in 22(b), 23(a) and 23(c) builds expectation. (2) “σώματός” (body) in 22(a) becomes “ὅλον τὸ σῶμά” (the entire body) in 22(c) and 23(b), indicating the importance of the nature of “ὁ ὀφθαλμός” (the eye) in determining the disposition of a person. (3) The conditional clause introduced by the final “εἰ” (if) in 23(c) provides the platform for the salutary conclusion in 23(d). A further comparison becomes apparent at this point: “λύχνος” (lamp) and “φωτεινὸν” (light) of 22 are contrasted with the threefold repetition of “σκότος” (darkness) in 23, giving weighted emphasis to “σκότος” and meaning that a reversal has taken place; “φῶς” (light) is now defined in terms of “σκότος” (darkness).



1.2.1.1.c) 24

24(a) Οὐδεὶς δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν·

(b) ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἕνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει,

(c) ἢ ἑνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει.

(d) οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.

Here repetition takes two forms. (1) The thesis statement in (a) is restated in (d) in such a way that the “δυσὶ κυρίοις” (two lords/masters) are now identified as “θεῷ” (God) and “μαμωνᾷ” (mammon) respectively. Further, the negative adverbs at the beginning of the sentences in (a) and (d) emphasise the utter impossibility of such an action. (2) The conditional clauses of (b) are creatively restated in (c) using a different set of verbs, thereby emphasising the radical differences between these particular feelings.

Progress is provided by the “ τὸν ἕνα/ τὸν ἕτερον” (either/or) argument and the definitive restatement of the thesis statement.

1.2.1.1.d) 25-34

25(a). Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν,

(b) μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν
τί φάγητε [ἢ τί πίητε],

(c) μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν
τί ἐνδύσηθε.

(d) οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστίν
τῆς τροφῆς

(e) καὶ τὸ σῶμα
τοῦ ἐνδύματος;

26(a). ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

(b) ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν
οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας,

(c) καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος
τρέφει αὐτά·

(d) οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;

27. τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν

δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἕνα;

28(a). καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος

τί μεριμνᾶτε;

(b) καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς αὐξάνουσιν·
οὐ κοπιῶσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν·

29(a). λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν

(a) ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομῶν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ
περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων·

- 30(a). εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ σήμερον ὄντα καὶ αὖριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον
- (b) ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν,
- (c) οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;
- 31(a). μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες,
- (b) Τί φάγωμεν; ἢ, Τί πίνωμεν;
ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα;
- 32(a). πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν·
- (b) οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι
χρηζετε τούτων ἀπάντων.
- 33(a). ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ]
καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ,
- (b) καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.
- 34(a). μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὖριον,
- (b) ἢ γὰρ αὖριον μεριμνήσει ἑαυτῆς·
- (c) ἄρκετόν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς.

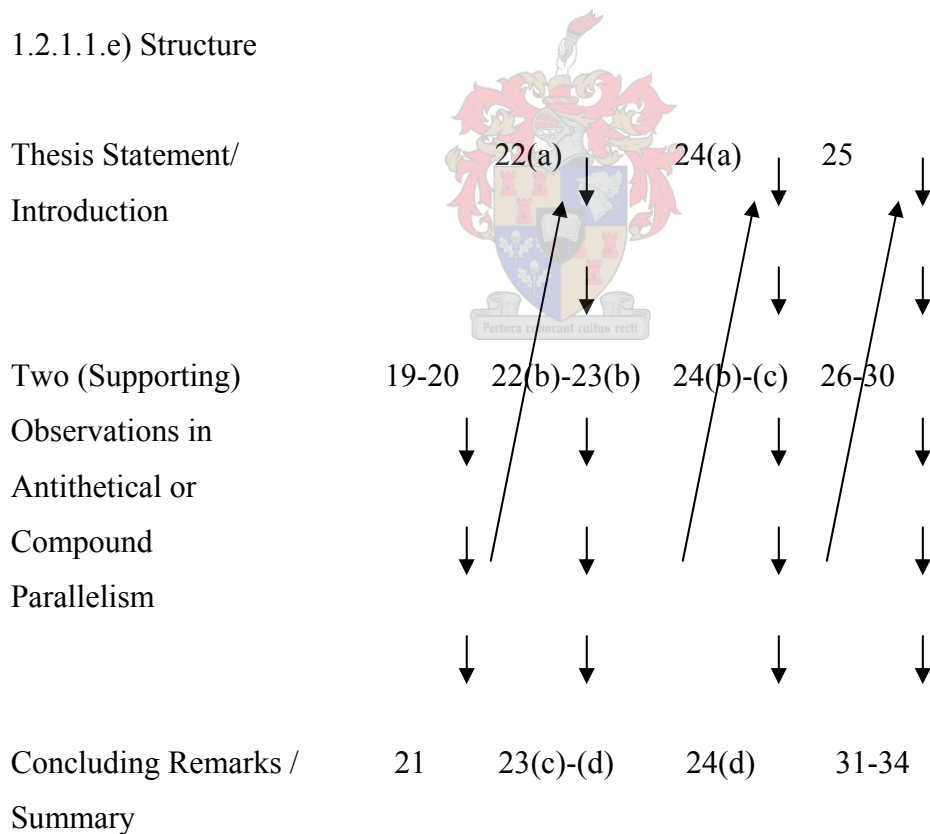
Repetition occurs in this passage in a variety of ways. (1) The passage starts with the words “λέγω ὑμῖν” (I say to you) (25(a)) and this expression is repeated in 29. (2) The discourse then commences (25(b)) and ends (34(a)) with a command not to worry (μὴ μεριμνήσατε). A further command not to worry appears in the body of the message (31(a)), while the verb “μεριμνήω” appears a further three times in the passage, clearly identifying the principal subject of these verses. (3) That which causes worry, viz. “ψυχὴ” (life) and “σῶμα” (body), are qualified by the activities associated with the maintenance of their respective well beings i.e. eating, drinking and clothing (25(b)&(c)). This pattern is repeated in 25(d) and (e) in the form of a rhetorical question. The combination of these activities is repeated again in 31(b) and they are then alluded to in both 32(a) and 33(b). (4) Two illustrations are then given which maintain the pattern of “ψυχὴ” and “σῶμα”, both of which begin with the injunction to observe carefully. The “πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ” (birds of the air) (26)

are cited as examples of creatures which eat and drink without labour and anxiety, while the “κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (lilies of the field) (28(b)), provide an example of a part of the created order that effortlessly and lavishly clothe the “χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (grass of the field). Both illustrations are completed by a rhetorical question (26(d) & 30) relating to the comparative values of the objects being described and the people being addressed/taught. In both cases the person who makes this generous provision for his creation is identified, first as “ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος” (the heavenly Father) (26(c) & 32(b)) and then as “ὁ θεός” (God) (30(a)). (4) Most striking in this passage is the repetition of various forms the personal pronoun “ὑμεῖς” (you). Specifically stated ten times in the ten verses, the sense of the message’s immediate and personal applicability to the audience is established. A relationship between the speaker, the audience and “ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος” (your heavenly Father) is also established by this repeated usage.

Progression also occurs in a number of different ways. (1) The three commands not to worry become progressively more time sensitive and specific. There is a command not to worry about “ψυχή” (life) and “σῶμα” (body), in both a general and absolute sense. Then the command not to worry refers to the activities of eating, drinking and clothing (31), presumably addressing the present. Finally the command concerning “τὴν αὔριον” (tomorrow) (34), covers future eventualities. (2) The futility of worry introduces movement. Worry does not add anything to a person’s physical stature, even in the smallest measure, in the present (27), and it does not change anything at all concerning what the future may hold (34). (3) Finally the ultimate value of the audience in the eyes of the speaker and “ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος” (your heavenly Father) is built towards. The audience is asked about their value when compared to “πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ” (the birds of the air) (26(d)); they are asked to apply the lesson of the clothing of the “χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (the grass of the field) with “τὰ κρίνα” (the lilies), given the expendability of the grass (30), and they are reassured that “ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν” (your Father) is fully aware of what they need (32) in contrast to “τὰ ἔθνη” (the pagans) who discount their importance to God by denying his existence and thus striving to provide for themselves.

The link between the first three pericopes and the final one is found in 25 with the use of the conjunction “Διὰ τοῦτο” (Therefore). This link is further strengthened, and the link between the first three pericopes is established, by the overall semantic structure. (1) 22-23 and 24 both open with a thesis statement. This is followed by two observations in antithetical parallelism (22(b)-23(a)/ 24(b&c)). Finally there is a concluding observation addressed to the listeners/readers. (2) Although 19-21 does not have an opening thesis, it does have two commands formulated in antithetical parallelism (19 & 20). These are followed by a concluding remark/thesis that confronts the audience directly (21). (3) 25-34 begins with an introduction (25) followed by two supporting observations rendered as compound parallelism (26-30 interrupted briefly by 27). The concluding observation is again directly addressed to the audience (31-34). Accordingly the overall structure, as per Emerton et al (1988:625), could thus be represented as follows:

1.2.1.1.e) Structure



The existence of this overarching structure provides evidence of careful composition by the author of the passage. By way of this composition Jesus is portrayed as a teacher of considerable skill in that his initial three succinct ethical teachings (19-21,

22&23, 24) move into a practical description of the beneficial consequences for those who will give heed to them. The two observations in 26-30 are longer than their counterparts in the other three pericopes because they flesh out and provide concrete, hence comforting, illustrations of the heavenly Father's care for His entire creation.

1.2.1.1.f) Comment

The repetitive-progressive texture of this passage immediately highlights two particular features of the text. The first concerns the personal nature of the discourse. In all, the personal pronouns ὑμῶν / σου (yourselves/you) occur nineteen times, speaking of the fact that this teaching has direct relevance to the entire audience, both collectively and individually. Then there is the forcefulness of the argument. The present imperative is employed seven times in the passage, indicating that the audiences thought and behaviour patterns require immediate attention and revision, and thus suggesting a pressing crisis facing them.

1.2.1.2 Opening - Middle - Closing Texture

This texture identifies the beginning, body and conclusion of a text or passage, thereby establishing the particular direction of the overall argument therein.

The passage under scrutiny here is a discourse attributed to Jesus by the author and displays an opening, middle and closing texture, albeit with the closing being the longest and most complex part of the discourse. The opening (19-21) is characterised by a negative imperative: “Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῶν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς” (do not store up treasures for yourself on earth)(19(a)), followed by a positive imperative: “θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῶν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῶ” (but (do) store up for yourselves treasures in heaven) (20(a)). In both cases the present command is in the plural, the significance of which will become apparent shortly. The closing portion of the passage returns to this plural imperative construct at its outset: “μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῆ ψυχῆ ὑμῶν” (do not worry about your life) (25(b)) but then, importantly, repeats the negative/positive command pattern at the end. Negatively the command is “μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες” (do not worry, saying) (31(a)), and then positively:

“ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ]” (but seek first his kingdom)(33(a)), both of which are plural verbs. This semantic feature appears to open up and close off the entire discourse as an entity.

The transition from the opening to the middle portion of the passage is found in 21 where the explanation for the commands is given: “ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου” (for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also). Here the verbs and pronouns become singular, in contrast to the plurals in 19 and 20. This singular form characterises the entire middle portion of the passage (22-24) where the subjects and objects of all the sentences are singular. In 24(d) the transition towards the closing portion involves a return to the plural: “οὐ δύνασθε θεῶν δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ” (You cannot serve both God and money).

The closing part of the discourse uses plural verbs and pronouns again. In terms of the closing portion of the passage, an opening, middle and closing are also present. As indicated above, the opening (25) and closing sections (31-34) here begin with commands: “μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν” (do not worry about your life)(25(b)) and: “μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες” (so do not worry, saying)(31(a)). In both cases the worrying is about eating, drinking and clothing and in both cases there is an explanation given. In the opening section this explanation has to do with the surpassing worth of “ψυχῇ” (life) and “σώμα”(body) over the mechanics of eating, drinking and clothing. In the closing section the explanation refers to the fact that the heavenly Father is acutely aware that “ψυχῇ” and “σώμα” require physical attention. This last explanation is then followed by a positive command: “ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ]” (seek first the kingdom of God)((33(a)) and a negative command: “μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον” (do not worry about tomorrow) (34(a)).

The middle section of the closing portion of this passage (26-30) is made up of two illustrations from nature concerning the lavishness of the heavenly Fathers provision for his creation. Both begin with an injunction: “ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ” (look at the birds of the air) (26(a)), and: “καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (see how the lilies of the field) (28(b)) and both ask questions of the audience: “οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;” (are you not much more

valuable than they?) (26(d)) and: “οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς;” (will he not much more (clothe) you?)” (30(c)).

The significance of the opening, middle and closing texture of the passage as a whole appears to relate to a shifting of emphasis from universal truth to individual applicability and back to a corporate experience. The opening segment addresses the entire audience with an injunction to be laying up treasures in the appropriate place i.e. in heaven. The importance of this then has individual applicability since where any person lays up their treasure, there their affections will also be focussed. This individual emphasis is maintained in the middle portion of the passage. A person’s attitude towards treasure, in terms of either generosity or meanness (“ἀπλοῦς” (single) versus “πονηρὸς” (bad) - see 2.2.1.4.b) below), is informed by an even deeper disposition; they will either be “ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται” (full of light) or “ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται” (full of darkness) (22(c)&23(b)). Should anyone’s attitude concerning treasure be that of meanness, then that disposition would have stemmed from a deeper, inner darkness. That core disposition is of the utmost importance since it would have been dictated by which of the two masters that person would have been serving – either God or money. In either case a universal truth applies; it is quite impossible to serve both at the same time (24(d)).

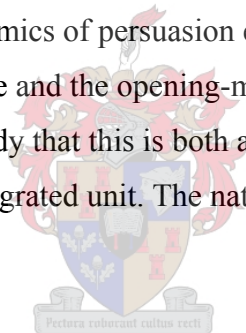
This moves the emphasis back to the larger audience in the closing portion of the passage. Now the attention is upon those who, collectively, will be obeying these dictates. As they store up treasures in heaven, their affections will be there. And as their generous dispositions express themselves in sharing, they will be demonstrating that their eyes are in fact single/good. In that state they will be serving God exclusively and so will become the recipients of his generous reassurances. They now have no need to worry about food, drink and clothing since, being correctly related to him, they are automatically assured of the heavenly Father’s provision. As they continuously seek after his kingdom and righteousness, such things will be supplied as a matter of course and there is thus no reason to worry about the future since it is both unproductive and changes nothing (27(a)&34(b)).

1.2.1.2.a) Comment

The importance of this opening, middle and closing texture, then, is that it draws attention to the changing segments of the audience being addressed at any one time. The entire audience is in mind during the opening. The middle focuses on every individual in that audience. The closing has in mind those who will respond individually to the instructions and thus become an integral part of the heavenly Father's family. They are together the objects of his promises and his commands not to worry.

1.2.1.3 Argumentative Texture and Pattern

Argumentative texture “investigates multiple kinds of inner reasoning’s in the discourse” (Robbins 1996a:21). i.e. it examines the logic of the text’s arguments and therefore has to do with the dynamics of persuasion exercised by the writer/speaker. The repetitive-progressive texture and the opening-middle-closing texture of Matt. 6:19-34 have demonstrated already that this is both an argumentative discourse and that it is a self-contained and integrated unit. The nature and force of this argument will now be examined.



1.2.1.3.a) 19-21

By repeating the thesis statement within the first pericope, it becomes possible to identify a contrasting pair of logical syllogisms here. (A logical syllogism is a form of argument consisting of a major premise, a minor premise and a conclusion, all designed to substantiate an assertion or claim).

Major premise 1 19(a). Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

Major premise 2 (b) ὅπου σὴς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει

καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν ·

Conclusion(thesis) 21. ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου,

ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου.

Major premise 2 20(a). *θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ,*

Minor premise 2 (b) ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρωσῖς ἀφανίζει
καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν·

Conclusion(thesis) 21. ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου,
ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου.

Mention must be made again of the fact that both these major premises take the form of present imperatives; one stated negatively and the other positively. The tone of the entire discourse is thus immediately established and is reinforced later in the closing pericope where present imperatives occur twice again (25(b)&33(a)), also in a negative/positive pattern. The teaching of the entire discourse does not come in the form of a suggestion or an option; there is an urgent insistence to accept its validity. The immediate reason for the negative injunction here in 19(a) is provided by the minor premise in 19(b). On earth treasures are under constant and ongoing threat of both obliteration (ἀφανίζει) and illegal appropriation (κλέπτουσιν). The utter futility of this approach to life and wealth, and the ultimate reason for the negative injunction, is given in the concluding (thesis) statement: “ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου” (for where your treasure is there your heart will be also) (21). Whoever sets about selfishly (θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν) storing up treasures on this earth will ultimately bankrupt themselves spiritually and emotionally for such treasures are insubstantial, transitory and impoverish the heart. By radical contrast, the major premise in 20(a) urges people to store up for themselves “θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ” (treasures in heaven). Interestingly this particular form of storing up is nowhere censured as being selfish, unlike the first form of accumulation that is apparently under fire in 23. In heaven treasures are incorruptible and inviolable (20(b)), which provides the ultimate reason for the positive conclusion (thesis): “ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου” (For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also) (21). The more time and attention paid to storing up heavenly treasures, the richer the investor will be since such treasures are substantial, eternal and enrich the heart.

1.2.1.3.b) 22-23

This second pericope also displays a contrasting pair of syllogisms with the repetition of the thesis statement.

Major premise(thesis) 22(a). Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός.

Minor premise (b) ἐὰν οὖν ἦ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς,
(conditional)

Conclusion 1 (c) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται.

Major premise(thesis) 22(a). Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός.

Minor premise 2 23(a) ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ᾖ,
(conditional)

Conclusion 2 (b) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται.

The significance of this figure of speech employed here will be discussed in 1.2.1.4.b) below, but for the moment it needs to be noted that as the argument stands, it is relatively unremarkable. The thesis statement moves quite logically into the conditional premises and their respective and anticipated conclusions. However the added and concluding enthymeme (being a truncated syllogism in which one of the thesis statements is not expressed but is assumed) is totally unexpected.

Thesis statement 23(c) εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν,

Supporting statement (d) τὸ σκότος πόσον.

This device does not simply interrupt the pattern of logic, it completely reverses it. The inner condition/experience of “φῶς” (light), understood until now to be something to be sought after, is spoken of here as “σκότος” (darkness) and thus the wretchedness of the final condition is accentuated. This can only be regarded as a dire warning. When an individual’s eyes are “πονηρὸς” (bad), then a pre-existing deep darkness will characterize their souls. The need to ensure that darkness doesn’t take hold in the first place is being strongly urged.

1.2.1.3.c) 24

The third pericope takes the form of a disjunctive enthymeme (i.e. a single thesis statement (enthymeme) that introduces opposing conclusions) followed by a rephrasing of the thesis statement.

Thesis statement 24(a). Οὐδείς δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν.

Supporting statement (b) ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἕνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει,

statement (c) ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει.

Thesis restatement (d) οὐ δύνασθε θεῶ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ.

The thesis statement appears in an emphatic form “Οὐδείς δύναται” (No one can), followed by the supporting alternatives. The repetition of the thesis statement also takes this emphatic form “οὐ δύνασθε” (You cannot), followed by the identification of the two masters as being none other than “θεῶ” (God) and “μαμωνᾶ” (money). The fact that this maxim is only fully articulated in the restatement adds impact to the teaching. The two masters could have been a reference to any two competing entities, but that they turn out to be God and money in dynamic antithesis underscores the strength of the assertion; it is quite impossible to serve both simultaneously and adequately.

1.2.1.3.d) 25-34

The final pericope appears to be arranged as a complete argument, i.e. it contains all of the argumentative devices that ancient rhetoricians considered necessary to present the most compelling case possible (Robbins 1996:21).

1. Introduction

25(a). Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν,

2. Thesis

25(b). μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε [ἢ τί πίητε],

(c) μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε.

3. Rationale

(d) οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστὶν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ
ἐνδύματος;

4. Confirmation of rationale

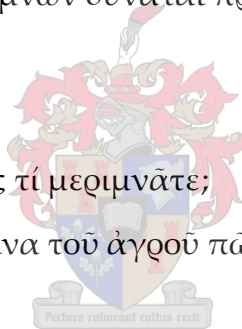
- 26(a). ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
(b) ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς
ἀποθήκας,
(c) καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά·
(d) οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;

5. Restatement of thesis

27. τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν
ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἓνα;

6. Argument from analogy

- 28(a). καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε;
(b) καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς ἀυξάνουσιν·
οὐ κοπιῶσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν·



7. Argument from antiquity

- 29(a). λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν
(b) ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομῶν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν
τούτων.

8. Argument from the contrary

- 30(a). εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ
(b) σήμερον ὄντα καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον
(c) ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν, οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;

9. Conclusion

Reiteration

- 31(a). μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες,
(b) Τί φάγωμεν; ἢ, Τί πίωμεν; ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα;

Reasons

32(a). πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν·

(b) οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρίζετε τούτων ἀπάντων.

Alternatives

33(a). ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην
αὐτοῦ,

(b) καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

Conclusion

34(a). μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον,

ἢ γὰρ αὔριον μεριμνήσει ἑαυτῆς·

(b) ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς.

This passage (1) is introduced by the speaker (Jesus), saying: “Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν” (Therefore I tell you) (25(a)), immediately making an authority claim which he repeats in 29(a). That authority is underscored by the fact that the teaching proper begins with a rhetorical syllogism (25-26), which, as Robbins (1996a:80) points out, was held by Aristotle to be the most powerful way to begin a speech. This intensity does not diminish since the teaching starts with an imperative “μὴ μεριμνᾶτε” (do not worry) (25(b)), introducing the principle subject matter of the discourse, and is repeated twice further in the form of an aorist subjunctive (μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε) (31(a)&34(a)). In total the word “μεριμνήω” appears six times in the passage.

The source of worry is immediately identified in the thesis statement (2). “ψυχῆ” (life), referring to the dynamic of existence, and “σῶμα” (body), the individual locus and expression of that existence, provoke worry by virtue of the need for food, drink and clothing to sustain them. The premise for worry, though, is immediately challenged in the argument of rationale in (3). That “ψυχῆ” and “σῶμα” amount to nothing more than physical expressions of existence is strongly questioned here and the notion is then debunked in the confirmation of the rationale (4). The audience is instructed to consider closely (ἐμβλέψατε εἰς) the fact that the “πετεῖνὰ τοῦ

οὐρανοῦ” (birds of the air) neither plant, harvest nor hoard and yet, as a matter of course, have their lives sustained by the heavenly Father. The rhetorical question which follows: “οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;” (Are you not much more valuable than they?) ((26(d)) makes the vital point; they are of far greater worth than the purely physical “birds of the air”. Their worth, then, elevates them above the creatures, is the reason they should not worry, and rests upon the fact that their lives and bodies are much more than simply physical experiences and entities.

The restatement of the thesis (5), here in the form of another rhetorical question, provides a further reason why they should not worry; such worry accomplishes nothing. Worry does not add an inch to frame.

The focus now shifts from “ψυχῆ” to the “σῶμα” with the employment of an argument from analogy (6). Asked why they are worried in the present about clothing (καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε;), the audience is again instructed to take careful note (καταμάθετε) of “τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (lilies of the field). This second analogy from nature might have build expectation of a repeat of the lesson from the first analogy, but it delivers an unexpectedly different lesson: Solomon (providing an argument from antiquity (7)) was never clothed so lavishly and splendidly as these lilies clothe the grass of the field. This notion of God’s abundant generosity in clothing the fields, expressed as a contrary argument in (8), sets up the first rebuke of the passage: “οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;” (will he not much more (clothe) you, O you of little faith?”. This notion provides the third reason why his children should not worry; God has proven His lavish faithfulness from of old.

The conclusion which follows (9) doubles back, initially, over familiar ground. This time the prohibitive “μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε” (do not worry)(31(a)), is against actually verbalizing the anxiety (λέγοντες): “Τί φάγωμεν; ἢ, Τί πίωμεν; ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα;” (“what shall we eat?” or “what shall we drink?” or “what shall we wear?”). The specific reason given for the prohibition is that “τὰ ἔθνη” (the pagans) perpetually run after (ἐπιζητοῦσιν) such things. This must constitute a further rebuke for, by definition, “τὰ ἔθνη” are either those who don’t know God or who don’t believe in Him and His goodness and thus make their own arrangements for

securing their daily provisions. To make the point even more tellingly, a further reason is added: “οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρῆζετε τούτων ἀπάντων”(Your heavenly Father knows that you need them) (32(b)). His children are those who ought to know that He knows.

Now an alternative is commanded. The children are to actively seek (ζητεῖτε), as a priority (δὲ πρῶτον), the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God. This kingdom, as will be described in 1.2.2.2.c) below, is primarily a reference to the active rule of God over their lives that is to be worked out in righteous living.

Provided the children implement these directives, they are assured of having their material needs being given to them (ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν)(33(b)).

The importance of this assertion must be highlighted, for here we have a counter to fear. When people seek God’s kingdom and righteousness, then life’s necessities will be provided by Him hence there will be no need for them to fear.

The concluding injunction returns to the main thesis, this time addressing the future. The children are not to be worrying about the future. The reason given, and the sixth reason spelled out in the discourse, evidently takes the form of a piece of folk wisdom (Kennedy 1984:60): “ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς” (every day has enough troubles of its own) (34(b)). This sententia (axiom) seems to make the point that worry is not only unhelpful, for it changes nothing, but also unnecessary since what one worries about concerning the future will not necessarily be what that future unfolded will eventually deliver.

1.2.1.3.e) Comment

By way of summary, it must be said that any formally definitive rhetorical instruction that specifically prohibits worry three times (and mentions it a further three times), and then provides six reasons why people shouldn’t worry, clearly presupposes a situation of very real and great anxiety. Plainly the cause for anxiety relates to the present and future availability of food, drink and clothing by which to maintain “ψυχῆ” and to sustain “σῶμα”. However, whether this pertains to a general life circumstance of all people or to the specific life circumstances of elements of this particular audience remains to be seen.

Equally the ultimate grounds upon which worry is prohibited bears repeating. The specific reason given to the children for them not to worry relates to their supreme worth in the Father's eyes. The concern of the Father for His children stems, not from their need of Him or His provision but from their innate value to Him. That said, however, the Father does express His concern specifically as it relates to their very real needs. In so doing He provides a specific promise that, if it is acted upon, will eliminate fear from their lives.

As a whole, then, the argumentative texture and pattern of this passage reveals a carefully structured rhetorical approach. This approach is designed to provide both impact and an overall logic to the argument. The passage begins and ends with commands. The initial command is not to lay up treasures on earth but to be laying them up in heaven (19-20). The concluding command, providing the ultimate rationale for and alternative to the initial command, is that instead people must be actively seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness (33). Between these commands, two sets of contrasting attitudes are explored. When laying up treasures, individuals will either be characterised by generosity or greed. That generosity or greed will, in turn, be determined by which of the two masters that individual is actively serving, either God or money. The message here is plain: serve God and not money. Serving God will generate and sustain a generosity of spirit towards others; serving God will involve laying up treasures in heaven; such treasures are incorruptible and will be enjoyed beyond time.

The complete argument of the closing texture of the passage then provides powerfully articulated reassurances to those who will be serving God wholeheartedly. They have no need to be anxious, now or in the future, about how their material needs will be met since the heavenly Father guarantees to provide them. That He is able to do this; more, that he is gladly willing to do this, is evidenced by His provision in the natural order. The final word is thus the repeated instruction not to worry about the future since His provision is certain to continue through all time.

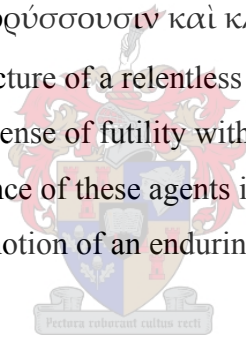
1.2.1.4 Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern

Here attention is focussed on the “range of senses the text evokes or embodies (thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, smell) and the manner in which the text evokes or embodies them” (Robbins 1996a:30). This assists in identifying the particular tone

of the discourse. The language of the entire discourse in Matt. 6:19-34 is rich in imagery and metaphor and these syntactical arrangements add to the communicative power of the argument.

1.2.1.4.a) 19-21

The instruction not to store up treasures on earth (19) is worded: “Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς”, immediately evoking a picture of piling up. The threat to this treasure is “σὴς καὶ βρῶσις” (moth and rust) which consume. According to Hagner (1993:156) moths were well known in antiquity for their destructiveness and indeed became the symbols for destruction (Job 4:19). Rust adds to this overall sense of steady erosion. “κλέπται” (thieves), on the other hand bring a sudden and invasive dimension to this depletion- they “break in and steal”. Literally they are always digging through and robbing (διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν). Together these agents of depletion invoke the picture of a relentless assault against worldly treasures that, in turn, ought to provoke a sense of futility within those who continuously seek to store up in this way. The absence of these agents in heaven, in contrast, is meant to provoke a sense of security; the notion of an enduring and satisfying reward that is guaranteed.



1.2.1.4.b) 22-23

The “lamp of the body” being the “eye” (Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματος ἐστὶν ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς) in Jewish thought apparently holds to the so-called extramission theory of vision propounded by Alemaeon in the early fifth century B.C.E. In terms of this theory the eye “produces or is the channel for some sort of visual ray” (Allison 1987:63). The eye, in other words, was understood to be a source or conduit for light, which explains why Jesus calls it “the lamp of the body”. The focus of attention is thus upon the nature of the light source. If that light source is “single” or “good” (ἀπλοῦς), for this is evidently an ethical description (Allison 1987:76), it stands to reason that this is so because it emanates from a body “φωτεινὸν” (full of light). By the same token, if the eye is “evil” or “bad” (πονηρὸς), then this is so because it

emanates from a body full of “σκότος”(darkness). That being the case, if the body is full of darkness in the first place, then only deepest darkness can emanate from it. Concerning the “πονηρός” eye, Hagner maintains that this is the “ ‘evil eye’ of Near Eastern cultures – an eye that enviously covets what belongs to another, a greedy or avaricious eye” (1993:158). The “ἀπλοῦς” (single/good) eye thus becomes identifiable as the generous eye – an eye that spurns covetousness and issues forth in generosity. By phrasing the teaching in this metaphor the audience is presented with a starkly visual representation of the inner workings of a person’s ethical disposition. The bleakness of the selfish disposition becomes tangible.

1.2.1.4.c) 24

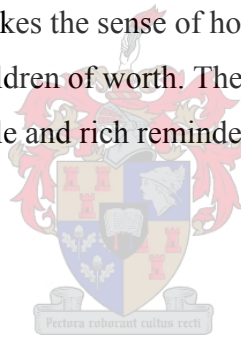
The impact that no one can serve two masters at the same time is made more telling by the use of four verbs describing intense and conflicting emotions. The choices are stark: we will either “μισήσει” (hate) the one and “ἀγαπήσει” (love) the other or we will be “ἀνθέξεται” (devoted) to the one and “καταφρονήσει” (despise) the other, highlighting the see-sawing tensions which will be the experience of anyone trying to serve two masters simultaneously. This tension can only be alleviated by the acceptance and implementation of the equally stark maxim: “οὐ δύνασθε θεῶ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ (It is not possible to serve God and mammon).

1.2.1.4.d) 25-34

The everyday and natural world becomes the source of the imagery in this final pericope. The repetitive mention of eating, drinking and clothing throughout accentuates the sense of the audience’s anxiety in that these are activities that clearly preoccupy them. Similarly the command: “Τί φάγωμεν; ἢ, Τί πίνωμεν; ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα;” (do not worry, saying, ‘what shall we eat?’ or ‘what shall we drink?’ or ‘what shall we wear?’) portrays a staccato expression of anxiety – almost as if every time a need was thought about it was articulated. Clearly the audience’s anxiety about these things was a very pressing reality.

The imagery of “τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ” (the birds of the air) neither planting, harvesting or storing away, and the picture of “τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (the lilies of the field) not labouring or spinning appears as a counter to the frenetic activity of those who must have been doing just such things in an anxious effort to make provision for themselves. The calm manner of the created order in receiving its Creator’s provision is thus portrayed as a soothing contrast and makes the double injunction to “look” (ἐμβλέψατε εἰς/ καταμάθετε) at this inactivity (26(a)&28(b)) all the more telling. The more looking that is done at the creation, the less the children will feel the need for worried activity.

The imagery of “Σολομῶν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ” (Solomon in all his splendour) not being clothed as well as “τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ” (the grass of the field) is striking in that, initially, it almost reverses the logic of the argument. One would expect a child of worth (i.e. Solomon) to be the better dressed. As it is, though, the lavish bedecking of the grass evokes the sense of how much more the Father is capable of richly clothing his children of worth. The bounty of God’s provision to His created world acts as an accessible and rich reminder that His children really have no need to fear deprivation or want.



1.2.1.4.e) Comment

What this sensory-aesthetic texture points to is probably the composition of the original audience to whom Jesus addressed these words. This is the vivid language of everyday life and, particularly in 25-34, the language of everyday rural life. The present imperatives to “look” and “see” (ἐμβλέψατε εἰς/ καταμάθετε) indicate that the evidence of the heavenly Father’s care and concern is to be found all around the audience, even as they listen to this teaching of Jesus. People with real needs require tangible assurances. Such tangible assurances are there, visually present, for those who are prepared to contemplate their true significance. The natural realm, correctly interpreted, speaks of the reality of the Father’s care for His creation.

1.2.2. INTERTEXTURE

Intertexture relates to a text's "representation of, reference to, and use of phenomena in the 'world' outside the text being interpreted" (Robbins 1996a:40) i.e. it is a text's interaction with the world (e.g. customs, values etc.) in which it (the text) is formulated and articulated.

1.2.2.1 Oral-Scribal Intertexture

In terms of this phenomenon, a text interacts with the language of other texts available or known about in a particular society. In the case of Matthew's Sermon, the interaction takes place initially by way of both a reconfiguration and recontextualization of the Hebrew Scriptures, specifically the books of Moses. Matthew's gospel has, since the early second century C.E., been traditionally regarded as the product of the pen of the apostle Matthew (formally Levi) (Emerton et al 1988: lxxvi). Although modern scholarship challenges this notion, the consensus of opinion is that, whoever the author, he was Jewish (Emerton et al 1988:58). This is significant given that the gospel writer introduces the Sermon on the Mount as follows: "Now when he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them, saying"(5:1-2). This series of Hebraisms records Jesus as going up onto the side of a mountain, where traditionally revelation had been received from God. He then sits down, as was the custom of rabbi's when they instructed their pupils. Finally, he opens his mouth, "saying", indicating that what follows is to be considered authoritative instruction (Hagner 1993:85). The writer then records the words of Jesus until 7:27 where the narrative recommences. The writer of this gospel, in other words, carefully crafts the introduction to the entire Sermon as a representation of the introductory teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God in a specifically Jewish context, a context that would have been immediately recognisable as such to his readers as a result of their familiarity with Torah.

By the same token, this representation of Jesus by the writer would have been designed by him to have been recognised by the readers of the work as a reconfiguration of the man who had originally brought revelation from Yahweh to His people Israel i.e. Moses. As Allison (1993:7) puts it, the various Moses typologies

found within the gospel “involve the conscious intention of the author and were designed to be perceived by others”. Amongst the Moses typologies present within the gospel, and of which Allison (1993:137-270) identifies at least twenty, perhaps the most significant for this paper is the representation of Jesus as a new Moses. Allison (1993:173) points out that from as early as the fourth century C.E., Eusebius “observed that (Matt.) 5:21-48 can be understood as Jesus’ transformation of the Mosaic Torah”. Although Eusebius’ view (and that of interpreters who have agreed with him since) that Matthew is deliberately picturing Jesus as a new Moses has been challenged, Allison (1993:180) maintains that the weight of evidence affirms that Matt.5:1-2 was designed by the First Evangelist to summon distinct recall. For those properly informed of and alive to Jewish tradition, the two verses constitute a Mosaic preface: the mountain is typologically analogous to Sinai, and when Jesus sits thereon, his posture evokes the image of lawgiver.

Jesus is the new Moses, articulating the new Law of the Kingdom.

With regards the actual content of the teaching, as it relates to other New Testament writings, Matthew’s Sermon has no material in common with Mark, other than 5:13 corresponding to Mark 9:50(a) (“if (salt) loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?”). A great deal of Matthew’s material, however, has an equivalent in Luke, indicating that both writers were making use of the same Q sayings source. The bulk of this material appears in Luke’s so called Sermon on the Plain, found from 6:17-7:1. Like Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, Luke’s Sermon on the Plain is recorded as having occurred after the calling of the disciples (6:12-16) and represents Jesus’ first ethical teaching to them. Both accounts are somewhat unclear as to exactly who Jesus addressed (either the disciples only or the disciples and a much larger crowd), both begin with the blessings and both have a similar conclusion: “When Jesus had finished saying these things” (Matt 7:28) and: “When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people” (Luke 7:1), all of which suggests that essentially the same occasion is being described by both evangelists.

Matthew’s Sermon is far longer than Luke’s and both have material that the other does not have (e.g. Matthew’s fulfilment of the Law pericopes (5:17-42) and Luke’s wise and foolish builders (6:46-49)), again indicating that each was, at these points, using their own unique sources. Very significantly, however, the passage under discussion from Matthew does not appear in Luke’s Sermon on the Plain. Rather,

much of it pertains to another occasion when, according to Luke, Jesus addressed a different large crowd (12:1). On this occasion the teaching is provoked by a member of the crowd asking Jesus to arrange for his brother to divide an inheritance with him (12:13). In terms of the teaching there is a warning about greed, in the form of a parable (12:15-21), before the instruction against worry is detailed (12:22-31). This teaching ends with the injunction for people to provide purses for themselves which will facilitate them storing up “a treasure in heaven... for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (12:33-34). The overall wording of this instruction about not worrying is substantially similar to Matthew’s account. Also of significance is the fact that Matthew’s pericope about the eye as the lamp of the body is found in a third location in Luke, this time in 11:34 where Jesus is beginning an address to a crowd which will grow much larger by 12:1. Finally, Matthew’s pericope about serving God and Mammon appears in exactly the same wording in Luke 16:13, in yet another context of Jesus teaching a large crowd.

1.2.2.1a) Comment

What may be concluded from this analysis of oral-scribal intertexture is that Matthew’s Sermon displays two different types of intertexture. The introduction to the Sermon (5:1-2) reconfigures Jesus as the new Moses and as such signals the fact that the content of the message that follows is of absolutely momentous importance; a new Law from God is being revealed here. The content of the Sermon in 6:19-34 then relates to material that Matthew shares with Luke from a common Q source. But, since Matthew was not in any way reliant upon Luke, but only upon this shared common source, it can safely be concluded that Matthew is here arranging these particular sayings of Jesus according to his own agenda. The content of the Sermon is under Matthew’s control, which has great significance for the rhetorical stance adopted by Jesus as described by Matthew. Jesus is introducing the financial/material guidelines by which the Kingdom community will live in community.

1.2.2.2 Cultural Intertexture

This particular texture focuses on aspects of a community’s common understanding of their own culture apart from their shared writings and oral traditions.

In addition to “the eye as the lamp of the body”, already discussed above, there are three further important references to cultural intertexture here.

1.2.2.2.a) Money (24(d))

“Money” (μαμωνᾶ) appears as a general and collective reference to the totality of accumulated material wealth and possessions (Brown 1976a: 836). The word in itself does not carry any particular moral connotation, however its usage here is significant. Money is now personified and elevated to the status of deity, standing in apposition to God. Both are earlier identified as being “masters” (κυριοίς) (24(a)), so when their particular identities are revealed here the implication can only be that this particular master is evil and, above all, counterfeit. Money, or the love of it, is not just a counterfeit but *the* counterfeit to a genuine love for God, hence a sober view of it is essential (21(a)&22).

1.2.2.2.b) The Heavenly Father (26(c)&32(b))

The “heavenly Father” (ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος) is, by all accounts, a reference to God as divine Patron. Bruce Malina (1996:147) points out that over seventy percent of Matthew’s uses of the word “father” in his gospel are references to the God of Israel and He should thus be viewed as the divine Patron of Israel. Patronage (which will be more adequately investigated in 2.3.6 below) refers to the reciprocal relationship that existed between an individual of greater social worth in a community and an individual of lesser standing (Malina 2001a:81). In terms of this reciprocal relationship the patron undertook to provide materially for his client in an economic environment that was perceived to be characterized by a limited availability of all things, including food and clothes. The client reciprocated by way of loyal support for his patron and this included providing “honor, information and political support” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:71). Of the utmost importance here is the fact that the relationship was characterised by inequality. The patron provided that which the client did not have but desperately needed, and the client reciprocated with that which the patron might wish for but did not need as an absolute necessity.

This inequality is certainly a feature of the relationship between the heavenly Father and His children clients. That the divine Patron here in Matthew takes the initiative and offers the reciprocal arrangement can only speak volumes for His graciousness and magnanimity. The responsibilities of the children are to store up treasures in heaven, to ensure that their eyes are good, to serve God and not money and, ultimately, to seek as an absolute priority God's kingdom and righteousness. In return for this the divine Patron guarantees not only that the material needs of His clients will be taken care of, but also that anxiety need not be a feature of their lives because of this assured provision. That the relationship between the Father and His children is cast in this cultural texture can only be considered to add to the impact of the message. Now the most humble Galilean peasant can be involved in a reciprocal relationship with an exalted Patron who not only guarantees to provide, but whose status and power absolutely guarantee that he is able to meet His commitments.

1.2.2.2.c) The Kingdom of God (33(a))

The "kingdom of God" (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ), according to Ladd (1977:19), is originally an Old Testament reference to the actual dynamic of God ruling over His creation and, specifically, over His people. Since He is the King of creation He has every right to personally rule over His created order. In the person of Jesus He has come to inaugurate that personal reign, hence Jesus announces: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near"(Matt 4:17). As Ladd (1977:19) describes it, this kingdom "is the authority to rule, the sovereignty of the king". Malina (2001a:9) sees this kingdom more as the realm over which God reigns and writes that the " 'Kingdom of Heaven' would be God's patronage and the clientele bound up in it". For an individual to enjoy God's patronage they first have to enter this kingdom. In either case the issue of God authoritative rule is in no doubt. That Jesus instructs the client children to seek this reign and its accompanying righteousness as an absolute priority immediately raises the question as to what it was about the existing kingdom which brought such widespread anxiety amongst his audience. This question will be addressed at a later stage, but it worth noting here that this particular element of cultural intertexture strongly suggests the existence of an alternative, and so presumably counterfeit, kingdom in existence in the society of the time. This

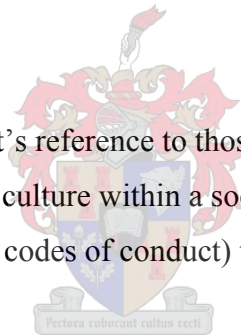
immediately alerts the reader of this discourse to something of the real weight of argument being brought to bear by Jesus as he confronts this counter-kingdom.

1.2.2.2.d) Comment

The cultural intertexture of this passage takes the form of direct references to a Jewish religious tradition, which immediately locates the speaker and his audience. The gospel writer is positioning the speaker firmly within the context of historical Yahwism and is presenting him as a spokesman for Yahweh to the present generation i.e. in a prophetic role. In so doing the audience (or at least a substantial portion of it) can automatically be assumed to have been Jewish and thus cognisant of the socio-religious nature of the instruction they were receiving. They can also be assumed to have heard these words as a rejection of the socio-political status quo.

1.2.2.3 Social Intertexture

Social intertexture involves a text's reference to those elements of a society that are not specific to any one particular culture within a society as a whole, i.e. to those elements (e.g. social roles, social codes of conduct) that are common to everyone within the broader community.



The social intertexture of this passage revolves around a series of attitudes and behaviors relating to material wealth as it was viewed and handled in late Second Temple Palestine.

1.2.2.3.a) Storing up Treasures (19(a)&20(a))

The need to store up treasures (θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυρούς), then as now, speaks both of the habitual practice of human beings and of the distinctly insecure nature of earthly treasures. Wealth in the ancient world, according to Blomberg (1992:122), was stored principally as valuable cloth and gold. Cloth was under constant threat from moths while gold required being hidden/stored within or under a house – hence the reference to thieves literally “digging through stealing” (διορύσσοουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν). The effort to store up securely often arises from an attempt to control

the present and the future through the accumulation of material possessions. The assumption is that people need to be making provision in the present for what might not be available in the future. However, that it was practice in Jesus' day to be storing store up commodities as valuable as expensive cloth and gold (if we accept Bloomberg's assertion above), then we need to be alert to the possibility that such a storing up might have reference to an accumulation of a sort other than that of simply making wise provision for the future. As it is, and as we have already established, Jesus strongly prohibits such a selfish storing up. Rather he urges people to be storing up "treasures in heaven" (θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῶ). Such a designation, according to Boring (1995:210), was "a common Jewish image for eschatological reward". In the context this speaks of the true durability and value of a treasure that was to be stored up in the present time for enjoyment in the eschaton.

1.2.2.3.b) Serving Two Masters (24(a))

Serving "two masters" (δουλεύειν) would have immediately brought to mind a pervading reality of ancient life – slavery. Analysing the usage of the word "slave" (δοῦλος) in the New Testament, Tuente (1978:595) concludes that for the most part slaves owed their masters "exclusive and absolute obedience" and that a slave's labour "earned him neither profit nor thanks". Given this reality, the imagery used here probably relates not so much to a person's social status as to having no real status at all. Slaves were generally without social status and without freedom; they were simply the property and instruments of their masters. Used of a person under the mastery of money, therefore, this is a chilling analogy. The person who is a slave of money may very well be a member of society with great material and social status within the community, but in reality, and from God's perspective, such a person is utterly under the control of another and has no freedom at all. This bondage may be recognized, by those who have eyes to see it, in people who's lives are characterized by endless attempts at making money and yet who demonstrate endless anxiety and profound dissatisfaction, just by very way of their frenzied attempts to have yet more. To be a slave of God, on the other hand, is to be free of money's control, even though such a person may well have great social and material resources. The evidence of their

freedom is their material generosity towards others, out of an understanding of their obligation to God who commands such generosity from his children.

1.2.2.3.c) Food, Drink, Clothing (25-34)

As indicated in 1.2.1.4.d) above, the repetitive mention of food, drink and clothing in this passage acts both as a continual reminder of the ongoing need all people have for such commodities and as an indication of the fact that their provision was a very real source of anxiety for the audience. The precise nature of the situation that gave rise to this acute anxiety will be examined below.

1.2.2.3.d) Comment

The social intertexture of this passage speaks directly to those activities that the members of Jesus' assumed audience were evidently directly involved in. They were apparently involved in trying to store up material wealth as the very means by which they could secure present and future supplies of food, drink and clothing, but, as has been pointed out, may very well have had a different motivation behind the activity. That these activities involved an ethical dimension, i.e. serving a particular master, does not appear to have been sufficiently appreciated by them, hence this corrective teaching. This immediately elevates such commonplace activities to the realm of the spiritual and religious, and in so doing underscores the importance of all human thought and activity in the eyes of God.

1.2.2.4 Historical Intertexture

Analysis of historical intertexture focuses attention on the historical, social and cultural events that are referred to, either explicitly or implicitly, in a text.

This discourse, in the mouth of Jesus, provides no overt information concerning the historical realities he is dealing with. That he is addressing a situation in which the audience is significantly anxious about the daily provision of their food, drink and clothing has been established, but precise historical data concerning the context and form of this need and anxiety will need to come from outside of the text. What is of importance at this point, however, relates to the actual historicity of the occasion of

this teaching. In his analysis of the authorship of Matthew's gospel, Hagner (1993:lxxvi) concludes that it is feasible to argue that the gospel contains at least some traditions that can be attributed directly to the eye-witness Matthew, who, as a tax-collector was likely to have kept records of his experiences. These traditions include the material "underlying the discourses".

Concerning the Q source, already established as having supplied much of the discourse material, Kloppenborg (1998:3), maintains that Q is actually an argument for a particular way of looking at Jesus i.e. a recovery and arrangement of existing materials about Jesus that argues for a particular view of him. These materials include, amongst other things, "lists of established topics, some recalling the particular pronouncements or exploits" of Jesus (1998:3). Certainly that would appear to be the way the author of this gospel is using the material here. He is presenting Jesus as the authoritative spokesman for the kingdom of God and is attributing a quite specific teaching to him. This teaching, then, whether sourced from Q or from vestiges of the apostle Matthew's original contribution to the gospel, can therefore be reasonably regarded as having had an authentic historical genesis. The content of this teaching, in other words, must have had an original verbal performance, a performance that gave rise to Q's existence or Matthew's memory in the first place. As Hagner (1993:xliv) notes, the Swedish scholars Riesenfeld and Gerhardson have demonstrated

the plausibility not only of the existence of such a holy tradition and its derivation from Jesus but also of the existence of a first-century milieu where memorization was a fundamentally important pedagogical tool, in which the careful transmission of the tradition along the lines of rabbinic transmission of oral Torah can have taken place.

That this passage, then, represents a record of an authentic verbal performance by Jesus will be an assumption with which I will proceed. Just precisely what socio-historical circumstances might have given rise to this performance, however, will have to be recovered from extra-textural sources.

1.2.2.4.a) Comment

An analysis of the intertexture of Matthew 6:19-34 indicates that the writer of the gospel was probably reliant upon both the Q source and his own unique source/s (the apostle Matthew's own testimony?) for the material he uses here. This material is then

uniquely employed and shaped to provide the content of Jesus teaching at this point in the Sermon on the Mount. The actual substance of the original performance of this teaching cannot be precisely recovered in terms of existing sources and current scholarship. However, the assumption that this is an accurate record of the essence of an historical performance, by Jesus, to an original audience is entirely reasonable, and will be an assumption with which this study will continue.

Certainly the cultural and social intertexture reflects content appropriate to a largely Jewish audience in rural first-century Galilee. The imagery is pastoral and the subject matter dealt with from an ethical standpoint, reflecting the fact that it was given to a largely rural audience familiar with Old Testament ethical instruction. The actual subject matter of the passage is down to earth and mirrors something of a social crisis. The need to be storing up treasures in heaven, to be cultivating generosity, to be serving God exclusively, and at the same time not to be worrying about what and when the audience will eat, drink and wear, suggests a situation of considerable tension. Clearly the everyday necessities of life were not plentifully or readily available to all, and yet there is a call here for the audience to be focussed on an altogether different reality. The divine Patron, through His spokesman, is calling for an ethical transformation with regards the earning and employment of money in a situation that seems to reflect a different approach being practiced in the society of the day. These current attitudes and practices are precisely what have occasioned this particular discourse. The precise cause of these prevailing attitudes and behaviors still need to be established.

1.2.3 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

This particular texture involves “the overall perception in the text of the context in which people live in the world” (Robbins 1996a:71), i.e. it provides insight into the nature of the text as an articulation of the social and cultural location of the people who inhabit the text.

1.2.3.1 Specific Social Topics

Such topics reveal the religious responses made to the world by the speaker of, or characters portrayed in, the text.

This passage in Matthew commences with strongly reformist tones (19-21). Quite plainly there was a movement underway in which people were storing up for themselves treasures on earth. This selfish storing up constituted a corruption of the ideal that God had for all humankind i.e. that their hearts would be orientated towards Him as the ultimate treasure. The social dimension of this storing up involved the accumulation of treasure that must have been taking place at the expense of others. In a world of limited good (to be discussed below in 2.3.5) any accumulation beyond necessity had to involve deprivation for others. The call being made by the speaker here, then, is to an attitude and behaviour in which God would be honoured and other people would be taken into account, and this call thus assumes the possibility of such an outcome being both possible and viable.

The reformist stance is maintained by the call for a generosity of attitude and behaviour (22-23). Only an individual characterized by a generous spirit would be capable of sharing whatever he or she had or would accumulate, thereby meeting God's expectations for social responsibility within society. The selfish individual would be incapable of such largesse and hence the need here for fundamental change. This call is thus ultimately for a review of the nature of the light within every individual as they lived together in society.

That individual responsibility is echoed, and the key to a generous spirit is given, by the insistence that no one can serve God and money simultaneously (24). Again the call here is reformist; an individual must ascertain which of the two masters they are serving since this will determine their overall material disposition towards others in society. Only by serving God exclusively will a person be possessed of a generous spirit towards others, and this in turn will dictate how and where they accumulate their treasures and thus, in an ultimate sense, whether they either loose them or keep them. At this point the approach of the discourse becomes dramatically thaumaturgical. Every individual who responds positively to the reformist injunctions is guaranteed, in the here and now and as part of the community of God's children, material provision from the hand of the heavenly Father. No indication is given as to how the Father will effect this provision, making the promises all the more dramatic. These promises then immediately become the grounds upon which the children should cease worrying. There is no need to worry since the Father has promised to provide for all His children. The thaumaturgical tone at this point adds substantial weight to the overall argument of the speaker since it draws attention to the fact that it is actually the God

of creation who is making such promises and He is someone, as the audience well knows, who has the credibility and power to keep His promises. This then provides the basis for the children of this Father not to worry; He knows what they need and He will provide those needs.

1.2.3.1.a) Comment

This passage, in summary, can be seen as addressing socio-financial realities from within a religious and ethical framework. The call is for a transformation of individual socio-financial orientation, attitude and behaviour that will thus align that individual with the material purposes of God for the entire community. Such a transformation will immediately result in a change in the material status quo of both the sharers and receivers of that generosity under such a dispensation.

1.2.3.2 Common Social and Cultural Topics

Such topics provide the overarching framework within which a society actually functions; a framework that becomes learned “consciously or unconsciously...[as]... cultural values, patterns, or codes” (Robbins 1996a:75).

Embedded within this discourse is the entire social and cultural world of the audience. Given the importance of these topics for this entire study, however, they will not be dealt with here but will be fully explored below in Chapter Two.

1.2.3.3 Final Cultural Categories

These categories identify “the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people” (Robbins 1996a:86), and thus distinguishes between people who belong, for example, to either the dominant culture or a counter-cultural group in a particular society.

Without doubt Jesus is portrayed as adopting a counter-cultural stance in this teaching and in the Sermon as a whole. The Sermon begins with a description of the blessedness of those who enter the kingdom of Heaven i.e. who become God’s children. This kingdom is one that is substantially different from, and thereby in direct opposition to, the kingdom that evidently holds dominant sway in Palestine at the time

Jesus is pictured as teaching. God's emerging rule and order inevitably clash with such a status quo. Which is precisely what is taking place in this discourse. Storing up and worrying about earthly treasures are evidently the behaviours that characterize the citizens of the present kingdom, while putting money and themselves first are the attitudes that underpin such behaviors. The children of God, by marked contrast and as Jesus insists, will put God and others first and will be characterized behaviourally by material generosity and absence of worry.

Whether this counter-cultural stance of Jesus is addressed only to the crowd that is present or whether it is also aimed at specific agents or typical representatives of the present and dominant kingdom who might have been present in that crowd, and who could therefore be relied upon to convey such a stance to their absent masters, is not indicated from within the discourse itself. However the fact that John the Baptist, as a preacher of this emerging kingdom had already been jailed (4:12), after having incurred the wrath of the Pharisees and Sadducees (3:7) and Herod Antipas (Mark 6:14ff.), suggests that opposition to the kingdom of God (or at very least, to the spokespeople of the Kingdom) had already become identifiable within Palestinian society. As such it would be reasonable to assume that Jesus was addressing that opposition, albeit through their representatives who might have been among the crowd, along with everybody else present and as is suggested by 5:20 and Jesus' words in other discourses (e.g. 11:18; 23:1-4).

1.2.3.3.a) Comment

Again the social and cultural texture of this passage reveals great tensions. An overall tension between the kingdom of Heaven and the earthly kingdom is to be expected, but that the socio-economic dimension of the earthly kingdom is so obviously under scrutiny here, and that it so obviously requires transformation, indicates the existence of a situation that Jesus was concerned enough to address and so to transform. This concern must have stemmed from the fact that the socio-economic circumstance of the audience was causing them to be materially deprived to the point of want and thus palpable anxiety. These precise circumstances will need to be identified from extra-biblical sources since they are not overtly dealt with in the discourse.

1.2.4. IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

The ideological texture “concerns the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes of a particular writer and a particular reader” (Robbins 1996a:95) of any text.

As the reader of Matt.6:19 -34 I am choosing not to explore the ideological texture of this passage from the standpoint of my own individual location since I have already made my personal motivation for this study known in E. above. Furthermore my stated intention of employing a social-scientific approach to address what I consider to be the problem here suggests my bias in favour of this particular methodology providing solutions to the problem.

In terms of the ideology of the author of the passage, on the other hand, and adopting the mode of discourse provided by social-scientific criticism (Robbins 1996a:105), this passage provides evidence for the author’s particular concern with the social value (as a “general quality and direction in life that human beings are expected to embody in their behaviour” (Pilch & Malina 2000:xv)) of *trust*, specifically as it relates to the storing up of treasures in their various dimensions. Trust, according to Pilch (in Pilch & Malina 2000:202), and as it operated in the Mediterranean society of Jesus’ day, has reference to the “search for security” in a world that was understood to be beyond the control of human beings, and to be characterized by limited good, i.e. by the existence and availability, in finite quantities, of all resources (and as will be more adequately described in 2.3.5 below). Under such circumstances people sought social and material security in someone or something that they could trust to provide for them what they could not provide or guarantee for themselves. Trust or hope, then, is “a value that serves as a means to attaining an honorable existence, so long as the source is trustworthy and reliable” (Pilch & Malina 2000:202). This immediately introduces the notion of patronage (see 2.3.6 below) in terms of which patrons would provide their clients with a range of commodities (from foodstuffs to physical protection), while clients would provide their patron’s with a range of services (largely words and deeds) that would enhance the patron’s public honor and status. Very importantly, these relationships were expected to operate, for the most part, on the basis of trust or faithfulness/*fides* (Hanson & Oakman 1998:72).

The author of Matthew’s gospel is closely concerned with the matter of trust in this passage, most obviously in the fourth pericope (25-34), as we have already identified from Jesus’ rebuke of the children for their lack of trust in the heavenly Father as

divine Patron. They need not worry, as Jesus corrects them, about the certainty of enjoying food, drink and clothing in the present time, just because their heavenly Father and Patron is so reliable and trustworthy, as the birds and grass give evidence aplenty. By worrying the children are behaving like pagans who, by definition, do not believe in God nor trust in His provision. Pagans, moreover and is detailed in the first three pericopes, are characterized by their storing up of treasures on earth, by their inner dispositions of selfishness and by the fact that they serve money and not God. Pagans, in other words, are shown in this discourse to be totally preoccupied with a material existence that revolves around a selfish earning and employment of material wealth.

What Matthew seems to do in this discourse, then, is to very closely link the issue of belief/unbelief in God with a corresponding and contrasting attitude towards and employment of material wealth. Those who believe in God are to be characterized by a laying up of treasures in heaven, a generosity of spirit, a serving of God and not mammon and then, most vitally, by a trust in Him to provide all their physical and social needs as their faithful Patron. The pagans, on the other hand and in spite of hearing the call here to change, will be known by their altogether different way with wealth, as a result of their belief and trust in earthly treasures and mammon to provide for them. As such Matthew is actually recording the articulation of a spiritually based material ethic. Jesus is rooting this ethic of wealth within a belief in God as heavenly Father. Relating to Him requires a specific approach to wealth.

Moreover, by analysing exactly how, where and in what form the identifiably pagan, and hence prohibited, materialism being spoken about here was manifesting itself in the society of Jesus' day, I believe that the writer of the gospel gives us some indication as to who he understands Jesus' intended target audience to be at this point in the discourse. In a Jewish context, and as will be more fully developed in 5.1.3 below, the Temple in Jerusalem was where massive quantities of material treasures were being stored up (Hanson & Oakman 1998:142). More, the fact money was being stored up in the Temple and elsewhere in Palestine in coin (and particularly gold coin) form, as will be described in 4.2.4.3 below, immediately introduces the reality of the Roman occupation of Palestine since coins were "an elite political tool, not a universal economic medium" (Oakman in Stegemann et al 2001:343). Coins were minted by the Romans, embossed with Roman propaganda, and employed as tools to subjugate conquered peoples (Carter 2001:20). Thus the gospel writer's record of

Jesus prohibiting the storing up of earthly treasures and the serving of money as a god, as evidences of pagan behaviour, strongly suggests that he envisages Jesus as addressing the power elites in both Jerusalem and Rome, both of whom were patently pagan in terms of the ethic being articulated here, and as we shall see later in this paper. Certainly this is what Matthew has Jesus doing directly in 21:13 where he calls the Temple “a den of robbers”, and in 23:16 where he calls “blind guides” those who get others to swear by the gold of the Temple as opposed to the Temple itself.

1.2.5. RELIGIOUS TEXTURE

The sacred texture focuses attention on what a text has to say about God or the gods, and about human beings relating to Him/them.

1.2.5.1 Deity

As Divine Being, God is given two names in this passage. The first is “God”(ὁ θεός) in 24(d), and this name is used as a description of Him as the ultimate reality. That He is contrasted with “money”(μαμωνᾶ) draws attention both to the surpassing majesty of His being compared with the insignificance of money, and to the frightening hold which money can come to have on a human being in that it can act as his god and master.

From this exalted status He becomes your “heavenly Father”(ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος) in 26(c) and 32(b), which is how the obedient children meet Him. As heavenly Father He is portrayed as the one who has the power and authority to order all nature and yet as the one who graciously cares for all that He has made. The overwhelming sense of this title must be its focus on divine involvement with and generosity towards His children living in human community.

1.2.5.2 Holy Person

Jesus, according to Matthew, declares the words recorded in 6:19-34 and twice includes a personal emphasis. In 25(a) he says: “Therefore I tell you” (Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν) and in 29(a) he says: “Yet I tell you”(λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν) and in so doing is

automatically understood to be making an authority claim. He is claiming to speak authoritatively on behalf of God and to the heavenly Fathers children. Concerning the nature of the relationship established by such claims we can assume that Jesus is here taking on the role of broker. As broker, whose role will be discussed more completely below, he mediates between an otherwise inaccessible God and a desperately needy people. Here he mediates the promises and conditions of God to the audience generally, and could thus reasonably be considered to be the one whose mediation results in God becoming heavenly Father to those in the audience who are prepared to accept what he has to say. His honor and reputation are thereby staked upon the relationship he claims to have with the Father.

1.2.5.3 Divine History

The continuity between God's provision for his people Israel in the wilderness in Sinai (Exodus 16:4ff.) and these children, presumably in a Galilean wilderness, is implied by the passage. More, the specific conditions for the continued assurance of that provision are too similar to be ignored. In Leviticus 26:1 God promises that if Israel refuses to bow down to idols, then he would send them rain and crops in abundance. The same issue of idolatry surfaces here; the moment these people place God exclusively ahead of money, and then behave generously towards others as God behaves generously towards them, they can then rest assured in the certainty of his generous provision. By the same measure, if they will not forsake *the* counterfeit idol, money, and reflect that by way of material meanness towards others, then they can expect only the certainty of their own provision that exists as ever eroding and threatened earthly treasures. Israel had already long since discovered that idolatry paid poor dividends even in the present time.

1.2.5.4 Religious Community

Entrance into the kingdom, i.e. becoming a child of God, is described at the onset of the Sermon. Here such children can be identified as those who exercise faith, by way of obeying the divine injunctions, and so prove themselves to belong to God. What this clearly implies is that from this time onwards, and in terms of the coming Kingdom, to be a child of God will not be determined by ethnicity, i.e. by being born

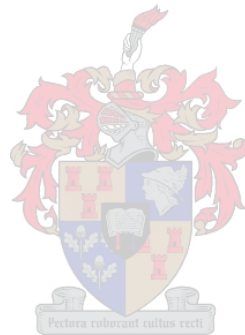
Jewish or, effectively, by becoming Jewish through proselytisation. This also leaves open the possibility that some in the audience will not respond positively to the teaching and so will demonstrate themselves to be His enemies, even though they are ethnically Jewish. Interestingly, those who exist as strangers to the heavenly Father and His provision are termed “τὰ ἔθνη”(pagans) – the very designation given to those who were outside of ethnic Israel in terms of the covenant through Moses. This strongly suggests that a major reversal is imminent. Some who once considered themselves as children of God by virtue of being children of Israel may now find themselves to be among “τὰ ἔθνη”, while some of “τὰ ἔθνη” may now find themselves to be children of the heavenly Father, all depending on their response to this discourse. The members of the heavenly Father’s family, whoever they eventually prove to be, are expected to be characterized by obedience to His ethical injunctions on an ongoing basis, showing their kinship through generosity towards others.

1.2.5.5 Comment

The overall sense of the religious texture of this passage has to be that of a God simultaneously dealing with two groups of human beings; those who are or are becoming His children and those who aren’t and wont. After a description of the attitudes and behaviors that distinguish the two, the almost exclusive focus of attention is upon those who are or will become His and of whom He expects exclusive faithfulness to Himself and His expectations. His conditions, and thus His children’s obligations, include storing up treasures in heaven, making sure that their eyes are good, loving God and not money, seeking as a priority His Kingdom and righteousness. His undertakings, and thus His children’s benefits, include a sure and certain provision of food, drink and clothing in the present time and, as a consequence of that provision, a freedom from fear, together with an enjoyment in the eschaton of a treasure that will not erode in value nor be taken from them.

With the force and direction of Jesus’ argument now established through this socio-rhetorical analysis, attention needs to be turned now to how such an argument might have been heard by Jesus’ first century audience, embedded as they were in their

particular social-cultural world. This will now be attended to in the chapter that follows.



CHAPTER 2:
A SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF HONOR-SHAME & KINSHIP AS
THEY PERTAIN TO MATTHEW 6:19-34

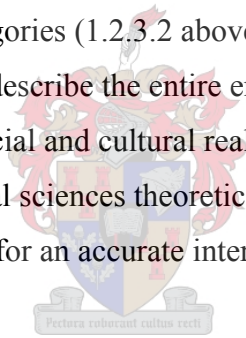
The Socio-Rhetorical analysis undertaken above, in keeping with the purposes for which it has been employed in analysing Matt 6:19-34 described at the beginning of the previous chapter, has provided initial assistance in this attempt at negotiating meaning between the “social location and personal interests” of a modern reader and the “social location and personal interests the text embodies” (Robbins 1996a:2). Specific attention is now given to further understanding the social location of the audience, to whom the discourse found in the text of Matt 6:19-34 was originally addressed, as implied by the assumed author of the text.

2.1 AUDIENCE

As it relates to the original audience to whom this religious-ethical discourse was first directed, and according to the author of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus returned to Galilee following his baptism (3:13) and temptation in the desert (4:1), and took up residence in Capernaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (4:13). From Capernaum he “went throughout Galilee, teaching... preaching... and healing” (4:23). The Sermon on the Mount is a record of an initial teaching, addressed explicitly to his disciples (5:2) and implicitly to a much larger crowd (7:28), somewhere within Galilee. Concerning the composition of the crowd, Matthew records that “Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him” (4:25). Given that Galilee has already been identified by the gospel writer as “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:15), and that many of the residents of the Decapolis would have been non-Jews, it would be reasonable to assume that this crowd must have consisted of both Jews and Gentiles alike. Similarly the fact that the Baptist’s teaching had attracted at least Pharisee’s and Sadducee’s (3:7), and that the Baptist had insisted that “after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry”(3:11), it can be safely assumed that Jesus’ audience would have included a similar cross-section of societal groupings, all eager to listen to the one greater than John.

Whatever their composition, Matthew tells us that at the end of Jesus' teaching "the crowds were amazed . . . because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (7:28-29), clearly indicating that the bulk of the crowd had understood his teaching as being authoritative in spite of a lack of socio-historic detail in the discourse. Malina (1996:24) accounts for this phenomenon as stemming from the fact that first-century Palestine was a high context society. In terms of this notion, a high context society is one in which a great deal of information concerning the assumptions behind and the actual functioning of that society are widely and implicitly understood, having been inculcated by socialization. As a result little descriptive detail is required and "little new information is necessary for meaning to be constant" (Malina 1996:25). Matthew thus records Jesus providing so few background details here because his audience would have been able to provide them for themselves.

Interpreting the discourse today, however, requires that we seek to recover the common social and cultural categories (1.2.3.2 above) that were taken for granted by the original audience since they describe the entire embedded social and cultural world of that audience. These social and cultural realities will now be described and analysed, using some of the social sciences theoretical models, in order to provide the inter-personal context necessary for an accurate interpretation of the discourse.



2.2 HONOR-SHAME

According to Neyrey (1998:4), modern scholarship is coming to accept as "fact that honor and shame were pivotal values in antiquity that structured the daily lives of people around the Mediterranean, including Jesus and his disciples". He also points out (1998:11) that social anthropologists such as Campbell, Pitt-Rivers and Gilmore have very adequately described these values of honor and shame, but that it was Bruce Malina who, in 1981, made these findings more widely available to New Testament studies. Accordingly Malina (2001a) will become a primary source for much of what follows and he says (2001a:31) that honor has to do with an individuals "claim to worth *and* the social acknowledgement of that worth". Both the particular status or worth that a person has in his or her own eyes, and that status/worth being publicly acknowledged and responded to, are at the heart of honor. As Malina (2001a: 28)

further indicates, there are three closely allied values that flow into the notion of honor, and which help in defining it i.e. authority, gender status and respect.

2.2.1 Authority

Authority is a reference to the social ability that an individual has to “control the behaviour of others” (Malina 2001a:29). This has nothing to do with the threat or use of physical force, but with the influence of a person’s authority over another (e.g. parent over child) in determining that other person’s behaviour.

2.2.2 Gender Status

Gender status, on the other hand, refers to a specific set of behaviours that are expected of an individual, depending on their gender. In the Mediterranean world males were a part of the outside and public environment, while females inhabited the private and interior world of the home or family courtyard (Malina 2001a:47). The respective roles and activities of males and females corresponded to this arrangement of public/private space. Husbands were the head of their households, responsible for earning a living through farming or the practice of a trade and, vitally, for protecting the honor and sexual integrity of their wives, daughters and sisters. Females administered the household, prepared the food and, equally vitally, were expected to display “sexual exclusiveness, discretion, shyness, restraint and timidity” (Malina 2001a:47). As both sexes accepted and adopted their respective roles and behaviours, honor would accrue to them as individuals and, particularly, to them as representatives of the family. As Hanson and Oakman (1998:26) summarize it:

Males are expected to embody the family’s honor in their virility, boldness, sexual aggression, and protection of the family. This is symbolized in the males penis and testicles. Females are expected to keep the family from shame by their modesty, restraint, sexual exclusivity and submission to male authority; this is symbolized in the females hymen.

In this specific context the word “shame” was used in a positive sense meaning “sensitivity for one’s own reputation, sensitivity to the opinion of others” (Malina 2001a:49). Negatively, and usually, a shameless person would be one who did not

accept and live up to such societal norms i.e. they behaved in a way that was the exact opposite of the way an honorable person behaved.

2.2.3 Respect

Respect, finally, refers to a particular attitude and behaviour that an individual was expected to display towards those people who were in ultimate control of their existences (Malina 2001a:30). At a human level this would be applied to a child in relation to his/her parents, and in an ultimate sense to an individual in relation to God or the gods. Here “respect and homage” (Malina 2001a:30), together with appropriate behaviour, was expected to be displayed towards the person/s who controlled an individual's existence. As such this notion of respect constituted “religion” in the first century world. Religion was respect in action.

Honor, then, could be considered to refer to the sum of all the socially sanctioned and expected attitudes and behaviours, both displayed and recognized, when the values of authority, gender status and respect met. As Pitt-Rivers (in Neyrey 1998:15) describes it:

Honor is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is the estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognised by society, his *right* to pride.

Such honor formed the basis upon which individuals related to others in their social worlds. Honor was both “a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgement of worth” (Malina 2001a:31), and as such regulated who could associate with whom (in terms of a social hierarchy) and how they then did associate i.e. what attitudes, roles and behaviours were prescribed for both parties by the initial relationship.

The notion of honor has immediate applicability in Matt 6:19-34. The honor of both the speaker (Jesus) and the audience he is addressing immediately come into play, given the public nature of the discourse. Jesus, in verbally and publicly engaging his audience, is adopting a stance of authority in that he is evidently attempting to exercise influence over that crowd's thinking and behaviour through his words.

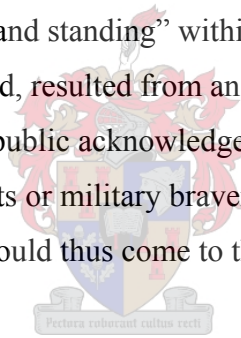
Whether or not the crowd considers that he has the necessary status to adopt such a

stance remains to be seen. Similarly, the respect/religious dimension of the discourse is immediately established by references to God and the heavenly Father as the one who, having ultimate control of human lives, is here seeking to exercise that control by way of calling for attitudinal and behaviour change from these particular listeners through the teaching of Jesus.

2.2.4 Honor: Ascribed or Acquired

Honor had two specific initial sources in Mediterranean society; either it was ascribed or it was acquired (Malina 2001a:32). In terms of being ascribed, honor came to people by virtue of the family into which they were born. If an individual was born into a noble family, they automatically assumed that measure of honor that their family already enjoyed in the community. According to Neyrey (1998:15), even village families could enjoy ascribed honor depending on their specific ranking “in terms of their reputation, wealth and standing” within their particular village.

Acquired honor, on the other hand, resulted from an individual’s specific achievements and the necessary public acknowledgement of them. So, for example, an individual’s civic achievements or military bravery or sporting prowess would be publicly recognized and honor would thus come to them (Malina 2001a:33).



2.2.5 Challenge and Riposte

Irrespective of the source of honor, indeed even in the event of an individual having little honor from either source, it was a quality/commodity that was ceaselessly strived for by all. As Neyrey (1998:16) describes it, both peasants and elites alike “engaged in a social competition for incremental increases in reputation and prestige through the interminable game of push-and-shove called challenge and riposte”. In terms of this “game”, an individual signalled their intention of entering into “the social space of another” by issuing a challenge to that other (Malina 2001a:33). The purpose of entering another’s space could be for both positive and negative reasons. Positively an individual might wish to enter another’s space in order to share that space or to initiate a mutually co-operative relationship. Negatively the entry might be designed to displace the other entirely from their space (Malina 2001a:33). Whatever the motive, the ultimate goal was always the same: the increase of one’s own honor in a world

where even this commodity was understood to exist in limited and finite quantity (Neyrey 1998:17).

The actual challenge took the form of a word or a deed or both (e.g. a word of praise or promise, a request for help, or the promise of help combined with the giving of a gift) (Malina 2001a:33). This challenge was always made publicly and between individuals of the same social standing and worth. In the event of an inferior publicly challenging a superior, the superior would not respond at all, thereby reinforcing their own honor and confirming the dishonor or shame of the challenger.

Between social equals, though, any challenge was automatically evaluated, by the recipient and audience alike, from the “viewpoint of its potential to dishonor their self-esteem, their self-worth” (Malina 2001a:35). Following such an evaluation the recipient of the challenge issued a response/riposte that could involve either no response at all (regarded as a loss of honor for the recipient since they thereby indicated a lack of the necessary skills of riposte), or an acceptance of the validity of the challenge with the offer of a counter-challenge (thereby perpetuating the encounter), or the positive rejection of the challenge by way of scorn or contempt. In this instance the initial challenger would be required to counter such an insulting response and thus gain the honor at stake in the entire interaction (Malina 2001a:35). The importance of this “game” can scarcely be overestimated since, as Malina (2001a:36) notes, “every social interaction that takes place outside one’s family or outside one’s circle of friends is perceived as a challenge to honor, a mutual attempt to acquire honor from one’s social equal”.

In Matt 6:19-34 Jesus makes his challenge to his audience in the form of a word and a promise of help/provision. The challenge of the word is relatively unremarkable in that this would have been normal when addressing a crowd. However the challenge contained in the promise of material provision hints at the possibility that Jesus may have had a broader audience in mind, given that it suggests that the heavenly Father’s patronage is more generous and reliable than the societal patronage in operation in the society at the time (see 2.3.6 below).

2.2.6 Honor Symbolized by Blood and Name

The importance of the Mediterranean family comes into focus here. As Neyrey (1998:21) points out, “the most important institution in antiquity was the family,

which conveyed to its members their personal identity and social standing”. Honor, in other words, resided in the “blood” and thus the family was regarded as the very embodiment of honor and hence its integrity had to be maintained at all costs.

The maintenance of that honor had to be effected in light of the fact that everybody outside of the family circle, until proved to be otherwise, was presumed to be dishonourable and a potential enemy i.e. they were assumed to be seeking your families dishonor. (Neyrey 1998:36). The presence of this dynamic in all social interactions leads to such a society being described as “agonistic”.

The particular measure of honor ascribed to a family was symbolized by the good name that they carried. Although a good name was something an individual received as a result of being born into a particular family, the family’s collective good name had to be maintained at all costs by the entire family behaving in a socially sanctioned manner (Neyrey 1998:21). This good name took on additional importance by virtue of the fact that Mediterranean families were not autonomous or self-sufficient. As such they had to enter into alliances (or covenants), with other individual families and societal groupings, in order to survive and prosper both socially and materially. Here the integrity of the name was crucial since “no one would freely associate with you in covenant relationship unless your honor rating were good, so good name and prestige are the most valuable assets” (Malina 2001a:37).

Such prestige, it may now be understood, both when it was ascribed and as it continued to be acquired, ultimately revolved around “ the domination of persons rather than things” (Malina 2001a:37). In order to reinforce ones ascribed honor and to continue to build up acquired honor, the ultimate issue became the ability to control those who both recognized and gave honor i.e. other people. This control could be exercised by behaviour that elicited a recognition and grant of honor from others. Along these lines people were evidently interested in the acquisition of material wealth in as much as it provided the possibility of generously sharing such wealth “among equals or socially useful lower-class clients” (Malina 2001a:37), and thus gaining honor for the giver. As such “money, goods and any sort of wealth are really a means to honor and any other use of wealth is considered foolish” (Malina 2001a:38). To control people, particularly through the judicious deployment of wealth, was to control their recognition and ascription of honor and prestige, and this was the ultimate objective of the “game”.

When it comes to the honor status of the speaker of this passage (6:19-34), Matthew has already set the stage. The gospel opens with Jesus' genealogy and his ancestry is traced back, through the entire sweep of Jewish history via king David, to the father of the nation, Abraham. Malina (in Rohrbaugh 1996:68) underscores the significance of this when he notes that such linear genealogies function "to ground a claim to power, status, rank, office or inheritance in an earlier ancestor". This ascription of honor establishes the exalted "blood" and "name" of Jesus to the original readers of the gospel. In terms of this particular audience, though, they may have been aware of some measure of Jesus' honor as ascribed through the teaching of the Baptist. John's insistence, concerning the worth of Jesus, i.e. that "he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (3:11), was an attribution of honor which some in the audience may well have heard for themselves, or at least have been familiar with. Certainly some of the disciples were aware of the honor ascribed to Jesus by the Baptist since John's gospel records that "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus" (1:40).

In terms of acquired status, Jesus' reputation had certainly preceded him to Galilee. Matthew records that as a result of Jesus' preaching and the healing of every sickness and disease, "News about him spread all over Syria" (4:24), and that "large crowds from Galilee... followed him" (4:25). According to Neyrey (1988:41), the Baptist's claim (now recognisable as his own challenge to the crowds concerning the status of Jesus), that Jesus would be "more powerful than I" (3:11), was a term of military prowess. This prowess would have been recognized in Jesus' healing of the demon possessed (3:24), since "the exorcisms of Jesus are best understood in their native or emic context as "combat' scenes". This status was then evidently recognised, confirmed and accepted by this crowd as a result of the content and impact of his teaching. At the close of the Sermon Matthew tells us that the crowds "were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law" (7:28). This authority (εξουσια) is a reference to the delegated right to teach that the crowd had evidently come to recognise that Jesus possessed. Who had delegated this right to Jesus is not specifically verbalized, but it can be assumed that the crowd understood it to be "the heavenly Father", in whose name Jesus taught. This public recognition of the unique status of Jesus also serves to diminish the status of

the teachers of the law since they were now publicly acknowledged not to have possessed such an exalted mandate.

The declarations of Jesus in this discourse (6:19-34) can now, as in the case of the Baptist, be understood as his challenges to the crowd howsoever it was made up. Implicit in all of the challenges is a claim to ethical authority by Jesus; he is calling for a change in attitude and behaviour towards the accumulation of wealth, to how it is to be viewed and distributed, and to the ultimate place that it could come to hold in a person's life. Significantly the fourth and final challenge is prefaced: "Therefore I tell you", specifically emphasising his authority and therefore of the need of the audience to make the necessary changes. Also implicit in these challenges is Jesus' understanding that he has the necessary status to make the claims in the first place. Whilst the discourse is not overtly responded to by a riposte, it can be reasonably assumed that the reaction of the whole crowd i.e. "that they were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority" (7:25), constitutes the outcome of their evaluation of Jesus' right to address them in the first place. Their response suggests a tacit acceptance of the validity of Jesus' power and status claims.

The purpose of Jesus wanting to enter the "social space" of this crowd must be considered to have been, in an ultimate sense, for positive reasons. Although the challenges are often blunt and emphatic ("Do not store up"; "But if your eyes are bad"; "No one can serve two masters"), their overall purpose was to effect change within people that would be for their ultimate good. Significantly, the final challenge, which has already been established to have been addressed to those who would respond positively to the earlier challenges, is the only one that contains a promise i.e. "all these things will be given to you as well" (6:33). The beneficial purpose of the challenges, in other words, although offered to the entire crowd, would only be enjoyed by those who personally accepted their validity.

The respect/ religious force of these challenges comes in the insistence that everybody in the crowd should adopt those attitudes and behaviours that were being articulated on behalf of "the heavenly Father". Since He is the God and Father of all humankind, all human beings should, by right, think about and behave towards Him and money as He stipulates. All of which provides or uncovers the true motive behind Jesus' challenges. Whereas men engage with other men for the sake of increasing their own honor, Jesus is challenging men only for the honor and glory of the Father. Nowhere here or in the rest of the Sermon does Jesus use the honor status, either ascribed to

him by Matthew and the Baptist or acquired in the eyes of the audience, to further his own reputation. He is only concerned about the honor of the Father. The crowd is similarly encouraged by Jesus in the Sermon to think and behave in such a way that “others may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (5:16), and that they should “be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:48), thereby publicly exalting the Father’s name. This dimension of the discourse also immediately identifies the relationship between the heavenly Father and those who respond to His injunctions through Jesus as one formed along family or kinship lines, the significance of which will be seen in 3.3.6 below.

2.2.7 Collective Honor

Mention needs to be made again of the fact that honor could only be challenged among social equals, a fact that Jesus seems to have ignored by addressing the crowd on the Mount, and that will be explained below. In Palestinian society an inferior, in terms of authority, gender status or respect, did not have sufficient honor in the first place to be offended by the affront of a superior (Malina 2001a:40). He may well have felt humiliation, but at the societal level the affront was not considered to be an issue of honor. By the same token, a superior’s honor was such that that it was not ever challenged by the affront of an inferior. The superior may well have reacted retributively against the inferior’s perceived impudence, but the issue of a challenge to that superiors honor did not arise (Malina 2001a:40).

At the same time, whether an individual was inferior or superior, any affront to that individual by another individual of the same social status constituted an affront to all that the individual represented and stood for i.e. to his/her entire social grouping (Malina 2001a:42). Since an individual had their identity determined by their relationship to the group of which they were a part, any affront to the individual was automatically an affront to the whole group. This makes Nathaniel’s question “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (John 2:46), both understandable and understandably offensive to anyone from Nazareth.

Social groupings were of two sorts: they were either natural groupings or voluntary groupings. Natural groupings, like families, were those groupings into which one was born i.e. social class, ethnic group or village. As such an individual automatically adopted the attitudes and behaviours that were considered the norm by that group

(Malina 2001a:44). Any challenge to such norms was viewed as incredibly serious since it constituted an attack on the very foundations of that group. Voluntary or optional groupings, on the other hand, resulted from an individual's choice i.e. joining a trade guild or burial society (Malina 2001a:46). Here the opinion of the group determined what was appropriate by way of attitude and behaviour.

In both groupings, it may thus be recognized, the issue of corporate expectation comes to the fore again. An individual was always a part of a larger group; they "take their basic identity from their group (especially their family and kinship network), internalise the expectation of that group, and consider life successful when they fulfil them" (Neyrey 1998:27). As such honor and shame are always collective notions.

The notion of collective honor and the fact of challenge and riposte highlight the issue of the status of two particular groupings within the audience being addressed here in Matt 6:19-34, both of whom are being challenged by Jesus from a position of superior status and as has been mentioned. The first grouping being addressed consisted of the entire crowd as they were present as part of their natural social groupings. The second grouping consisted of those who would choose to become children of the heavenly Father by way of obedience to Jesus' teaching. As such the challenges to the entire crowd must be considered to have been a substantial breach of public etiquette in that, by so doing, Jesus was affording them all the status of his equals. He was ascribing to them an honor which they did not necessarily possess in the eyes of society, but which they evidently possessed in the eyes of God, in whose name he spoke. His challenge to them to change, and thus to receive an even higher measure of honor as the Father's children, can therefore be viewed as one of extreme graciousness. Those who would react favourably to this gracious challenge would become recipients of an even greater honor in that they would become the "blood" and "name" children of the heavenly Father i.e. part of a community of the most exalted status.

These challenges of Jesus can now be understood as the crowd must have understood them i.e. as an ascription of honor with the possibility of an even greater honor to follow. As such, and at the level of the dynamics of effective communication, Jesus' message would thus have been most acceptable to most in the crowd given their lack of social status. To others in the crowd, however, specifically those who might have had status in society, these challenges would have sounded altogether subversive in that they surely constituted a threat to the social status quo. Those who would accept

this greater status, however and as will be more adequately described below, would then automatically be expected, in terms of the norms of Mediterranean society, to exercise a great responsibility. Since they would now belong to the family of God, they would now be literally honor-bound to think and behave in such a way that their collective honor as members of this family, and the honor of the Father in particular, were not ever called into question. Honor was now to be incrementally acquired by collectively living in the light of the honor that the Father had already ascribed to them. One particular way of collectively living in this manner was to henceforth avoid worrying about the things which pagans worried about i.e. food, drink and clothing. To worry about such things was tantamount to a denial of one's blood and name status – child of God.

In promising to meet the material needs of His new children, the Father's own honor comes into focus again. On one level, the fact that He makes a public promise to meet the physical needs of His children would have been readily understood by the audience, given that this was the language of patronage (which will be discussed shortly). At another level, however, the public promise of provision actually raises the issue of whether or not the Father is capable of fulfilling such a promise and, vitally, whether He will actually do so. This public offer of patronage, in other words, puts the honor of God on trial in society. Can He and will He really provide? Which introduces the notion that the clients of this patron will be required to exercise faith and trust in Him to keep his public undertakings. The very fact, however, that He is prepared to stake His honor so publicly surely constitutes a guarantee of sorts in that no patron would make such an undertaking without ensuring that it was publicly honoured.

2.2.8 Summary

From this brief description of honor and shame it becomes possible to read Matt 6:19-34 with a greater comprehension of the dynamics at work during the delivery of this discourse. To start with it would be reasonable to assume that the bulk of the audience consisted of males. Given the fact that the space where this teaching was proclaimed was public, we may assume a predominantly male audience. This is apparently confirmed by the fact that Matthew records that, in similar circumstances, “The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children”

(14:21) and “The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children” (15:38). Furthermore the subject matter of this discourse, suggesting a predominantly male audience, relates to the storing up of treasures on earth and the provisions of food, drink and clothing i.e. to the making of a living. This was principally the responsibility of males, although their embedded females were certainly involved in such activities, albeit in subjection to their family males and in their private spaces.

Then there is the fact that the discourse represents a number of honor claims by Jesus. He is issuing a series of quite specific challenges that assume that he has honor enough to do so in the first place. More, these challenges are addressed from an authoritative vantage point i.e. from the point of claiming the right to insist on attitude and behaviour changes from the audience (albeit that in so doing Jesus’ graciousness in ascribing honor to the crowd would have been appreciated by most of them). Finally he makes these claims on behalf of the heavenly Father, claims that were met by radical riposte in later incidents recorded in this gospel (e.g. 9:1-7 & 12:22-24). In this instance, however, the only riposte indicated is that of the crowd apparently recognising and accepting Jesus status since “he taught as one who had authority” (7:29). This response could then reasonably be assumed to indicate a form of counter-challenge by many in the crowd in that, in effect, it invited a continuation of the encounter. Certainly the narrative, which resumes after the completion of the Sermon, seems to indicate as much in that Matthew writes that when Jesus “came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him” (8:1).

The objective of the challenges, the purpose for which Jesus was entering the collective space of this crowd, was the well-being of all present and those they represented. He was there to broker an essentially religious relationship between the crowd and God in terms of which the crowd would become the children of the heavenly Father and He would reciprocate by way of meeting their material and emotional needs. This relationship would then immediately impact on all others in society by way of a markedly different view and employment of material wealth in the present time.

2.3 KINSHIP

Stegemann, Malina & Theissen (2002:5) maintain, in agreement with what has been noted above, that Jesus and his disciples would have defined themselves in terms of gender, genealogy and geography. Gender in that maleness and femaleness were absolute determinants with regards to an individuals roles and behaviours, genealogy in that it determined exactly what level of society one was born into, and geography in that where one was born and lived was understood to govern ones intrinsic personality traits. As such all these determinants suggest that individuals belonged to, they were embedded in, a larger context. This larger context will now be examined in some detail in order to provide a platform for understanding the forms in which the Mediterranean world of Jesus and his audience functioned. In terms of Matt 6:19-34, the gender of the crowd has already been established to have been predominantly male. Their genealogical and geographic origins must now be investigated since these factors have a crucial bearing on how the original audience heard this discourse and how it needs to be read and interpreted today.

2.3.1 Individual and Group Personality

In marked contrast to the radical individuality of modern Western society, Mediterranean society and all its institutions were “embedded in kinship” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:20), i.e. a person was not thought of as an individual but as a member of a larger family, clan or ethical grouping. As such first-century Mediterranean persons are considered to have had a “ ‘dyadic’ or group-orientated personality” (Neyrey 1993:72). In terms of such a personality Neyrey (in Pilch & Malina 2000:54) says that individual people “are not known or valued because of their uniqueness, but in terms of their dyad, that is, some other person or thing”. As such every person in society constantly required feedback from others “to tell them who they are” (Neyrey 1993:73). This would go some way towards understanding the importance of challenge and riposte in the social interaction of Jesus’ day. By way of this “game”, individuals were receiving constant feedback concerning their place and performance in society and were thus able to adjust accordingly so as to acquire further honor and avoid shame. Dyadic people, in other words, by virtue of their interaction with others

in this way are characterised by a group personality i.e. they adopt the values, standards and behaviors of the clan, village, family of which they are an integral part. As dyadic people, Mediterranean individuals were not psychologically minded (Malina 1996:38). Although they possessed individuality and uniqueness in terms of relationships with equals and with others up and down the social scale, they were not necessarily “self” aware. Rather “basic personality derives largely from ethnic characteristics” which one inherited (Malina 1996:38). These ethnic characteristics were acquired, or so it was thought, from the geographical location in which one lived, from the air one breathed and from the water one drank (Malina 1996:39). As such stereotyping abounded (e.g. “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12)), and a person’s social world consisted of his or her own ethnic group and, over against them, all others as a collective group (e.g. “Greeks and non-Greeks”(Rom 1:14)).

According to Malina and Neyrey (in Neyrey 1993:74), a number of basic stereotypes were assumed by first century Mediterranean people. People were known by which family and clan they were born into and not as individuals per se (e.g. James and John were sons of Zebedee (Matt 4:21)). Such families and clans had specific places of origin and people were known by their place of birth (e.g. Jesus of Nazareth (Matt 2:23)). Such places were considered to be honorable (Tarsus, no mean city (Acts 21:39)) or shameful (Nazareth (Jn 2:46)). Families and clans were known by their ethnicity and certain behaviour patterns were expected of them, depending on that particular ethnicity (Jews have no dealings with Samaritans (Jn 4:9)). Along these lines it was assumed that to know an individual of a particular ethnic grouping was to know the whole group. So “ as Virgil’s Trojan says: *Ab uno disce omnes*, ‘Learn about all (Greeks) from this one Greek’” (*Aeneid* II.65 in Neyrey 1993:75). People were also known by the trade, craft or occupation they were involved in and, again, stereotypical behaviour was assigned to each profession so that, for example, carpenters were not expected to possess wisdom or perform great deeds (Matt 13:55-56). Finally people were known by the particular social or factional groupings they belonged to (e.g. Pharisee’s, Sadducee’s etc.). Such groupings were joined, not necessarily by individual choice, but as determined by the family or clan an individual belonged to (Sadducee’s) or the craft a person practiced (Scribes). All groups were assumed to hold to their own particular ideology (Neyrey 1993:76).

Given that Jesus addresses a crowd in the Galilean wilderness in the Sermon, and accepting that many of that crowd were Galilean residents as has been shown, we can safely conclude that Matthew intends his readers to recognise that this was a largely low status group of people being addressed here for that is what most Galileans were, existing as they did mainly by way of farming and fishing, as we shall see in 4.1 below.

2.3.2 Morality and Deviance

From the subject matter already dealt with it has been established that a first-century Mediterranean person found their identity and significance in terms of their embeddedness within their family, clan and ethnic grouping. As Malina (2001a:61) puts it, “the primary emphasis in the culture...is on collectivistic personality, on the individual as embedded in the group, and on behaviour as determined by significant others”. This raises the crucial matter of the implementation of acceptable behaviour and, in particular in this context, religious behaviour.

As might be expected a “group conscience” existed through which respectful or religious behaviour was regulated. By virtue of the expectation of the group, and the behaviours that they considered acceptable and unacceptable, honorable individuals adopted the group’s conscience. Applied to an individual this conscience “refers to a person’s sensitive attention to his or her public ego-image with the purpose of striving to align personal behaviour and self-assessment with that publicly perceived ego-image” (Neyrey 1993:76). By way of this conscience, people strove to be and behave as their watching group expected in order that this group’s approval would provide them with “grants of honor necessary for meaningful, humane existence” (Neyrey 1993:76). Aristotle (*Rhet.*2.6.15,18 in Neyrey 1998:31) best summarizes the dynamics involved here when he says,

He takes account of those who admire him and whom he admires
and by whom he wishes to be admired and those to whose rank
he aspires and those whose opinion he does not despise...

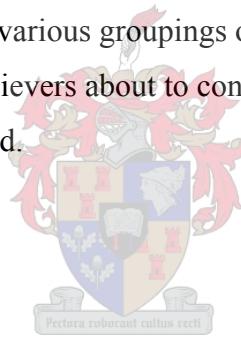
And they feel more shame at things done before these people’s
eyes and in the open; hence too the proverb ‘Shame is in the eyes’.

For this reason people feel more shame before those who are going to
be with them and those watching them, because in both cases they

are ‘in’ their ‘eyes’.

In light of these dynamics the responsibility for ensuring morally acceptable behaviour was considered to be a group matter and was not left to the individual alone. Which has enormous significance when the moral injunctions made in Matt 6:19-34, concerning godly attitudes and behaviours towards money, are considered. Such prescribed attitudes and behaviours, whilst applicable to individuals, were being addressed to the emerging and believing community as a whole. As such the believing community would automatically have been expected by Jesus to be responsible for seeing that everyone in the community implemented these prescribed behaviours and attitudes since they were “essentially and fundamentally concerned with the maintenance and strengthening of group cohesion” (Malina 1996:43). The believing community as a whole, in other words, would have been expected by Jesus to ensure that all its members lived in a God-honoring and group-edifying way. Which introduces the matter of how the various groupings of Mediterranean peoples, amongst who were individual believers about to constitute a new community, actually lived together in their social world.

2.3.3 Family and Village



As has been previously mentioned, the family was the most important institution of antiquity. As Ferguson (2003:72) puts it, “The family was the basic unit of society in all of the cultures that provide the background for early Christianity”. Although families took various forms, what they had “in common relative to kinship is that inheritance follows the male line and that males represent the family to the outside... while females are expected to uphold the inside” (Malina 1996:50). Mediterranean families were, in other words, “patrilinial and rooted in a sharp gender division of labour” (Malina 1996:50). What made the family so important was that it constituted the most basic unit of kinship in society, a kinship in which all social institutions were embedded. As Hanson and Oakman (1998:20) describe it, the

family’s patriarch, matriarch, or clan elders constituted the basic ‘political’ structure in society, while the everyday life-generating activities of a family, whether crop cultivation or shepherding or bartering with neighbours, constituted the basic ‘economic’

structure in society.

In addition “religious” structures operated from within the family since the transcendent and moral values of a family were communicated within that family while worship took place inside the family home. Although it is a fact that by the time of Jesus an alternative set of institutions had been established by the political realities which had overtaken Palestine, it would still be true to say that “virtually no social relationship, institution, or value-set was untouched by the family and its concerns” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:20). On top of this, the family formed the reproductive locus of all communities. The family, it may thus be said, *was* the community.

Families tended to live as endogamous communities, i.e. as multigenerational units, in their own houses and in close proximity to other families, both in rural and urban Palestine. Lensky (in Neyrey 1993:155) has estimated “that only 2% of the agrarian population belongs to the ruling elite, about 8% comprises the service class in the cities, and the remaining 90% or so tills the soil or services the village”, meaning that the vast majority of Palestinians lived in rural villages. According to Horsley (1995:192), most such rural families living in Galilee did so in a single or double-roomed dwelling that shared a courtyard with the dwellings of other families and “shared use of installations such as oven, cistern, and millstone in the common courtyard”. A number of these collective complexes would then open out onto a village passageway or alley. Indications are that families who shared a courtyard, or who lived along a mutual alleyway, “could form an association or partnership...in which they shared food supply and gained freer movement around their shared living area on Sabbaths” (Horsley 1995:192). All of which speaks to the fact of substantial material poverty in Palestine in general and in Galilee in particular and suggests, again, that given this discourse is reported to have taken place in Galilee, many in the audience can be assumed to have been poor.

2.3.4 Application to Matt 6:19-34

Employing the analysis of kinship in the Mediterranean world made thus far, it becomes possible to think of the crowd listening to Jesus’ discourse as being a disparate and dynamic entity. This is not a group of people passively listening to a teaching, but people listening to a message that has potential for building honor or

bringing shame for each of them in their wider contexts. They are largely Jewish rural and urban peasants, but probably with some Pharisees and Sadducees and unspecified groupings of Gentiles amongst them, as has been described in 3.1. All alike are interacting with Jesus and one another on the basis of who they are and who they are, or are not, in relationship with, as members of a variety of social groupings present. By virtue of the collectivistic, stereotypical and agonistic nature of their society, it is reasonable to assume that each individual or family grouping within the crowd would have considered themselves to have been in direct competition with every other individual or family present. What is certain is that envy would have been a part of most of this audience's experience since "envy is a feeling of begrudging that emerges in the face of the good fortune of others relative to some restricted good that is equally of interest to us" (Malina 2001a:109). With the gathering, presumably of so many people from so many different stations in life, envy of others who possessed "some singular quality, object, or relationship that gave or expressed or gave honor" (Malina 2001a:114) must have abounded. Which makes Jesus' teaching on generosity towards others in 6:22-23 so significantly relevant in terms of a corrective to existing social norms.

What is equally certain, and has already been mentioned several times, is that the bulk of the audience would have been materially needy. Horsley (1995:189) notes, "The vast majority of (these) people were peasants living in villages of varying sizes farming the land or near the lake supplementing farming with fishing" and, as has just been noted, all alike subsisting in very humble circumstances. Certainly the teaching of Jesus reflects a situation of material want to the point where uncertainty concerning even the most basic requirements of food, drink and clothing was a persistent reality. This teaching, though, in the form of specific challenges, can now also be recognized as being Jesus' feedback as God's representative, concerning various attitudes and behaviors apparently prevalent in the society as a whole, by means of which the widespread poverty in Galilee and elsewhere in Palestine could be accounted for. There was certainly a selfish storing up of treasure going on, and there was thus certainly an underlying attitude of selfishness and a behaviour of serving mammon present. Given the reality of so many different social groupings existing in Palestine at the time, it now becomes important that the particular group/groupings who were thinking and behaving in this way be identified since this (negative) feedback by Jesus indicates that it was these very attitudes and practices that were causing widespread

want in the society, to the point of fear. Such an identification would have been immediately possible by the crowd present at the teaching, given the nature of their high-context world, however for us today the identity of this group/ing needs to be established from extra-biblical sources since it is not provided by the record of the discourse as we have it. This will be done in the following chapter.

Feedback also takes place here in the form of repeated challenges to the emerging grouping, designated children of the heavenly Father, not to be afraid about how they were to be clothed and fed. That these children were afraid is testimony to their very threatening material circumstances, however the repeated challenges to stop such fearing also represents a negative evaluation, by Jesus, especially in the light of the promises of provision from the heavenly Father. Since they will now belong to a family of unprecedented status, headed by a heavenly Father, the reputation of Father and family alike will be under pressure in the event of this fear continuing.

2.3.5 Limited Good

Attention now needs to be given to the notion by which poverty in general in Palestinian society was popularly accounted for; the notion of limited good. Assuming that over ninety percent of the population worked the land, as indicated above, and that this mass of people found “themselves subject to the demands and sanctions of power-holders outside their social realm” (Malina 2001a:89), as will be detailed below, it is not surprising that such people understood that their lives were out of their control. By way of experience they harvested finite-sized crops and knew the dominance of the power-elites who had a claim on those crops, and thus they came to understand that all thing in life existed in finite and limited quantities. This “limited good” was perceived to apply to absolutely everything, i.e. “land, wealth, prestige, blood, health, semen, friendship and love, manliness, honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety” (Malina 2001a:89).

Furthermore there was evidently no way, within their power, by which this situation could be changed. In terms of agriculture, for example, “the limited rainfall of almost all parts of Palestine compelled the ancient peasantry to practice what is now called dry or dryland farming” (Oakman 1986:20), meaning that they were totally at the mercy of the weather. Even in the event of good rainfall the average planting would not yield a greater than fivefold increase in grain (Oakman 1986:26), no matter what

they did. In addition “in the absence of irrigation, low rainfall demanded that half of the fields of ancient Palestine on average be left fallow in order to replenish the water reservoir” (Oakman 1986:27), thereby limiting the acreage under cultivation at any one time. The net result was that the population in general thought that “as with land, there was no way to increase the amount of good things in life without impinging on another” (Stegemann et al 2002:6). Since all things existed in finite quantity, and since it was impossible to increase this finite quantity, any increase that one individual was perceived to have experienced had therefore to have come about at the expense of somebody else.

This situation, understandably, caused great tensions in society and all the more given that it was not always obvious who had been deprived by another’s increase. Thus it was that any significant improvement or increase in an individual’s material lot was “perceived not simply as a threat to other individuals or families alone, but as a threat to all individuals and families within the community, be it a village or city quarter” (Malina 2001a:89). The real social significance of this situation can best be understood when it is borne in mind that every honorable person was

entitled to fulfil their inherited roles and hence entitled
to economic and social subsistence. The right to subsistence – to the
preservation of family status in all the dimensions of the ideal persons
role – is the active moral principle in peasant societies.

(Malina 2001a:91)

An honorable life for the Mediterranean person, in other words, rested upon the premise of that person being able to subsist economically and socially. When somebody else prospered, therefore, either economically or socially in a world of limited good, that prosperity constituted a terrible threat to the ability of everybody else in the community to subsist.

Those who did so prosper, by denying others their right to a share of the limited good and thus the ability to subsist, had to be both “greedy” and “dishonourable”. Such people were the rich (Malina 2001a:97). A fourth century proverb which articulates this sentiment, and which coincidentally substantiates the notion of the slow change within a society’s core values, says: “Every rich person is either unjust or the heir of an unjust person” or “Every rich person is a thief or the heir of a thief” (Malina 2001a:98). To be rich, then, in the Mediterranean world was to be considered dishonourably greedy and, as such, it was not an economic but a moral designation.

By the same token, since an honorable individual would not want to be so labelled “the accumulation of capital, the profit motive, was closed to him” (Malina 2001a:99). In a similar way “poor” was not an economic designation but a description of an individual’s social circumstances. Malina (2001a:100) point out that in the New Testament the word “poor” was used both to label people, without any further description or qualification, and also to describe those who were blind, lame, thirsty, hungry etc. – in other words those upon whom adverse circumstances had fallen. He summarises that “poor persons seem to be those who cannot maintain their inherited status due to circumstances that befall them and their families” and concludes, “in this context, rich and poor really refer to the greedy and the socially ill-fated”. As such these are not final and irreversible categories but one’s which, in both instances, could be altered by a recovery of status.

Given such an understanding of limited good in the world-view of Jesus’ audience, and specifically given that his teaching categorically prohibits a greedy accumulation and hoarding of wealth (19-24) while at the same time seeks to reassure those who were barely subsisting (25-34), both rich and poor are being addressed in this discourse. The greedy rich are being told to desist from their selfish material attitudes and practices precisely because such approaches to wealth are directly responsible for many of the consequences being experienced by the now socially ill-fated poor i.e. they have been brought to the point of shame as a result of the loss of the very ability and opportunity to subsist economically.

2.3.5.1 Defensive Strategy

Since the maintenance and strengthening of the status of the community, through subsistence at the very least, was of the utmost importance to every social grouping, two specific strategies were developed and deployed in order to deal with this situation. Malina (2001a:90ff.) terms the first of these a “defensive” strategy and the second a “dyadic” strategy or alliance. With a defensive strategy, the assumption was that an honorable person would be keen to maintain the stability and harmony of the community. This could be accomplished by that person maintaining “a culturally predictable, transparent, socially open existence” (Malina 2001a:91), i.e. by that person living in such a way that the community at large was totally aware of all that they were doing and that all that they were doing was seen to be honorable. To this

end, and by way of example, people allowed the children of others to roam through their houses and places of work and also kept the doors to their houses and courtyards open during the day (Malina 2001a:92), presumably to indicate both that they had not acquired anything of economic value that they wished to hide and that they were not doing anything which they didn't want others to know about. That the storing up of wealth, according to Jesus in 6:19, was evidently being undertaken in inaccessible treasuries must therefore be a reference to shameful or dishonourable behaviour, certainly in the eyes of the poor within Jesus hearing.

Another behaviour adopted in the society of Jesus time, along defensive lines, was to avoid giving credit to anyone outside of the immediate family. To give credit outwardly was to admit that an individual had taken something (unlawfully) from an outsider and thus to have “upset the community balance and the honorable self-image they try so hard to maintain” (2001a:92).

2.3.5.2 Dyadic Strategy of Alliances

Such defensive behaviours referred to above did not mean that contacts with those outside the family were not taking place. Rather, outside contacts took place along the lines of a non-formal reciprocity in which “the honorable person selects (or is selected by) another for a series of ongoing, unspecified acts of mutual support” (Malina 2001a:94). This arrangement of reciprocal support has been termed a dyadic contract or alliance and took place between a pair of individuals (hence dyadic), rather than between groups of people, albeit with those individuals involved representing a larger grouping of people. The pairs could consist of individuals of the same social status (colleague contracts) or individuals of differing social statuses (patron-client contracts), and such contracts functioned “side by side with the formal contracts of society, such as buying and selling, marriage, Israel's inherited covenant with God, and the like” (Malina 2001a:94). As such these contracts provided a flexible but clearly understood mechanism whereby people interacted on a mutually beneficial basis. The importance of these contracts can scarcely be overstated given that in a world of limited good, where no amount of self-effort would generate more good, such mutually beneficial relationships were the means by which the status quo could be maintained and, ultimately, a community's economic and social subsistence guaranteed.

2.3.6 Patron-Client Relationships

Matt 6:25-34, as has been previously suggested, is articulated in terms of a patron-client form of dyadic alliance which, as Elliot (1987:39) points out is a

fundamental and pervasive form of dependency relations, involving the reciprocal exchange of ‘goods and services’ between ‘patrons’ and their inferior ‘clients’, [and] shaped both the public and private sectors of ancient life as well as the political and religious symbolizations of power and dependency.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the patron-client relationship was the fact that it was a relationship of unequals. Hanson and Oakman (1988:71) say “ Patrons are elite persons (male and female) who can provide benefits to others on a personal basis, due to a combination of superior power, influence, reputation, position and wealth”. “Clients”, on the other hand, “are persons of lesser status who are obligated and loyal to a patron over a period of time”. In terms of this inequality, the patron provided his clients with

a diversity of ‘goods’ including food, financial aid, physical protection, career advancement and administrative posts, citizenship, equality in or freedom from taxation, the inviolability of person and property, support in legal cases, immunity from expenses, of public service, help from the gods, and in the case of provincials, the status of *soclus* or ‘friend of Rome’ (proxenia).

(Elliot 1987:43)

Plainly this diversity speaks of the entire spectrum of goods and services that patrons of various ranks in society had at their disposal. At the very top of the spectrum Saller (1982:127) notes that the “Most prominent in the emperor’s storehouse of *beneficia* were senatorial and equestrian offices”, while at the other end of the spectrum there would be the offer of labour to a day labourer by a land owner (Matt 20:1 ff).

In return for this material consideration the client was “obligated to enhance the prestige, reputation and honor of his patron in public and private life” (Elliot 1987:43). As Saller (1982:127) describes it, the principle responsibility of a client was to publicise the generosity, along with all the other honorable acts, of his patron. In so doing the client “by publicising his patrons *beneficia* also advertised his own

inferiority”, thus ensuring that both parties accrued honor. Another public acknowledgement of *beneficia* involved a client appearing “daily at early morning at the house of the patron to offer salutations and requests” (Ferguson 2003:67), thereby gaining the patron much public honor. Such honor was multiplied by the number of clients a patron might have saluting him in this way.

This mutually beneficial relationship, as has been mentioned, was a largely informal arrangement although “Roman law mandated and regulated the duties and services between freedmen/women and their former owners” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:71). In spite of this general informality, however, the relationship between patron and client persisted over protracted periods of time (usually lifelong) and involved “a strong element of interpersonal obligation” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:72), based on the solidarity engendered by the arrangement, and was termed “fides” (faithfulness). The actual quality of the relationship between patron and client could vary from mistrust (Saller 1982:36) to friendship (Ferguson 2003:68), although friendship usually occurred in horizontal relationships between social equals and so, in this particular context, could be considered to refer “not so much (to) an emotional attachment as a form of social and even political contract based on reciprocity” (Moxnes in Neyrey 1993:245).

Emerging from these long-term patron-client dyadic alliances was the political “family” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:81). This family, known by social scientists as a “fictive kinship” or “pseudo-kinship”, came into being when the dyadic relationship was articulated “not simply as an abstract contract but as kinship” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:81). This kinship was based on the fact that ancient Mediterranean politics involved the control, by elite families, of other families and came about as “the result of creating alliances and networks, reciprocity, debts, force, and taking advantage of social stratification” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:81). Matt 6:25-34 can now be understood to have been articulated, and as will be referred to more comprehensively shortly, in terms of an elite patron (God) seeking a strong interpersonal and enduring relationship of kinship between Himself (as heavenly Father) and those He considers of great worth. This Patron, although plainly the superior partner and clearly stipulating the mutual responsibilities of the alliance, does so in terms that are mutually beneficial to both parties and not by way of exploiting His client’s materially pressing circumstances, hence not necessarily attempting to highlight the client’s inferior status.

2.3.7 Patron-Broker Relationships

Often involved in the establishment of such fictive families, indeed in the establishment of patron-client relationships in general, was the “broker” who was himself considered a type of patron. Blok (in Oakman 1986:195) explains the dynamics that gave rise to the existence of brokers when he writes that “In segmented societies, central authority is firmset but in urban centres rather than throughout the countryside. Mediators or brokers are required to provide links between these two segments of society”. Malina (1996:150) adds that where “ ‘important’ social networks meet, the meeting point is invariably a person, a symbolic centre, about whom a range of social forms develop”. Both Oakman (1986:195) and Malina (1996:150) follow Boissevain in saying that the essential difference between a patron and a broker occurs in terms of the type of resources which each control. Patrons control what are termed first-order resources including “land, jobs, funds, power, information”, while brokers control so-called second-order resources “which are largely strategic contact with other people who control first-order resources” (Malina 1996:150).

This social reality leads Malina (1996:150ff) to speak of the God of Israel as Patron and Jesus as Broker. He does so on the grounds that God adopts at least five characteristics of a Mediterranean patron. Firstly, God has a distinct “interest in and talent for cultivating relations with strategic persons” i.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants in Egypt with the view to occupying Canaan. This points to God’s employment of intermediaries between Himself and the human representatives of a larger community. Then, He “manipulates” these relationships for the “benefit” of His honor and glory with the deliverance of Israel and in so doing seeks to bring about the objective of all human dyadic relationships i.e. the patron’s honor in the eyes of the broader society. Next, He stays “ahead of competitors” in that He prohibits Israel from having other gods, while sending prophets to them to continually indicate His control over and concern for them. God thus declares that, as the ultimate Patron, there is absolutely no need for His clients to have other patrons since He fully intends to take care of all their needs himself. Then God, “because he is innovative”, initiates a covenant “with individual males of non-elite status” and plans for “the well-being of the people of the land”, pointing to His graciousness in initiating, through a broker, a relationship with a community that has needs that they cannot themselves meet.

Finally, God is willing to take risks, as is evidenced by the fact that the prophets continually point out Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant. The danger of unfaithful clients always exists in human society, but somehow when human clients relate to the Divine Patron they seem particularly predisposed towards unfaithfulness. The fact that He presses ahead under these circumstances, and that He continually calls for a return to faithfulness through His prophets, speaks of His extraordinary determination to benefit His clients in line with His own faithfulness.

As Malina's analysis (1996:150ff) relates to Matt 6:19-34, the author of the gospel attributes the culturally familiar status and roles of patron to God, who as the Creator and Covenant-maker is ascribed ultimate control over all first-order resources by Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, is shown to claim control over second-order resources in terms of his "strategic contact with God as Patron" (Malina 1996:151). He is the Broker of the Kingdom of Heaven in that he puts "people in contact with a heavenly Patron who, in turn, is ready to provide first-order resources of a political, religious and economic sort" (Malina 1996:152).

2.3.8 Application to Matt 6:19-34

Given the reality of limited good in the world-view of Mediterranean persons, and the existence of a variety of strategies designed to overcome the reality of material need, we can safely assume that almost everybody within this crowd on the Mount being addressed by Jesus would have been, and would have been seeking to be, in dyadic relationships with others in society. This would have included both colleague contracts with people of the same social status, and patron-client contracts with those of a different social status, both of which would have been necessitated by the battle to maintain status. Equally, there can be little doubt that many of these dyadic relationships would have been sources of great tension given that, as Oakman (1986:208) describes it, the relationship between many landlords and peasant farmers had been reduced to "the owners interest in the profitability or the peasants obligation to pay the rent" i.e. to a totally exploitative arrangement. In light of this, and given the amazingly comprehensive and generous dyadic relationship that Jesus must have been heard to be mediating on behalf of the heavenly Father here, his message must have had enormous appeal and impact to many in his audience. This teaching of Jesus could only have been regarded by the crowd as an offer of a dyadic relationship

between God as Patron and those who would choose to become His client children. As such Jesus must have been considered to have been acting as God's broker. He claimed, after all, to be speaking on behalf of the heavenly Father, the Creator and Sustainer, the ultimate controller of all first-order resources. And, as broker, he was obviously claiming to be in a position to make these resources available to the crowd by virtue of his strategic contact with the Father.

The nature of this strategic contact between God and Jesus is not specifically described here. What is described in 25-34, though, is the nature of the alliance he is brokering i.e. the fact that those who responded to the offer of such a relationship would then be considered to be a part of God's family; they would now be considered to be the children of the heavenly Father. This immediately identifies the envisaged contract as a form of fictive or pseudo kinship which, by way of radical contrast to the immediate cultural context, makes it much more than a purely material arrangement. This is a relationship of kinship, but in this instance a kinship of genuine love. God becomes Father to those who enter the alliance and he promises them food, drink and clothing under all and every circumstances. The reciprocal responsibilities of the children have already been spelled out in 19-24. The client children are to obey the Father's instructions i.e. not to lay up for themselves treasures on earth but to do so in heaven, not to be possessed of an evil eye, not to try and serve God and money and, importantly, not to worry. Positively they are to be cultivating an attitude of material generosity towards others in society by being devoted exclusively to God and not to Him and money. Ultimately they are to be seeking to honor God by living under his lordship and according to his righteous standards.

The entire discourse of 6:19-34, then, has a two-pronged emphasis. Firstly those who would become client children of the divine Patron are made aware of what He promises to and expects of them. In this sense, and as has been mentioned, the challenges of Jesus would have represented divine feedback to the entire crowd. The crowd was well aware of how they and others in the broader society were conducting their lives; now they were being made aware of how God saw their lives and the changes He expected of them. Secondly and importantly, what concerns God, as articulated by Jesus, is that there were those (possibly) in the crowd but certainly in the wider society, who were laying up treasures for themselves i.e. selfishly. By way of this concern Jesus appears to be endorsing the conventional wisdom that the rich were dishonourably greedy since, as a result of their selfish accumulation, they were

denying others their right to subsistence, and hence to honor. The teaching of Jesus not to “store up *for yourselves* treasures on earth” would have sounded very like an attack on the rich and, hence, music to the ears of the poor in the crowd. The rich were storing up treasures for themselves at the expense of the poor; they were denying the majority in this crowd the most precious of all resources: honor. The corollary, however, to be storing “up for yourselves treasures in heaven”, would have come as something of a thunderbolt to most. When life consisted of a ceaseless battle just to maintain a social and material subsistence; when life involved an endless striving for some tiny measure of advantage through one’s dyadic relationships, the instruction that all such struggles were illegitimate and in vain must have astounded the crowd. Significantly the offer of this dyadic relationship is just that – it is the offer of a dyadic relationship between God and every individual who personally responds to it (as the grammar has already indicated). What is noteworthy here then, and along these lines, is that the offer is made largely to males present in the crowd who headed up their respective families, villages and clans. Given both the status and roles of men, this fact raises the issue of just how one becomes a child of God. Was this offer available only to those present in the audience or did they decide on behalf of their own blood and name families? Clearly no answer is given here, however the nature of Mediterranean collective kinship suggests that an individual relationship is not all that Jesus is talking about here. Individuals are always part of a greater whole.

What is certain, however, and as has already been established by a description of the dyadic nature of this society, is that the impetus to obey these instructions from God is not expected to come from the individual respondents alone. As was the social norm, that impetus would surely have been expected to come from the new community that is collectively referred to here as the children of the heavenly Father. These children are together instructed not to worry about life and body and so, presumably, are meant to take collective steps to ensure that the entire community complies. Given that the honor of God and the group is at stake, the reasonable assumption is that the effort to ensure the public upholding of that honor would be a group enterprise.

Of even greater significance is the overall thrust of the ethic. After detailing the ethical pillars upon which, from the children’s point of view, the relationship will be built (19-24), Jesus articulates the reciprocal undertaking of the heavenly Father (25-34). What this undertaking amount to is nothing less than a guarantee of material provision that will apparently render all societal dyadic undertakings unnecessary,

even redundant. That which men strive for, social and economic subsistence, and so that which all dyadic alliances are designed to provide, is now guaranteed from a different Source. No matter how materially needy, no matter how socially bereft of honor, no matter how insignificant in the eyes of other men, no matter how “poor” in other words, anyone who responds to this offer can enjoy both status (certainly in the eyes of God and the rest of the believing community) and material provision regardless of circumstance. This then appears to obviate the need to be involved in those societal dyadic alliances that are exploitative and emotionally corrosive. As such this ethic must have represented a considerable challenge to those who had most to lose from the establishment of this form of patronage i.e. the elites. The elites in Palestinian society were those who initiated the usual, and usually exploitative, patronage arrangements within the society of the time. Now a patronage was being offered from heaven (largely) to those who were suffering under societal alliances. This heavenly patronage had radical and material ramifications for society as a whole and would likely deprive earthly patrons of the continued opportunity to exploit their existing clients. More, by virtue of the fact that Jesus was quite apparently adopting the role of broker for this type of accord, his strong condemnation of existing material practices and his firm advocacy that all in the crowd adopt the proffered new patronage, must have constituted an attack on those who exploited, under existing arrangements, others to the point of shame.

Such a patronage from the view of those who would become God’s client children, on the other hand, must have sounded hugely attractive since it evidently obviated the need for worry as a consequence of the absolute guarantee of material provision for them. Under such an arrangement they could live as people of honor. The patronage of the heavenly Father is thus liberating and substantial. Even more, the duration of this arrangement extends beyond the physical lifetime of the child client, into the age to come. At that point those treasures, which have been stored up for just that time, will become due to the children and their true value fully realized and enjoyed. Before it becomes possible to specifically identify exactly who the patrons and clients of the society of Jesus’ day were, it is first necessary to place Palestinian society into its unique historical context, something that will be done in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3:
A SOCIO-POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF LATE SECOND-TEMPLE PALESTINE

Having identified the format and rhetorical force of the discourse that Matthew attributes to Jesus in Matt 6:19-34, and having located that discourse within the social framework in which it was articulated, attention is now turned to locating the discourse in its specific historical context. By so doing it will bring into play vital historical data that will further assist in this endeavour at understanding how the teaching might have been heard and interpreted by a first century Palestinian person in the audience being addressed.

The author of Matthew's gospel makes only incidental reference to the socio-political and historical context of Jesus' life and ministry when he notes, for example, that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod" (2:1) and that after "Herod died ... Archelaus was reigning in the place of his father Herod" (2:19 & 22) so that Joseph "withdrew to the district of Galilee" (2:22), with his young wife and her child Jesus, and that they "lived in a town called Nazareth" (2:23). As brief and as incidental as these references are, however, they do provide us with a specific time and place in Palestine in which to locate Jesus' birth and eventual ministry. That time and place now needs to be sufficiently described, from extra-biblical sources, so as to assist in making possible an adequately accurate interpretation of the discourse as the original audience might have understood it.

3.1 A HISTORY OF LATE SECOND-TEMPLE PALESTINE

At the time of both Jesus' birth and public ministry, "Rome was the master of the world" (Kaylor 1994:21). Specifically Rome became the direct master of Palestine in 63 B.C.E. when the Roman general Pompey, in a move to "reduce the size and influence of the Hasmonaean kingdom", and at the request of squabbling factions within this elite and ruling family, invaded the country, besieged and eventually took Jerusalem, and captured other Hasmonaean-controlled territories (Kaylor 1994:21). The Hasmonaean, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the third son of a Jewish priest named Mattathias, had revolted against the occupying Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV and "By 160 B.C. ... were accepted as rulers of Judea" (Packer, Tenney & White

1980:177), thus being the first Jews to rule here (albeit with the permission of the Seleucids) since the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 590 B.C.E. (2 Kings 25:8ff). The Hasmonaeans, having succeeded in becoming the high priests of this new Judean temple-state “in succeeding generations ... extended Hasmonaean rule over the Samaritans to the north, the Idumeans to the south, and finally, in 104 B.C.E., over the Galileans” (Horsley 1996:25). In this manner Galilee, as will be more adequately detailed later, came back under the rule of Jerusalem for the first time in eight centuries.

The capture of Jerusalem in 65 B.C.E. by Pompey, and the “liberating” of the Hellenistic cities hitherto under Hasmonaean control “in the Decapolis and on the coast” (Kaylor 1994:21), ushered in almost a decade of civil chaos as rival factions of Hasmonaeans and Romans vied for political control of Palestine. In a final major battle by the proconsul Gabinius (57-55 B.C.E.), and in an effort “to put down a serious rebellion by a Hasmonaean faction, the Romans killed thousands of rebels at Mount Tabor in southern Galilee” (Horsley 1996:24). By 55 B.C.E. Rome had gained sufficient control over Palestine to appoint a procurator over the territory and to exact heavy taxes from its citizens. The first procurator, an Idumean with connections to the Hasmonaean family, was Antipater and he, on his death in 43 B.C.E., was succeeded by his son Herod. King Herod, so designated by Rome, “took several years and Roman assistance to subdue all opponents and establish his control over Palestine” (Kaylor 1994:22), eventually gaining some measure of legitimacy for his title in the eyes of some Jews by marrying a Jewish princess of royal blood in 37 B.C.E. (Kaylor 1994:22).

Herod ruled, through and importantly, for and by Rome. As Hanson and Oakman (1998:70) explain: “The emperor personally appointed prefects and procurators, and held them accountable for honourably (and tenaciously) representing his and Rome’s interests. The Herodian client-kings and tetrarchs depended upon their families, clients and spies to keep them abreast of their realms’ activities”. Which is precisely how Herod set about ruling Palestine. Proving his loyalty to Rome he endeavoured “through his policies and his ambitious building programme to make Palestine a reflection of Roman greatness” (Kaylor 1994:22). Both inside and outside Palestine he “mounted a massive building programme of monuments to Augustus Caesar and Roman-style theatres and amphitheatres” (Horsley 1996:30), and constructed a new Temple in Jerusalem as well as his own palace in Jericho, both of which had the

reputation of being the largest in the world at the time (Kaylor 1994:22). Having rid himself of any possible claimants to the throne by drowning his brother-in-law Aristobulus, executing his uncle Joseph and framing the Hasmonaean King Hyrcanus II for plotting with the Nabateans (Packer et al 1980:181), Herod “became famous for the tight control he maintained on this entire realm, adding massive fortresses such as Masada and Herodium to those he took over from the Hasmonaeans” (Horsley 1996:30). Significantly he retained the high-priesthood in Jerusalem but “made it an instrument of his own policies” by replacing the Hasmonaeans with men from high-priestly families in Egypt and Babylon (Horsley 1996:30). Herod died in 4 B.C.E., resulting in “large groups of peasants in every major district of his realm” (Horsley 1996:32) asserting their independence. The Romans reacted with characteristic brutality and re-conquered Galilee first and then the rest of greater Judea. According to Josephus (in Horsley 1996:32), the Roman army captured and burned Sepphoris in Galilee and enslaved the people, meaning that “in the villages around Sepphoris such as Nazareth the people would have had vivid memories both of the outburst of rebellion against Herod and the Romans and of the devastation of their villages and the enslavement of their friends and relatives” (Horsley 1996:32). With the rebellion quashed for the moment, the Romans proceeded to divide Herod’s realm amongst his three sons. Herod Philip became the tetrarch of the Northern Territories (4 B.C.E.-34 C.E.), while Galilee and Perea were awarded to Antipas (4 B.C.E.-39 C.E.). As Tetrarch, he governed the territory in which Jesus grew up and ministered in, virtually from the time of Jesus’ birth until some time after his death (Horsley 1996:33). The other significance of Antipas’ rule over Galilee was that it brought to an end, after almost exactly a century, Jerusalem’s rule over the province since it was now “set up under separate political-economic jurisdiction” (Horsley 1996:33), where it remained, with the exception of a period under Agrippa I (41-44 C.E.), for the rest of the first Christian century.

Judea proper and Samaria were given to Archelaus who ruled for ten years but was removed in 6 C.E. after “scandal and internal tension worsened” (Kaylor 1994:23). Direct Roman rule was established with procurators being appointed from Rome, the most famous of whom was the fifth governor, Pontius Pilate (Kaylor 1994:23). This direct rule was significant in that it resulted in a difference between the “events and affairs that were destructive to Galilee and events that pertain to Judea and/or Jerusalem” (Horsley 1996:33), e.g. the census in 6 C.E. that did not apply to Galilee.

In addition it also meant that Jesus and his fellow Galileans only fell under direct Roman rule when they travelled out of Galilee to Jerusalem, a journey that also brought them “under the political jurisdiction of the Temple and high priesthood in Jerusalem” (Horsley 1996:33). Pilate was eventually removed from office by the Romans in 36 C.E. when, after a career that “ignored Jewish sensibilities concerning their religion”, he “sent cavalry and heavy infantry against a large crowd at Mount Gerizim” who had gathered in response to a Samaritan prophet who had promised “to show them holy vessels he claimed Moses had hidden there” (Kaylor 1994:23).

Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, ruled over the Northern territories from 37-40 C.E. before being given the title “king” and responsibility for Galilee and Perea by emperor Gaius (Caligula) in 39 C.E. In 41 C.E. he was also given rulership over Judea and Samaria, this time by the emperor Claudius and thus “for a brief period ... Herod’s realm was reunited under his grandson” (Horsley 1996:35). In 44 C.E. he was succeeded by Fadus (44-46 C.E.), the first of a series of Roman procurators who administered Palestine until “widespread revolt erupted in Galilee as well as Judea in the summer of 66” (Horsley 1996:36). This revolt, responded to by its repression under the Roman general Cestuis Gallus who effected the slaughter or enslavement of tens of thousands of Galileans in particular, was followed by a second, which saw a Roman army destroy Jerusalem and its temple in 70 C.E. In this military action both “the Temple and high priesthood were completely destroyed” (Horsley 1996:40).

Summarising this particular period of history, Hanson and Oakman (1997:67) write that Rome

had controlled Palestine’s politics and political economy, by the time of Jesus’ ministry for nearly one hundred years. Rome also influenced Israelite political religion through control and patronage of the Jerusalem high priesthood. Through prefects and procurators, the Romans directly exerted their power over Palestine (backed by the Roman auxiliary troops headquartered in Caesarea and the legions in Syria) and indirectly through the Herodian tetrarchs.

To this we can add the fact that this was a century of considerable turmoil for the residents of Palestine. To begin with, following the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.E. and coinciding with the birth of Jesus at around this time, Palestine was ruled

as three separate administrative entities until Herod Agrippa was given control of the entire region in 41 C.E. Bearing in mind the essentially homogeneous nature of the Jewish people as a religio-cultural entity, these artificial political divisions of the land must have been a source of considerable uncertainty and tension to them. Then the manner in which the rebellions following Herod's death were so brutally dealt with can only have intensified the fear that the previous and violent regime changes had already engendered. This was the Palestine into which Jesus was born, in which he formulated his ethic, and in which he ministered for three short years. The ethic of Matt 6:19-34 must now be understood as reflecting something of a time and place that was characterised by tremendous political uncertainty and wracked by its attendant violence.

3.2 REPUBLICAN AND IMPERIAL ROME

From Hanson and Oakman's comment above, Rome's role in the uncertainty and violence prevalent in Palestine at this time must be understood as having been overwhelming. Which makes an understanding of exactly how Roman rule there was established, what form it took and how it was perpetuated vitally necessary. Accounting for the success of the Roman Republic (750-133 B.C.E.), Everett Ferguson (2003:20) attributes the second century B.C.E. Greek historian Polybius with observing that Rome's achievements were due to a constitutional system which was a "perfect balance of the monarchic (consul), oligarchic (senate), and democratic (assemblies) elements" all held together by "the fear of the gods expressed in due performance of the traditional rites". This system was undergirded by an approach to law in which the magistrates had "*imperium*, or complete power" and in which "*Ius* (the ordinary Latin word for force, 'civil-law') and *fas* ('religious law', that had divine sanction apart from the state) were combined in the ruling bodies" (Ferguson 2003: 21). For all its genius, however, the Republic increasingly struggled to maintain discipline in its rapidly expanding territories to the point that a "permanent court had to be created in Rome in 149 B.C. to deal with charges by provincials against Roman officials for extortion" (Ferguson 1993: 22).

The year 133 B.C.E. saw the beginning of a century of "social upheaval and civil war" (Ferguson 2003:24), effectively marking the end of the Republic. The strife began with land reforms promoted by Tiberius Gracchus and a more comprehensive

social and political reform attempted by his brother Gaius Gracchus. Summarising this long period of turmoil and the changes that resulted, Petit (1976:125) comments that “The principate arose from the decay of republican institutions, and was to modify itself progressively into the bureaucratic and totalitarian monarchy that is the late Empire”, while Packer et al (1980:179) remark that the “old republican government could not rule the widespread colonies Rome was taking on; a stronger executive rule was needed”.

The first person to move into that rule was the general Julius Caesar. In 59 B.C.E. he formed what became known as the First Triumverate with fellow general Pompey (who “had established himself as a military leader and statesman by sweeping the Mediterranean of pirates, ending the threat of Mithridates VI, and bringing the remaining Selucid territories within Roman control” (Ferguson 2003:25)), and Crassus (“a rich real-estate speculator” (Packer et al 1980:180)). Crassus, who commanded Rome’s Syrian province, died in 53 B.C.E. and the Roman senate then “manoeuvred Pompey into a position of opposition to Caesar” (Ferguson 2003:25), who promptly crossed the Rubicon River in 49 B.C.E. and invaded Rome in order to attack Pompey. Pompey avoided Caesar by removing his army to Greece but their battle “at Pharsalus in Thessaly in 48 left Caesar master of the Roman world” (Ferguson 2003:25). Caesar assumed the role of “perpetual dictator”, a situation which was bitterly opposed by those in Rome who were “champions of the Republic”(Ferguson 2003:25) and which, ultimately, led to Caesar’s murder on the Ides (15th) of March 44 B.C.E. at the hands of C.Cassius and M.Brutus. As Ramsay MacMullen (1996:1) describes this event: “For the first time in Roman politics, virtue and philosophy joined hands with assassination”.

Not that such politics, virtue or murder resurrected the Republic’s fortunes for the death of Caesar led to the formation of a Second Triumverate. This time Octavian, a nephew of Caesar and adopted in his will, Mark Anthony, Caesar’s chief lieutenant, and Lepidus, a former consul and governor of Gaul and Spain, took charge of Rome (Ferguson 2003:25). Together Octavian and Anthony defeated Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C.E. whereupon Octavian stirred up “national sentiment in Rome against Anthony” (2003:26) as a result of Anthony’s affair with the last of the Ptolemaic rulers in Egypt, Cleopatra. Octavian cast his battle against this couple as a war against Egypt and, following Anthony and Cleopatra’s defeat at Actium in 31

B.C.E. they committed suicide in 30 B.C.E., leaving Octavian with “absolute power” (Ferguson 2003:26). Petit (1976:46) comments that

Government was in the hands of one ruler, and politics gradually gave place to administration. Open conflict between ambitious individuals or parties disappeared: the princeps heading a party or a powerful clientela was surrounded only by coteries. The principate was begotten of civil war and rested on the power of the army, but it devised for itself (not without some heart-searching) a constitutional basis.

Octavian, who was later renamed Augustus by the Senate, “concentrated on his empire’s internal problems and laid the foundation for two centuries of strong rule and peace” (Packer et al:181). This period has become known as Pax Romana or the Peace of Rome. Displaying the genius by which he initiated this peace by simultaneously formulating a policy for the frontiers, avoiding giving the impression of absolutism at home, providing a workable government and ensuring peace and stability, Octavian (in Ferguson 2003:27) wrote in 27 B.C.E.

When I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the senate and the Roman people. For this service on my part I was given the title Augustus by decree of the senate.



Augustus ruled Rome from 31 B.C.E. to 14 C.E., thereby profoundly and almost inestimably influencing the atmosphere and events that pertained prior to and following the birth of Jesus in Galilee in around 4 B.C.E. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the rise of Augustus to power was the fact that the massive Empire was now headed by a single individual who’s status, as we shall see shortly below, was soon elevated to that of demi-god, ruling the Empire for the god’s. This must have had a profound impact on Jesus who, as we have already noted, was advocating a very different form of society under the control of a very different God in the Sermon.

3.3 THE PAX ROMANA IN LATE SECOND-TEMPLE PALESTINE

The pax Romana has traditionally been interpreted as a period of almost universal peace and prosperity. Packer et al (1980:181), for example, list a comprehensive series of benefits that accrued to Rome and the Empire in general under the pax.

These included the fact that “the imperial navy [had] swept the Mediterranean of pirates who had imperilled shipping” to “the great Roman roads [which] were built primarily as military routes to the provinces” but which also “allowed grain to be brought to the city of Rome and wine and olive oil to be brought to outer provinces”. Economic expansion was facilitated by “improved methods of banking and credit” while there was a “rapid increase of cities and the creation of a cosmopolitan world state” (Packer et al 1980:181). Recent scholarship, however, has questioned both the nature and universality of the benefits of the pax. Crossan (1991:xi), for example, remarks that people living in lower Galilee at the time “know all about rule and power, about kingdom and empire, but they know it in terms of tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession”, while Horsley (1995:59) says that the “general effect of Herod’s rule on all subject peoples was extreme economic burden and hardships” and, most tellingly, that the new world order benefiting the elite “was experienced as a disruptive, disorienting, or even devastating new world disorder for many of its subject peoples” (2003a:21). Here we are introduced for the first time to the fact that the economic dimensions of the ethic articulated in Matt 6:19-34 must have taken this reality into account. The essential nature of this reality leads Carter (2001:31) to conclude that the peace of Rome was not a description of the “absence of civil war” given, for example, the rebellion following the death of Herod in 4 B.C.E., nor “the absence of war from the Empire as a whole” given that “neither Augustus nor Vespian, nor any of the seven emperors in between, swore off waging war on opponents throughout the century and Empire”. Rather this peace

is a convenient category that utilizes theological claims and religious activities to justify and celebrate the elite’s military and economic power and activity, while ignoring it’s costly impact on the ruled, ‘from below’ who did not celebrate it.

(Carter 2001:32)

In discussing the question, Klaus Wengst (1987:5) makes the balanced observation that “There need be no dispute that there was great splendour during these centuries, but the important thing is not to be silent about the cost of the splendour and not to forget the suffering of those who contributed to it”. He accounts for the emphasis on the splendour as arising from the fact that most accounts of the history are written

“from above (1987:9) i.e. from the perspective of the victors and beneficiaries of that conquest, and that the “underside” (1987:5) of these accounts need to be examined. When they are, certain patterns become discernable which reveal the true nature of the pax. Perhaps the most important of these patterns concern the military, religious, political, economic, legal and cultural dimensions of the pax.

3.3.1 The Military Pax

Although there had been expressions of peace before, the time of Augustus was considered to be the turning point in Rome’s history for “with his principate the turmoil of the civil war came to an end, and for the moment he stopped the policy of expansion” (Wengst 1987:8). That he was considered the architect of peace can be gauged from the fact that the Roman Senate had “an ‘alter of the peace of Augustus’ built, so to begin with this peace was named after the supreme authority of the Roman empire: Pax Augusta” (Wengst 1987:9). But it was a peace through force, as has just been noted, a peace that was the political goal of the leaders of Rome and their Emperor and which was “secured by military action through the success of his legions” (Wengst 1987:11). Horsley (2003a:27)) comments that the “ancient Romans believed that to ensure their own national security they had to conquer other peoples with their superior military force in order to extract *fides/pistis* = loyalty (i.e. subject and deference)”. Tacitus (*Annals*.I, 51.1 in Wengst 1987:13) describes an episode from such a conquest – the first campaign of Germanicus in 14 C.E. - and writes: “For fifty miles around he wasted the country with sword and flame. Neither age nor sex inspired pity: places sacred and profane were razed indifferently to the ground”. Palestine did not avoid the realities of this peace. Horsley (1997:10) records how, in 63 B.C.E., Pompey’s troops defiled the Jerusalem Temple when the priests resisted its occupation. Then the periodic reconquests of Judean and Galilean rebels saw thousands enslaved at Magdala/Tarichaea in Galilee in 52-51 B.C.E. Following the death of Herod, and as a result of the ensuing unrest, mass enslavements took place in and around Sepphoris near Nazareth and thousands were crucified at Emmaus in Judea in 4 B.C.E. Finally there were the systematic destructions of villages and towns prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 C.E. Horsley (1997:10) concludes that “Roman military violence established the material, political, and cultural conditions in which the Christian movement originated”.

Another overt form of this pax was the coins that the Romans minted. Wengst (1987:12) describes a tetradrachm from the time of Augustus on which “Pax is standing on a sword with the staff of peace in her hand” and remarks that this “peace is an ‘armed peace’ and the legions which have achieved it are evidently ‘peace troops’”. The portrayal of the goddess of peace was most evident during the time of the emperor Trajan (98-117 C.E.) and on one “she has her right foot on the neck of a vanquished foe” (Wengst 1987:12).

Such violence, and the “peaceful” representations of it, naturally terrified the local populations and effected its intended purpose; an absence of military challenge to Rome’s power elite (Carter 2001:32). As such, and according to Carter (2001:32), these claims of peace are propaganda claims since “Peace is a construct from the ruling elite that denotes the status quo, the way of life as ordered under the empire for the elites’ benefit”. This status quo, in the form of unbridled privilege for the elite at the expense of everyone else in the Empire, could not have escaped the attention of Jesus as he was formulating his material ethic of Matt 6:19-34. His reference to the selfish laying up of treasures on earth (19) thus may well have been, in part, a commentary on just this very situation. Furthermore his reference to the “little faith” of the children of the heavenly Father (28) reflects a very different tone to that of the fathers of Rome in their insistence on *pistis/fides* from their conquered subjects, underpinned as it was with the threat of military violence.

3.3.2 The Religious Pax

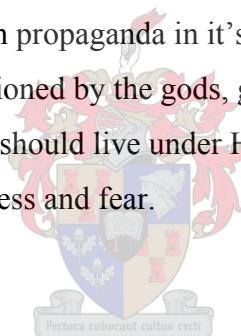
Identification of the gods with the Roman victory and rule, as depicted by the coinage, was not in any way co-incidental; it was a reflection of perhaps the most basic tenet of what has been termed “imperial theology”, namely that Rome ruled at the behest of the gods. Carter (2001:20) insists that “Basic to imperial theology was the claim that Rome rules it’s empire because the gods have willed Rome to rule the world”, and he gives the example of how “Vespian’s own propaganda, notably his coins, presents him as the agent of the gods who transmit their favour and benefits to the people through his rule”(2001: 24). Horsley (2003:15) concurs when he says, perhaps somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that “Without God’s aid, so vast an empire could never have been built up”.

The choice and sanction of Rome by the gods leads easily to the notion of the Roman ruler as god. As such Bauernfeind (in Brown 1976b:958) says “It was not surprising...that the expression of peace was accompanied everywhere by a powerful resurgence of the worship of the divine rule which was by no means alien to Hellenism”. Ferguson (2003:199) explains, however, that ruler cults emerged in Rome not because “the rulers were thought divine, but...(because) the Roman emperors had a power that could only be compared to that of the gods and the people received from them what only the gods could give”. Recognising this power and expressing gratitude as the beneficiaries of this power, the Roman people thus ascribed “divine honours to kings” (Ferguson 2003:199). In the case of Augustus, who had through his military prowess become Rome’s “saviour” and “prince of peace”, gratitude and honour was bestowed in three ways. First, the very name given to him in 27 B.C.E., Augustus, “Without making specific claims ... declared him to be something more than an ordinary man and as possessing a special sanctity”. Then Rome instituted a festival in his honour, to which was later added games (the Augustitia). Finally, “a month was dedicated to him in 8 B.C. as had earlier been done to Caesar” (Ferguson 2003:208).

One of the most significant results of the emergence of this imperial cult, specifically under Augustus, is that it unified Romans across the empire. As Horsley (1997:20) puts it “In the most civilised areas of the empire, the imperial cult provided the principal means by which cities and provinces were held together and social order produced”.

Perhaps the most significant implication of the development of the imperial cult ideology, however, and particularly as it applies to the subject matter of Matt 6:19-34 is identified by Carter (2001:70). He writes: “Imperial theology boasts that the emperor and the empire, the agents of the gods sovereignty and presence, bring well-being into a submissive world”. This is surely a theology that was saying exactly the opposite of the one being articulated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus’ theology, therefore, must be considered to be a counter-claim against Rome’s religious propaganda. As Carter (2001:70) has it, Matthew’s approach in his gospel is “that it is precisely from this imperial ‘well-being’, from these sins of oppression, domination and economic greed, that the world needs to be saved”. Jesus was apparently saying as much in 6:19-24 when he condemned the selfish accumulation of material wealth. The broader relevance of Roman emperor worship relates to the

effectiveness of the propaganda that underpinned it. Wengst notes that the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (*BJ* VI, 341 in Wengst 1987:15), who admittedly did change from being a Jewish rebel leader to a spokesman of Rome leading up to Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E., wrote that his fellow-countrymen were "waging war not only against the Romans but also against God". The apostle Paul, evidently and earlier, made similar claims when he wrote: "everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established" (Rom 13:1). Quite what Paul had in mind here is, mercifully, beyond the scope of this particular inquiry! What Jesus had to say about false gods (be they financial or Roman), however, is quite unambiguous. All human beings are not to be seeking to serve both God and false gods simultaneously, but are invited to enter into a dyadic relationship with God and then to be seeking His Kingdom and righteousness with the utmost diligence. The religious claims of Rome are evidently being met here with the counterclaims of the Kingdom of heaven. As such Jesus can surely be understood to be voicing his rejection of Roman propaganda in its attempts at legitimating a harshly oppressive rule supposedly sanctioned by the gods, given that the heavenly Father's expressed desire was that people should live under His rule, characterised by an absence of hunger, thirst, nakedness and fear.



3.3.3 The Political Pax

The peace which Rome brought to the world was packaged and sold to the vanquished as being that which had brought about their security. So Aelius Aristides (*Eulogy of Rome*, 104 in Wengst 1987:19) writes that "Now the earth itself and its inhabitants have been granted universal security which is evident to all". What the Romans meant by this was that, by their conquests, they had secured internal security by way of "protection against any threat from outside of the boundaries of the empire" (Wengst 1987:19) for their new peoples. These new peoples, in turn, were now meant to live "securely" by avoiding any insurrection against Rome and by settling their own internal disputes (Wengst 1987: 20). The Romans expected the new peoples to ratify their intent, by way of concords with Rome, in which they bound themselves over to good-neighbourliness. One such concord from Ephesus dating from 85 B.C.E. reads "the people preserves its old goodwill towards the Romans, the saviours of all, and readily agrees to their ordinances in all things" (in Wengst

1987:21), clearly indicating the pressure Rome put subject-people's under. For the Romans this made it "possible to have peace from revolts in an increasingly large centre and to be able to exercise rule undisturbed" (Wengst 1987:23). How different, then, is the security being offered by Jesus on behalf of the heavenly Father in Matt 6:25-34. To be sure the relationship being offered by the heavenly Father had to be ratified in terms of an acceptance of His terms and conditions by those who would become His children, but this was to be done on the basis of voluntary acceptance and not overt or covert threat.

One of the two principal ways in which Rome managed its internal security under these circumstances was "by giving the upper classes of subject peoples a share in exercising rule" (Wengst 1987: 25) and thus securing their loyalty. In conquered areas that were considered "civilised" by the Romans. i.e. organised into self-governing Greek cities that controlled the surrounding countryside (Horsley 1995:116), the Romans designated the area a province and appointed a Roman proconsul or governor to directly "provide general oversight and supervision". In conquered areas that consisted largely "of villages and towns or temple-communities under a local dynast, temple-state, or king" (Horsley 1995:116), the Romans governed indirectly through what became known as client-rulers, as we have previously noted in 3.1 above. The division of Palestine following the conquest by Pompey in 63 B.C.E. followed this pattern. This fact, vitally, identifies for the first time how it came to be that in Palestine this particular class of elite persons came to exercise power over the people at this point in history.

The pattern by which Rome ruled through its client-kings "developed on the basis of patron-client relations in Rome itself" (Horsley 1995:117). Josephus (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:74) records, for example how his patron, Vespian (9 –69 C.E.), "arranged a marriage for him, granted him Roman citizenship, set him up in Rome with an apartment and a pension, protected him against false accusations and gave him Judean lands". By the same token, client-kings were expected to display loyalty to the emperor, specifically in the area of returning tax revenues to him. As Wengst (1987:26) explains, the peace and security guaranteed by Rome "was the presupposition for the money and offerings in kind which had to flow to Rome as duties and taxes". Ferguson (2003:45) summarises the political policy of Rome with regards its foreign territories as follows:

The client kings were left free in internal administration, levied taxes for

their own use, and maintained armies under their own control....

Their duties were to supply auxiliaries and military aid on demand for the Roman army, maintain order and security on the frontiers, and pay taxes to Rome.

By way of this “explicit piece of political calculation”(Wengst 1987:25), Rome avoided the cost of a bloated administration and bureaucracy and the need to have Roman armies stationed across the empire (Horsley 2003a:22).

The other principal way by which Rome managed internal security within the Empire was by the use of terror. In terms of employing terror, there was no more effective a vehicle than the threat of crucifixion. Horsley (2003a:28) states, along these lines, that the “Romans deliberately used crucifixion as an excruciatingly painful form of execution by torture (basically suffocation), to be used primarily on upstart slaves and rebellious provincials”, thereby effectively cowering the rest of the population into submission. Presuming Horsley is correct, then we have here a very telling insight into how Jesus was probably regarded by the Romans, given his own execution in this manner. He must have been understood, at least, as a rebellious provincial who’s teaching against the socio-religious status quo was considered seditious.

Given the manner in which Rome ruled its Empire, specifically by way of patronage towards client rulers, and given the fact that it has been shown that Jesus was brokering a counter-cultural patronage from the heavenly Father for His children, a reasonable assumption would be that in this passage in Matthew 6 Jesus is aiming his teaching at the ultimate source of all societal patronage in the Palestine of his day, i.e. at Rome. And this, surely, for the very reason that Rome’s was a patronage that benefited not just the elites, but the elites at the expense of the rest of the population, as will be shown in the following chapter. If this is the case then it can also be held that Jesus was here actually addressing an audience that was larger than the one that was physically present in his hearing at the time the discourse was given.

3.3.4 The Economic Pax

Josephus (*BJ* III.45 in Wengst 1987:27) gives a remarkable description of the equipment that was carried by an ordinary foot soldier in the Roman army. He had a “spear and long shield, then a saw and a basket, a spade and an axe, a thong of leather and a hook and handcuffs”, clearly indicating that conquest was to be followed by

material and economic exploitation, with the handcuffs at the end of the list speaking of “the maintenance of the new situation brought about by force of arms” (Wengst 1987:27). This exploitation was carried out by the Roman army and, where possible, by an army of slaves who were tasked with building an infrastructure in the conquered territories that would facilitate Rome’s rule (Wengst 1987:27).

The natural resources of any conquered territory were considered to belong to the Romans by right of conquest, and were taken off to Rome in massive quantities. Josephus (*BJ* VI, 317 in Wengst 1987:28), for example, in describing the aftermath of the storming of the Temple in Jerusalem writes that “now all the soldiers had such vast quantities of the spoils which they had got by plunder, that in Syria a pound weight of gold was sold for half its former value”. This plunder was exacerbated by the fact that the plunderers, the Roman legions, by way of extortion and requisition, lived off the conquered peoples. “So”, as MacMullen (1988:31) writes, “they demanded a boat, a cart, a horse, food, fuel, lodging; use of the local hot baths”, which would adequately explain the Baptist’s instruction to the soldiers: “Do not extort money and don’t accuse people falsely – be content with your pay” (Luke 3:14(b)).

By far and away the most devastating economic consequence of the pax, however, was the fact that “peace had to be paid for by taxes, tolls, offerings, tributes and levies” (Wengst 1987:29). Petit (1976:184) seems to sum up this reality most succinctly when he says that “Taxation ... represents the chosen field for state intervention in economic matters”.

Given the importance of the economic exploitation of Palestine for this paper, this aspect of the Roman reality will be more thoroughly examined in the chapter which follows. Until then the assessment of Carter (2003:39) concerning the implications and consequences of this regime’s rule should be borne in mind:

This oppressive burden on the provinces and their peasants and artisans paid for Rome’s military presence, the elites wealth, Rome’s splendour and food supply, Antioch’s building projects and infrastructure, and of course entertainment and games.

The bottom line concerning the economic pax was that Rome’s policy “benefited the city of Rome, and there in turn primarily the upper classes” (Wengst 1987:31), which once again makes it well nigh impossible to imagine that Jesus, in detailing something of the Kingdom’s material ethic recorded in Matt 6:19-34, was not addressing the

issue of the rampant selfishness of Roman and client elites, particularly since this selfishness was having such a devastating effect on those who were not amongst these elites. His six references to fear relating to people simply being able to eat, drink and clothe themselves and their families must be a reflection of his concern at and condemnation of Roman economic policies and practices in as much as they were the cause of this fear.

3.3.5 The Legal Pax

The principal responsibility of the Roman civil administration, according to Petit (1976:64), was “the administration of justice”. As the Empire expanded it follows, therefore, that the Romans considered it their right and duty to civilise the colonies through the imposition of their laws. This mindset is reflected by Virgil (*Aeneid* IV, 231 in Wengst 1987:37) who has Jupiter say to Mercury that one of the tasks of a Roman was “to bring all the world beneath his law”. In the provinces the Roman governors held the responsibility of *imperium* “which gave them almost unlimited power of life and death over provincials, restricted only by the laws against extortion and treason” (Ferguson 2003: 64). The death sentence was the prerogative of governors and they could not delegate it, although they were always ultimately subject and accountable to the emperor and the Senate” (Ferguson 2003:64).

Although there is evidence of the efficacy of the Roman legal system, for example Seneca (*De Clementia* I, I, 7f in Wengst 1987:38) says of the time of Nero that there was “a security deep and abounding, and justice enthroned above all injustice”, Wengst (1987:38) maintains that it “proved patchy for the Roman nobility ...[and]... for the upper classes in the provinces”. The reality that perverted justice was, as always, money. So Tacitus (*Histories* II, 84 in Wengst 1987:38) records how Mucian, the governor of Syria, “in deciding cases which came before him as judge ... had an eye not for justice or truth but only for the size of the defendant’s fortunes”. In particular the patchiness of Roman justice manifested itself in the lenience it showed to the upper classes and its discrimination “against little people” (Wengst 1987:39). Apuleius (*Metamorphoses* X,12,4. in Wengst 1987:39) speaks of an instance where a wealthy woman was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to life in prison, but the slave whom she had used to attempt the murder was condemned to death by crucifixion.

This element of the pax has obvious application in the trial of Jesus where the governor Pilate, rather than apply justice (“Why? What crime has he committed?”), “had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified” for the simple reason that he “saw that he was getting nowhere (with Jesus’ accusers), but that instead an uproar was starting”(Matt 27:23ff.). In terms of the economic injustices that were being perpetrated against the peasant farmers of Palestine (which will be detailed in the following chapter), and against which they were evidently not being protected under Roman law, perhaps Jesus is speaking to this fact in Luke 18:1-8 when he concludes the parable of the persistent widow with the words “And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?”. Certainly the persistence of fear repeatedly mentioned in Matt 6:25-34 suggests that the peasants had little recourse to a system of justice that would address the exploitative mechanisms that were rendering them materially destitute and over against which Jesus was offering the security of a just patronage.

3.3.6 The Cultural Pax

With the spread of the Empire came the spread of the Roman way of life, exemplified by the establishment of many new cities (Wengst 1987:40). The policy of Rome was to use military veterans to establish and inhabit these cities, especially in barbarian provinces, as “a deliberate way of pacifying them to the advantage of Rome” (Wengst 1987:41). The characteristic of these new cities was the number and quality of their public buildings, all of which “represented Roman control, displayed the benefits of Roman presence, and attempted to assuage resentment or ensure cooperation through gratitude” (Carter 2000:37). Most of the new cities were built in the Western empire as a result of their absence there prior to Roman occupation and as a “Roman creation ... their institutions are more uniform” (Petit 1976:70). In the Eastern empire many cities of Greek and Hellenistic origins already existed and the Romans made “no attempts to impose uniformity” (Petit 1976: 71). In both wings of the empire though, in the first century and especially under the emperors Tiberius, Domitian and Trajan, the construction “added, extended, or improved residential quarters, administration buildings, baths, water supply, drainage, aqueducts, the theatre, temples, the hippodrome, gates, statues, fountains and streets” (Carter 2000:37).

As might be expected, many of the buildings were constructed for the specific purpose of reinforcing the public perception of Roman power and control (Carter 2003:37). So, for example, after his victory over Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Titus adorned Antioch's gate, on the road to Daphne and facing Jerusalem, with "a bronze figure of the moon and four hills, a symbol of *Aeternitas*, of Rome and the Flavians forever" (Carter 2000:38). Given that the gate was located near the Jewish quarter of the city this construction was both "humiliating for Jews and a clear warning to all of the cost of not submitting to Roman control" (Carter 2000:38).

Another aspect of this cultural imperialism was the Roman Games. The games "were a favourite form of benefaction by rulers and wealthy men" (Ferguson 2003:100) in the Empire in general. However in the provincial cities they "served not the least to consolidate the rule of the indigenous upper classes" (Wengst 1987:42), by way of a show of wealth, power and status. In marked and macabre contrast Apuleius (*Metamorphoses* IV, 14,2f in Wengst 1987:43), relates how when circus animals died in the streets "the common people, having no other meat to feed on, and forced by their rude poverty to find any new meat and cheap feasts, would come forth and fill their bellies with the flesh of the bears".

The significance of the cultural pax for Palestine will become more apparent as we examine the matter of Hellenism immediately below, for we will see that the Roman military occupation of Palestine more thoroughly entrenched the cultural manifestations of Hellenism which already existed, particularly in the cities of the region. For the present, however, and as it relates to the overall effects of the pax on Palestine, what we have seen so far certainly validates Wengst's (1987:5) opinion that "there need be no dispute that there was great splendour during these centuries".

Such splendour, though, was almost exclusively the experience of the Roman elites and their client-elites in the provinces. The cost of this splendid peace was borne by the rest of the empire. As Wengst (1987:13) so tellingly describes it, it was a "Peace produced and maintained by military force... (and was) accompanied with streams of blood and tears of unimaginable proportions". The Roman author Juvenal (50-130 C.E.) (*Satires* XIII, 28-30 in Wengst 1987:51) concurs. He describes it as "An age more evil than that of iron, one for whose wickedness nature itself can find no name, no metal from which to call it" Into this age were born Jesus and every single person who listened to him teaching on the Mount. What they heard, therefore, has to be interpreted with the reality of this peace taken into account, a reality which Jesus just

could not have avoided as he formulated his socio-material and religious ethic in the Sermon. Before that ethic is more adequately scrutinized, though, it is necessary to focus on the second major socio-cultural reality that impacted on the people of Palestine, the Hellenization of the Middle East because, in essence, if Rome provided the military-political machinery through which Palestine was ruled at the time of Jesus, Athens provided the ideology which was its lubricant.

3.4 THE HELLENIZATION OF PALESTINE

During 332 B.C. the Macedonian King Alexander (356-323 B.C.E.) conquered Syria, Palestine and Egypt, while the following year at the battle of Gaugamela in Mesopotamia, he defeated the armies of Darius II, bringing an end to the Persian empire, and then pushed further east as far as the Indus River. In so doing he “ushered in the Hellenistic Age, but the ingredients of that age were already there. He accelerated the pace of change” (Ferguson 2003:13). Included in these ingredients were the “movement of Greeks abroad” (to supplement those who had already planted Greek colonies around the Mediterranean since the 8th century B.C.E.), the spread of Greek culture, the Greek language (*koine*, largely based on the Attic dialect) and a “body of ideas accepted by all” (Ferguson 2003:14), together with the “emergence of philosophy as representing a way of life (promulgated by the Sophists and Socrates). Of the utmost importance was the establishment of society around the self-governing *polis* (city-state), where the Greek gymnasia emphasised the essential role of public life. The city “remained the basis of social and economic life through the Roman empire”, and it was expanded “to the *oikoumene* (the inhabited, civilised world)” (Ferguson 2003:14) in time.

Following Alexander’s death in 323 B.C.E. his empire was divided up amongst his generals and their successors, the most important of whom, for Palestine, were the “Selucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt” (Kaylor 1994:24), who vied for control of Palestine until 167 B.C.E. when the Hasmoneans took control. Both the Selucids and the Ptolemies “promoted Greek language, Greek culture and Greek ways” (Kaylor 1994:24) with the Selucid Antiochus IV, in particular, having “a burning passion to unite all of his territory by spreading Hellenism throughout” (Packer et al 1980:171). Ironically, the fragmentation of Alexander’s empire “delayed the universalising tendency” (Ferguson 2003:16) which he had initiated, and this task was

completed by the Romans with their eventual conquest of Alexander's original empire. At the centre of these shifts of power and sweeping Hellenization was the Jewish community of Palestine that had, since its return from the Babylonian exile from 537 B.C.E. onwards, by and large "sought to maintain its identity and integrity regardless of the foreign rulers" (Kaylor 1994:23), through the observation of Torah. As will be detailed below, the Hellenising pressures that swept over this Jewish community took place in three distinct waves in the three centuries leading up to the birth and ministry of Jesus i.e. under the Ptolemies and Selucids, under the Maccabeans and Hasmoneans, and under the Romans and Herodians. Each wave brought a different dimension of threat to the beleaguered Jewish population.

3.4.1 Hellenism in Judea and Galilee under the Ptolemies and Selucids

Reference is made to this period in the history of Palestine only in order to account for the origins of the thought and behaviour patterns that, by the time of Jesus, held great sway over the Jerusalem leadership and that was so steadfastly resisted, in particular, by rural Palestinians.

The force and impact of Hellenization was felt variously over different parts of Palestine. According to Horsley (1996:24) this can be traced back to a "combination of previous history and Persian imperial policy". After their conquest of the Babylonians, the Persians sent "the exiled Judean royal and priestly aristocracy to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and restored the Samaritan aristocracy in the district to the north" (Horsley 1996:24). In so doing the Temple "became the central political-economic-religious institution of the province of Judea" (Horsley 1995:130), while the priestly families, as client-rulers, "quickly established their pre-eminence in Jerusalem... (as) the heads of state in charge of a tributary economy centred in the house of God to which the people brought their tithes and offerings" (Horsley 1995: 131). This power reality continued under the Hellenistic rule of the Ptolemies and Selucids and was restored under the Romans following a period of Judean independence under the Hasmoneans, thus exposing Jerusalem and Judea directly to strong Hellenising influences. The Galileans, on the other hand, consisting of those Jews who had been left behind after the Assyrian conquest of 733-732 B.C.E. and other peoples who had been forcibly settled there or who had filtered into the territory subsequently, had come under successive rule by the Assyrians, Persians, Ptolemies

and Selucids and had never evolved “an indigenous aristocracy” (Horsley 1996:24). This meant “instead of being headed by a ‘native’ priestly or royal aristocracy, the Galileans were simply ruled and taxed by imperial officers based usually in Megiddo” (Horsley 1996:24). The crucial result of this was that although several Hellenistic cities were established in areas bordering Galilee, “not only did they have no political jurisdiction over any part of Galilee ... but they also had little cultural influence on Galilean life” (Horsley 1996:24).

The vital issue here, then, concerning the degree and speed of Hellenization at this time revolves around the relationship between the ruling class and “the indigenous peasantry they ruled” (Horsley 1995:7). Where the indigenous peasantry was ruled by its own indigenous aristocracy, the degree of Hellenization was accelerated and accentuated since such aristocracies had “Hellenistic political forms and language superimposed on them (Horsley 1995: 7), and they tended to transmit such to the under classes.

Under the rule of the Ptolemies (301 – 198 B.C.E.), Palestine experienced a large measure of “Hellenization in the economic and social spheres” but the “continuation of traditional Jewish ideals in Palestine is seen in the ‘Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus’” (Ferguson 2003:404), albeit that this work was translated into Greek in Egypt by the author’s grandson in 118 B.C.E. According to Kaylor (1994:24) “many among Palestine’s leading classes were attracted to the modernity that Hellenistic civilisation represented” and their association with the diverse Gentile population “whose upper classes were thoroughly Hellenised” would have added to the attraction. This trend was undoubtedly accelerated when the Selucid king, Antiochus III (223 – 187 B.C.E.), “finally wrestled Palestine from Egypt about the turn of the century” (Ferguson 2003: 404), a situation that saw many Jews change allegiance and accept Selucid patronage. Amongst these Jews were two rival elite families, the Oniads and Tobiads. The Oniads “held the high priesthood in succession from Zadok” while the Tobiads “held the right of collecting taxes for the Ptolemies and presumably for the Selucids” (Ferguson 2003:405). In 174 B.C.E. the high priest Onias III was deposed and murdered when his brother, Jason, secured the high-priesthood after paying a large bribe to Antiochus IV (175 – 163 B.C.E.), meaning that the “high priest was now a Selucid official” (Ferguson 2003:405). Jason accelerated the Hellenization process in Jerusalem by changing “the

constitution of Jerusalem from that of a temple-state to a Greek-city-state with council, citizen list, gymnasium, and *ephebeia*” (Ferguson 2003:405).

The period of Ptolemaic and Selucid control of Palestine, in sum, witnessed a radical Hellenization particularly of the Jewish ruling classes living in the now polis of Jerusalem. This automatically exposed them to Greek thought forms as diverse as Stoicism and Epicureanism. In terms of Stoicism, the “goal of life is virtue, and virtue is to be lived in accord with the rational nature of reality” (Ferguson 1988:662), while the Epicureans “taught that the body must be satisfied if the mind was to know happiness” (Packer et al 1980:174). These two thought forms evidently wrestled for control of Greco-Roman minds, with the evidence suggesting that by the first century C.E., Epicureanism held sway (Packer et al 1980:174). The fact that the Jerusalem high-priesthood, exposed to such thought forms, was now a Selucid political appointment and not a descendant of Zadok as had previously been the case, suggests that Greek thought forms must have affected how the Temple hierarchy now read, interpreted and applied Torah. Jerusalem Judaism must inevitably have undergone some degree of change in terms of its understanding and interpretation of Torah. Rural Jews, however, and particularly those living in Galilee, seemed to have largely escaped this tendency given that the region was without Hellenised cities and the local elites that would have populated them. As such the Galileans were evidently able to maintain their distinctly traditional religion and customs based on Torah.

3.4.2 Hellenism in Judea and Galilee under the Maccabees and Hasmoneans

Under the prevailing circumstances, and in understandable horror at what was taking place in Jerusalem, many pious Jews fled to the surrounding Judean villages where they joined an insurrection led by a Hasmonaean Jewish priest, Mattathias, and his five sons who “called upon all those zealous for the law of their fathers to rally to them” (Ferguson 2003:407). Led by Mattathias until his death in 166 or 165 B.C.E., and continued by one of his sons Judas, (nicknamed Maccabee), the so-called Maccabean Revolt began. Judas succeeded in suppressing the Selucid garrison in Jerusalem for long enough to re-dedicate the Temple and re-institute the daily burnt offering on December 14th 165/164 B.C.E. (Ferguson 2003:402). Killed in 160 B.C.E. by a Syrian army, Judas was succeeded in leadership of the rebellion by his brother Johnathan. This Johnathan, along with his remaining brothers, “successfully

manoeuvred between rival Selucid factions to obtain appointment of the Judean temple-state” (Horsley 1996:25). This appointment was made by Alexander Balas, who claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV, in acknowledgement of Johnathan’s assistance in gaining him the Selucid throne. The irony of this situation is identified by Ferguson (2003:409) who speaks of the strange fact “that a Hasmonean, whose family rose in revolt against Antiochus IV for his intervention in Jewish religious affairs that began with deposing and appointing high priests, would accept the high priesthood from one who based his right to bestow it on a claim to be the son of that same Antiochus”.

Perhaps this very episode reveals something of the true motives of the leaders of the revolt for, with the imprisonment and execution of Johnathan, the last of Mattathias’ sons, Simon, “obtained recognition by the Selucid regime as high priest” (Horsley 1995:36), having previously obtained the lifting of the tribute on the Jewish people by the Selucid king Demetrius II, a move which “implied complete independence” (Ferguson 2003:409). The early leadership of the Maccabees, in other words, worked for and achieved a political-religious regime change without changing the status quo for the bulk of the people. As Kaylor (1994:25) puts it, the “revolt did not establish God’s kingdom, nor did it end the tendency towards Hellenization, nor does it seem to have brought about a genuine social revolution”. What did happen was that “One ruling group supplanted another, but rule remained in the hands of the same social class”.

Of equal importance is the fact that, up to this point in time, the region of Galilee escaped the most intense of the pressures of Hellenization, which Jerusalem and Judea had experienced. Horsley (1996:24) says that the Galileans “had no experience comparable to the crisis of sudden forced Hellenization in Judea under the Selucid emperor Antiochus Epiphanes and the long guerrilla struggles of the Maccabean Revolt”. As a result they underwent “no sudden threat to their traditional way of life and had no central Temple around which they might rally” (Horsley1996:24), speaking to the fact that Galilee was not necessarily the “hotbed of revolutionary sentiment and zealotry” (Rapinchuk 2004:200) that biblical scholars have previously thought was the case.

Whatever may have pertained in Galilee up until this point, however, was radically interrupted by the ascent of the Hasmoneans to power in Jerusalem. Under John Hyrcanus (134 – 104 B.C.E.) and his sons, and as a result of escalating Selucid

impotence, Hasmonaean rule was extended “over the Samaritans to the north, the Idumeans to the south, and finally, in 104 B.C.E., over the Galileans” (Horsley 1996:25). Hyrcanus’ son, Aristobulus I (104-103 B.C.E.), became the first in his family line to adopt the title “king”, giving an indication of his Hellenistic tendencies, having “come to power in reaction against Hellenism” (Ferguson 2003: 410).

Aristobulus also made “conquests in ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’ (the ‘region’ of the Gentiles) and began the settlement of new Jewish colonies in the region” (Ferguson 2003:410). Aristobulus was succeeded by his older brother Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.) who “in an extensive military campaign subjected several nearly Hellenistic cities, so that the area ruled by the Hasmonean regime was virtually the same as that under Solomon’s rule centuries earlier” (Horsley 1995:38).

Doran Mendels (in Horsley 1995:38) says that the two Hyrcanus sons thus imitated the pattern of Hellenistic kings whose philosophy was “to reign over as much territory as possible and to subjugate other peoples”. Alexander was succeeded by his wife Salome Alexander (76-67 B.C.E.), who appointed her elder son Hyrcanus II as high priest. On Salome’s death Aristobulus II defeated his elder brother Hyrcanus II and “assumed the kingship and high priesthood” (Ferguson 2003:411). A civil war followed between the brothers who both “presented their cases to the Romans” after the Roman general Pompey made his way into Syria (Ferguson 2003:411).

With all of Palestine under Hasmoneans rule, and with the Hasmoneans displaying distinctly Hellenised behaviour patterns, the issue of how the Galileans reacted to this rule needs to be addressed. This issue revolves around the ethnic-religious composition of the people of Galilee. According to 2 Kings 15:29 the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser “took Gilead and Galilee – all the land of Naphtali” – and deported the people to Assyria in 733- 732 B.C.E. The question raised by this deportation relates to what percentage of the Jewish population was actually removed from Galilee. According to one view, based on archaeological evidence from lower Galilee, the “Galilee was devastated and virtually its entire population deported” (Horsley 1995:26). The population of Galilee was then apparently built up again during Persian and Hellenistic times with non-Israelites, who were then “Judaized in some way after the Hasmoneans took control” (Horsley 1995: 26). Horsley (1995:26) himself argues against this position and maintains that the Assyrians were in the habit of deporting “primarily the rulers, their privileged officers, their artisans, and other royal servants and retainers”. He concludes that the “continuity of the Israelite

population seems far more likely, despite the fragmentary evidence”. Freyne (in Rapinchuk 2004:203) agrees and maintains, “a substantial portion of the Galilean population would have been direct descendants of the Israelites”. But, as Horsley (in Rapinchuk 2004:244) points out, it is also “clear that ‘Gentiles’ in some numbers must have been living side by side with ‘Israelites’ in the villages of Galilee for generations”. Although Horsley and Freyne agree on the ethnic origins and composition of Galilee’s population, they do not appear to agree on how readily the Galileans accepted their new political masters and their brand of Jerusalem Judaism. Freyne (in Rapinchuk 2004:204) is of the opinion that the “Galileans were typically very loyal to Jerusalem and the religious elite of the city and temple”. Horsley (1995:50) does not agree. He says that it is true that most Galileans were of Israelite background and “would supposedly have worshipped the same God of Israel and shared certain Israelite traditions with the Judeans and the Jerusalem temple-state”. However he insists that although many Galilean customs were the same as Judean customs, “they had undergone more than eight centuries of separate development” (1995: 51), making “the laws of the Judeans” different from their own. These laws of the Judeans, “were presumably the official Jerusalem traditions shaped according to priestly and scribal interests ... whereas the Galilean customs would have been popular traditions”. Thus, continues Horsley (1995:51), although their shared roots would have provided a basis for the incorporation of Galilee into the reconstituted Jewish state, this would have been accomplished “with varying degrees of change or friction depending on variations in the local village customs” and that “ a distinctively Galilean social life would have continued under Hasmonean rule” This distinctly Galilean social life included:

customs and traditions that expressed and guided the life of village communities, with emphasis on local reciprocity and the preservation of all families on their ancestral inheritance of land that formed the basis of their subsistence and place in the village community.

(Horsley 1996:28)

Horsley’s (1996:28) emphatic conclusion is that there “can be no question of any effective integration of the Galileans into the Temple-community”.

The initial nature and success of the Maccabean revolt and Hasmonaean rule (167-63 B.C.E.), and by which ethno-religious Jews once again ruled over the land of their forefathers, must have greatly encouraged the Jewish lower classes throughout

Palestine who were trying to maintain their traditional religious and cultural identities. Subsequent events, however, demonstrated that this change in leadership amounted to little more than a second wave of Hellenization. What it certainly did, though, was bring Jerusalem rule directly to Galilee. Concerning the nature of this rule, Horsley (1995:179) muses that the Hasmoneans “surely brought Jerusalem-based cultural forms with them when they took over Sepphoris as the administrative city, although we cannot be sure that they replaced Greek with either Aramaic or Hebrew as the administrative/official language”. For all the promise held out by being under “the laws of the Judeans”, however, the Galileans were confronted by customs and traditions that were not necessarily their traditional ones in that these laws were undoubtedly cast in the thought forms of the Hellenised Jewish elites. Under these circumstances it is difficult to imagine that the Galileans were anything other than reluctant to accept the new order.

Certainly there had been no change in the effective status of the high-priesthood in that this institution, although now under direct Jewish control, was still in the hands of a Hellenised leadership. Furthermore the fact that the Hasmoneans had evidently “converted” many Idumeans and Itureans and, under Aristobulus I, settled Galilee with new Jewish colonists (Ferguson 2003:410), thereby suggesting that these people had imbibed a Jerusalem-style Judaism, does nothing to alter the fact that that the vast majority of Jewish Galileans had maintained their own particular and traditional belief and behaviour patterns in terms of their reading of Torah, and that these would have been different to the Jerusalem equivalents. They had, in other words, apparently successfully resisted a Hellenised form of Yahweh worship that had evidently washed over Jerusalem. All of which speaks to the fact that by 63 B.C.E., and thus some ninety years before Jesus formulated and publicised his religious and material ethic in Galilee and as recorded in Matt 6:19-34, the province as a whole had largely resisted the “corrosive” elements of Hellenism as it pertained to their belief/behaviour system.

3.4.3 Hellenism in Judea and Galilee under the Romans and Herodians

Following the Roman invasion of Palestine in 63 B.C.E. and during its subsequent subjugation, the Romans “confirmed the Hasmonean dynasty in power” (Horsley 1995: 53). Julius Caesar, in 48-47 B.C.E., “confirmed Hyrcanus II and his descendants in the office(s) of Ethnarch and High Priesthood of the Judeans” (Horsley

1995: 53), which included the Galileans, Idumeans and others. The result was that these peoples were now taxed “by the regime in Jerusalem as well as by the Romans, through the regime in Jerusalem” (Horsley 1995:53). This caused great hardship for the peasantry, evidenced by the eruption of social banditry that was reported by Josephus (*BJ*.1.204; *ANT*.14.159.in Horsley 1995:54) to have included “the brigand-chief Ezekias (who) was ravaging the district on the Syrian frontier with a large troop”. Caesar also appointed the Idumean aristocrat, Antipater, procurator of Judea under Hyrcanus who was ethnarch at the time (Horsley 1995:54). Antipater immediately appointed his sons as military governors with Phasael given Jerusalem and its environs and Herod, the future king, receiving Galilee. So it was that the “Galileans were thus the first among Herod’s future subjects to become acquainted with his repressive practices” (Horsley 1995:54). The extraordinary situation of the time, which included material and human “devastation, enslavement, and taxation seems to have provoked a certain level of anti-Roman, anti-Herod feeling among the Galileans” (Horsley 1996:30).

Antipater was murdered in 43 B.C.E. and Mark Anthony made Phasael and Herod joint tetrarchs, “once more terminating Hyrcanus’ political authority” (Ferguson 2003: 412). Herod had to flee to Rome, however, when Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, gained power in Judea in 40 B.C.E. He ruled for three years and “held the titles of king and high priest, the last Hasmonean to do so” (Ferguson 2003:412). Herod, declared king by the Roman senate in 40 B.C.E., returned to Palestine and gained power after Antony defeated Antigonus in 37 B.C.E. and had him tied to a cross, flogged and then killed (Ferguson 2003:413).

After having bloodily established his power in Palestine as a whole, Herod did all he could to ingratiate himself to his new patron, Augustus, who had defeated his previous patron, Antony, at Actium in 31 B.C.E. He expanded “a small Hellenistic anchorage on the Mediterranean coast called Strato’s Tower” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:76) into a major port that exported and imported goods for all of Palestine and called it Caesarea, Latin for “emperor”. The technically sophisticated harbour was given the name Sebaste, Greek for “emperor”, and one of the harbour towers was named “for Drusus, Augustus’ dead stepson” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:76). When the Romans took direct control of Palestine in 6 C.E., Caesarea became their capital. Herod also built a temple in the city that he dedicated to both the emperor Augustus and Roma, the Roman patron goddess. In so doing Caesarea was given “a temple connecting it

with the political religion in Rome” and Herod thus demonstrated that whatever inclinations he may have had towards monotheism, these were “overridden by his role as a client of the Roman emperor” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:77). This temple also provides a reason for the fact that the cities were considered by the average Palestinian to be “something separate from the land as a whole” since what was done in them “would never have been acceptable to the general population in the countryside’s of Galilee and Judea” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:77). Finally Herod initiated a musical and sports festival, celebrated every fifth year, which “honoured Augustus’ victory over Antony at Actium” (Hanson & Oakman 1988:76).

At the same time, Herod devoted considerable attention to the Jewish areas of Palestine. By way of eliminating Hasmonaean influence, he appointed to the high-priesthood Jewish men from high-priestly families in Egypt and Babylon, who then promptly “built themselves luxurious mansions in the New City overlooking the temple complex” (Horsley 1996:30), a move which “would not have enhanced the legitimacy of the office in Judea proper and may have only further discredited it in the outlying district of Galilee” (Horsley 1996:31). Herod, in one of his most ambitious building projects, rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem and hugely expanded the entire Temple complex. This evidently impressed some in Jerusalem as is suggested by the comment of a rabbi named Baba Bathra (in Ferguson 2003:413) who said “He who has not seen Herod’s temple has not seen beauty”. The style of the Temple, as with all of Herod’s public buildings, was Hellenistic-Roman and “must have seemed remote in cultural and class terms to the Galilean peasants” (Horsley 1996:31).

Herod, in the process of establishing his grip over Palestine, “added massive fortresses such a Masada and Herodium to those he took over from the Hasmoneans” (Horsley 1996:30). In the Galilee, after taking over such fortresses, he “would have garrisoned them with his own troops, headed by loyal officers” (Horsley 1995:57). Moreover, in the manner of the Hasmoneans, Herod chose Sepphoris as “his principal fortress town from which to rule and tax Galilee” (Horsley 1996:30). There is no record, however, of any public building by Herod in Galilee. Furthermore Josephus (in Horsley 1995:56), although extensively describing Herod’s reign, provides much less “direct evidence for Galilee under Herod’s rule than Hasmonean rule”.

This means that the nature of the relationship between Galilee and Jerusalem under Herod has to be ascertained by extrapolation from the indirect evidence. According to Horsley (1995:56) this produces mixed results. On the one hand Herod “left the

Temple, the high priesthood, and the Judean laws intact”, resulting in a protracted period of social stability in Judea. This also meant “the laws of the Judeans” still pertained in the Galilee and other areas, presumably bringing the same conditions. On the other hand, “the effects of Herod’s political-economic and cultural-religious practices may have compromised the authority of the Jerusalem-based institutions and undermined their effectiveness for Galileans as perhaps for Judeans as well” (Horsley 1995: 57). Along these lines, for example, the lavishly rebuilt Temple “besides being a dedication to God ... was a monument to Herod’s own glory, a monumental institution of religio-political propaganda” (Horsley 1995:57), something that would not have been lost on the Judeans and Galileans alike. In addition, the appointment of the new families to the high priesthood and Herod’s use of them for his own purposes “effectively undermined the legitimacy of the high priesthood” (Horsley 1995: 57), meaning that whatever loyalty to the Temple-based government the Hasmoneans might have built up in Galilee and elsewhere, “Herod’s treatment of the high priesthood would have only undermined it” (Horsley 1995:58) in their eyes.

This, and of vital importance, would have been the immediate context in which Jesus formulated his ethic in Matt 6:19-34 and might well provide the key to understanding his approach to the Temple hierarchy in general. As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Matthew attributes to Jesus (5:21-43) a refutation of the apparent teachings of the Pharisees and teachers of the law (as members of a retainer class in Jerusalem – see 5.1.4 below) concerning their interpretation to Torah. Furthermore in 15:1-20 Matthew records Jesus correcting their interpretation of Torah to their faces, while in 23:1-39 he publicly criticises their teaching and particularly their behaviour from within the precincts of the Temple itself. Finally in 21:12-13 the record of his earlier fury at the desecration of the Temple by the moneychangers might well constitute his rejection of all that the Temple now stood for under a largely Hellenised high-priesthood. The Temple, in sum, is quite apparently a thoroughly discredited institution in the eyes of Jesus. This suggests that if as a Galilean (for that is how he is designated by Temple staff in 26:69-74) he was reflecting the mindset of his Galilean kinspeople as it related to the Temple, and given that the Temple leadership and its interpretation of Torah had been incrementally discredited in the eyes of the Galileans over a period of three hundred odd years as we have found above, it was with such a mindset that he developed and delivered his discourse in 6:19-34.

What is absolutely certain, though, is that Herod's rule meant crippling financial circumstances for the vast majority of Palestinians. As has been established, and as will be emphasised again the next chapter, Rome's rule of Palestine and their confirmation of the Hasmoneans as client-kings, had already led to a double taxation. When Herod ascended the throne a third layer of taxation was added "for the Temple and the priests did not suddenly forego their revenues" (Horsley 1995:59). The result was that in Galilee and elsewhere the peasantry experienced "increasing indebtedness and even alienation of their ancestral lands, as they were unable to support themselves after rendering up percentages of their crops for tribute to Rome, tithes and offerings to priests and Temple, and taxes to Herod" (Horsley 1995:60). Kaylor (1994:26) agrees and adds "it is difficult to see how the placing of Hellenised Jews in the high priesthood and promoting an elite society with a Hellenistic spirit could avoid having significant impact on Jewish society". Thus, in his opinion (1994:26), and by the time of Herod's death in 4 B.C.E., "the people were not only thoroughly alienated from his regime due to his excesses, intrigues, and remoteness from Judaic values (even though he affirmed his allegiance to Torah), they were also exhausted economically".

This alienation and exhaustion manifested itself, on Herod's death, in the form of "popular uprisings that erupted in every major district of Herod's realm in Perea and Judea as well as Galilee" (Horsley 1995:61). Very significantly, and according to Horsley, these popular uprisings "were not movements to restore the Temple and the Torah, as was the Maccabean Revolt" (Horsley 1995:61). Rather, and as Josephus (*Ant.*17.271-85; in Horsley 1996:61) records, each of those movements made a claim for their own "king" and as such constituted civil-war.

In this specific context such claims should be understood as expressing determined opposition to "traditions that served to legitimate either the Temple or the Torah" and as a "reaction to illegitimate Roman-sponsored Herodian kingship" (Horsley 1996: 61). As such these revolts across Palestine were "probably an Israelite assertion of independence of the principal institutions of Jerusalem rule as well as Herodian tyranny" (Horsley 1996: 61). Which would quite adequately account for the immediate and devastating Roman response. Under the Syrian Legate Varus a "massive army of Roman legions and auxiliary troops from the cities and client-rulers in the surrounding area" (Horsley 1996:62) marched into Palestine in 4 B.C.E. Josephus (*Ant.*17.268 in Horsley 1995:62) reported that the main body of this force advanced on Judea to secure Jerusalem, while a detachment was

sent to “fight against the Galileans who inhabit the region adjoining Ptolemais”. Varus led the main force and took Jerusalem, apparently without a fight. He then sent troops into the surrounding countryside, “to seek out those that had been the authors of the revolt” whereupon “he punished some of them that were most guilty, and some he dismissed: now the number of those that were crucified on this account were two thousand” (*Ant.* 17.295). Galilee, equally, did not get off lightly. Under Varus’ son the Romans “made an attack upon the enemy and put them to flight, and took Sepphoris, and made its inhabitants slaves, and burnt the city” (*Ant.* 17.289). There is some debate, archaeologically speaking, about the extent of the destruction of Sepphoris, and Horsley (1995:63) suggests that the Roman effort here was probably directed “against the surrounding villages in which the insurrection led by the popular king Judas, son of Hezekiah, was clearly based”. What is in no doubt, however, is the fact that across Palestine the “Romans terrorized the populace as a means of intimidation and imperial control” (Horsley 1995:63), using their usual tactic of crucifixion.

Following the suppression of the revolt, Herod’s kingdom was divided amongst his three sons, thereby bringing about the situation in which Galilee “remained under separate political jurisdiction from Judea throughout the rest of the first century C.E.” (Horsley 1995:63). This initiated a period, briefly interrupted between 40 – 44 B.C.E. when Herod Agrippa I held power, of direct Roman rule over Judea until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E. The Roman prefects and procurators (after 44 B.C.E.) established Caesarea as their capital and ruled from there, “but a strong Roman military presence was maintained in Jerusalem at all times” (Ferguson 2003:415). By and large the Romans appeared to have shown “great respect for Jewish religious scruples: for example, Jews were exempt from appearing before a magistrate on a Sabbath or holy day” (Ferguson 2003:415). The high priesthood, though, continued in the hands of the Jewish elites and the “Sanhedrin, the council of seventy presided over by the high priest, had considerable, if limited authority over internal affairs: (Ferguson 2003: 415). The most famous of the early governors, Pontius Pilate (26 – 36 C.E.), and the one under whom Jesus was executed, did not ingratiate himself to his Jewish citizens from the start. In one extra-biblical account (Josephus *Ant.* 18.3.2; *War* 2.9.4 in Ferguson 2003:416) he took funds from the Temple treasures (known as *Korban*) to pay for the construction of an aqueduct into Jerusalem. When the Jews gathered to protest this action, Pilate had

soldiers in civilian dress infiltrate the crowds and, armed with clubs, on “an agreed signal they began to beat the rioters. A large number perished, and the protest was silenced” (Josephus *Ant.*18.3.2; *War.* 2.9.4 in Ferguson 2003:416).

Concerning the relationship between the Jerusalem Temple and Galilee at this time, the information appears to be limited (Horsley 1996:33). Regarding the movement of Galilean pilgrims to observe the Jewish holy days in Jerusalem, for example, Horsley (1996:33) says that there “is literary evidence for some pilgrims from Galilee, but the numbers were likely small”. He maintains, however, that given the centuries of “separate historical experience and notwithstanding the century of direct Jerusalem rule, the historical regional differences and different class interests may have outweighed whatever bonds may have been established during the century of troubled Jerusalem rule in Galilee”. In addition he makes the point that the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem and Herod Antipas in Galilee, under the new political dispensation, were now “competing for influence and particularly revenues from the Galilean peasantry” (1996: 34). All in all, then, it does not appear that this period saw the Galilean population come further under the influence of the Jerusalem Temple than was previously the case.

In terms of the Galilean population itself, it came under the rule of Herod Antipas from 4 B.C.E. to 39 C.E., i.e. for virtually the entire duration and beyond of Jesus’ life. Antipas, in typical client-king fashion, was both the “client of the Julio-Claudian emperors: of Augustus, Tiberias and Caligula” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:84) and “also the most powerful patron of the region” (1998:34). According to Freyne (1988:136), the most “easily documented impact of Antipas’ reign on Galilean life is his building projects”. Most significantly he rebuilt, or certainly re-decorated, Sepphoris and founded Tiberias on the Galilee lakefront. Concerning Sepphoris, which Josephus (in Freyne 1988:137) called “the ornament of all Galilee”, the city appears to have been “Antipas’ initial capital, and the city became a centre of Roman political and cultural influence, remaining steadfastly loyal to the Romans and a focus for Galileans’ resentment” (Horsley 1995:65). Horsley (1995:65) contends that Antipas reconstructed this city “both to tout his own position and to advertise the rule of his imperial patrons”.

Within two decades, however, Antipas had completed a new capital on the shores of Lake Galilee, to which he gave the name Tiberius, after his new patron, the Roman Emperor Tiberius (14-37 B.C.E.). Antipas populated the city by drawing its residents

from a wide source, including local Jewish Galileans. Initially these Galileans were apparently reluctant to populate the city given that “Jewish graves had been violated in its building” and that the “peasants would have found it an uncongenial environment” (Freyne 1988:138 & 139). The Galilean elite had their own reasons for not wishing to settle in the city, specifically that by doing so “they were being directly brought within the net of his (Antipas’) control” (Freyne 1988:139). The city was, first and foremost, “a royal-administrative city” (Horsley 1995:169) and both it and Sepphoris were “set over Galilean society as the institutions by which it was controlled and taxed and, as long as they were royal administrative cities, by which the ruler’s position and fame were manifested in the context of Roman imperial rule” (Horsley 1995:174).

The economic consequences of the reconstruction of these cities for the local population was massive since “it was the city which as the agent of the central government supervised the taxation system adding its own burdens on the rural population in the forms of financial demands and personal labour services” (Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller in Horsley 1995:177). Given the added fact that once Tiberius was completed, putting every village in Lower Galilee within walking distance of tax collectors, “Antipas’ founding of Tiberius soon after the rebuilding of Sepphoris must have had a major impact on life in Lower Galilee” (Horsley 1995:178).

The tensions produced by Antipas’ financial exploitation of his subjects can only have been ratcheted up by the fact that he did not, like his father, “observe the traditional customs and laws of the Judeans” (Horsley 1996:34). In addition to the fact that he built Tiberius partly on top of a Jewish cemetery, Josephus (*Life* 65) reports that Antipas’ own palace was decorated with representations of animals that were not permitted by Jewish law. Josephus (*Ant* 18.5.2) also records the fact that Antipas had the Baptist executed as is recorded in Mark 6:17-28. Having divorced the daughter of “the Nabatean king Aretas IV ... in order to marry his niece Herodius, the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip” (Ferguson 2003:415), Antipas had John beheaded, indicating, if nothing else, that he was not prepared to put up with public opposition. This fact might in turn provide the context for the episode reported in Luke 13:31, viz. “At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, ‘Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you’”. Jesus may, according to this train of thought, have been perceived by Antipas to be in the mould of John i.e. a vocal critic.

In terms of the Hellenising effect of Antipas' reign over Galilee, Horsley (1995:179) is of the opinion that rather than necessarily increasing purely Hellenistic pressures on the Galileans, what happened was that "the Roman political-cultural influence intensified". This he deduces from the fact that the Gospel of Mark designates Herod as "king" and describes his royal banquet in Chapter 6 in terms of its Roman client-ruler characteristics, together with Josephus' descriptions of Tiberius and the royal palace along the same lines. Horsley maintains, in other words, that under Herod Antipas, the pressure on the Galileans would have taken on a distinctly imperial and divine-emperor flavour. This pressure, in turn, was steadfastly resisted by the Galileans and, in time, Jesus. One way in which this resistance can be identified, says Horsley (1995:179), is the fact that the Galileans seemed to have avoided Sepphoris and Tiberius when they could. Unlike Jerusalem, which the Galilean peasantry visited "to bring tithes and offerings, and to attend the great festivals such as Passover" (Horsley 1995:179), the Galileans did not flock to the cities for the events held in the theatres or stadia, particularly when they were "used for Roman imperial celebrations and other religious ceremonies" (Horsley 1995:180). Rather "One suspects that the tradition-minded ('conservative') Galilean peasantry of the first century, like the rabbis later, identified the theatre as 'Roman' and otherwise alien and hostile" (Horsley 1995:180).

Along these lines Freyne (1988:140) accounts for the fact that the Gospels make no mention of Sepphoris and Tiberius, and specifically the fact that Jesus did not visit them, as being best explained "in the light of a conscious decision not to become directly embroiled in a confrontation with Herodian power". Not that Jesus was averse to registering his protest against what the cities stood for. Herzog (2004:47) believes that one "way to interpret Jesus' public activity is to view him as a prophet of the justice of the reign of God" and, particularly in identifying with the Baptist in his condemnation of Antipas, to interpret him as "identifying with prophets who live on the edge or margins and yet address the rulers at the centres of power" (Herzog 2004: 50).

What is beyond doubt, however, is the intense hatred that the Galileans had towards these imperial cities. Josephus (*Vita* 75. in Horsley 1995:180), in detailing the events of the general uprising against Rome in 66-67 B.C.E., says of their assault on Tiberius: "The Galileans seizing this opportunity too good to be missed, of venting their hatred on one of the cities which they detested, rushed forward, with the

intention of exterminating the population” and “they had the same detestation for the Tiberians as for the inhabitants of Sepphoris” (*Vita* 384 in Horsley 1995:181). Four decades of rule under Antipas, four years under Herod Agrippa I, and twenty-two years under the Roman Procurators, during which time the Galileans had suffered imperial taxation and theology, saw their patience finally exhausted.

This third wave of Hellenization under the Romans (63 B.C.E-70 C.E.), then, and as we have just seen, took a different form its predecessors i.e. that of a specifically Roman political-cultural flavour. From the first Herod the Great set about making the Gentile areas of Palestine unashamedly Roman and at great cost. Even the Jewish areas were Hellenised in terms of their architecture and the influence of a Hellenised high- priesthood. Also, and again at great economic cost, Galilee apparently suffered, initially, “the cultural influences from Sepphoris (which) would have been slow and steady, but never aggressive or programmatic” (Horsley 1995:179). With the rise to power of Antipas, however, “the Roman political-cultural influence intensified” (Horsley 1995:179). These influences were resented and resisted, as has been noted. Just exactly how the Galileans felt about the lead from Jerusalem, in terms of a common faith, cannot be definitely ascertained. What appears eminently reasonable, however, is the assumption that the Galileans and other rural Jews must have regarded the Temple leadership with great suspicion. Certainly the identification of this leadership with Herod the Great, as their patron and as the promoter of a Hellenised Temple, would have been resented by the Galileans. More, Herod’s appointment of his own dynasty of high-priestly families, again apparently accepted by many of the Jerusalem elite without much problem, can only have eroded confidence in this element of Jewish leadership in the eyes of the Galileans. In all the Galileans evidently continued to do as they had done from the time of the Ptolemies i.e. to resist the influence of Hellenism as it came to them in its various guises through their conquerors, and to be extremely wary of it as it came to them in the form of an increasingly Hellenised Yahwism through their own leaders.

All of which provides us with the specific ideological context in which Jesus constructed and communicated his material ethic in Matt 6:19-34. He was a Galilean Jew, thoroughly immersed in the socio-religious tradition of rural Yahwism, a Yahwism that had, for at least the last three hundred years, steadfastly resisted the Hellenism of it’s Jerusalem counterpart. More, he was a prophet of Yahweh who had recognised from the margins both the insidious claims of the Imperial theology now

being broadcast from Sepphoris and Tiberius right into his own back yard, and the ruinous economic policies and practices of Rome's client-rulers. Given the fact that both Jerusalem and Rome, through their particular Hellenised ideologies, agendas and institutions, were wreaking material and spiritual havoc across the whole of Palestine, Jesus could hardly have done other than to address both sets of elites, from the margins of the Galilean wilderness, and in the hearing of the particular crowd present listening to his Sermon.

Both Jesus and most of his physical audience then, and in summary, can be said to have been those who were experiencing the end results of Roman military occupation in Palestine as it was underpinned by an essentially Hellenised philosophy of power. They knew at first hand all about taxes and terror, about city wealth and rural poverty, about elite power and peasant insignificance. Worse yet, they knew this first hand as it was partially administered through many of their religio-ethnic kin from Jerusalem, acting on behalf of Rome. The net result was that they were a people whose traditional and largely rural religious belief system (as we will see immediately below), with its attendant social structuring and functioning, was under severe pressure. This pressure was undoubtedly to the point of fear, a fear that surely provides the context, subject matter and corrective addressed in Jesus' discourse in Matt 6:19-34. The discourse, then, can now be reasonably understood to constitute, at very least, a protest against the political-cultural realities pertaining in Palestine during the late Second-Temple period.

What most immediately impacted on the lives of Jesus' audience, however, and what constitutes the essential subject matter of his ethic in 6:19-34, i.e. material wealth, has not yet been investigated to the point of understanding what place it had and what role it played in an early first century Palestinian context and why, in particular, the audience on the Mount was in such obvious material distress. The nature, form and employment of material wealth in Palestinian life will therefore now be brought under the spotlight.

CHAPTER 4:
A SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS ANALYSIS OF LATE SECOND-
TEMPLE PALESTINE

Given the content of the previous chapter, i.e. an examination of socio-political and ideo-political aspects of late Second-Temple Palestine, I have moved away somewhat, albeit necessarily, from the core teaching of Matt 6:19-34 regarding material wealth and just why Jesus verbalised his discourse as he did. To that subject matter I now return in order to provide the specific socio-religious and socio-economic context in which Jesus himself lived. Although the analysis might artificially compartmentalise various topics (e.g. geography, belief systems etc.), it must be mentioned again that every aspect of life in Palestine was integrated into the larger social matrix of the society. Land and wealth, values and beliefs, tax and employment – all were embedded in the overarching reality of the honor orientated, elite dominated, power motivated reality that was Palestine of that day.

Speaking in general terms Gilmore (in Hanson & Oakman 1988:71) has said that

Mediterranean societies are all undercapitalised agrarian civilisations.

They are characterized by sharp social stratification and by a relative and absolute scarcity of natural resources.

There is little social mobility. Power is highly concentrated in a few hands, and the bureaucratic functions of the state are poorly developed.

Just how true this is of the Palestine of Jesus' day will become evident as this socio-religious and economic analysis proceeds, an analysis that will provide the quite specific material context in which Jesus developed and delivered his discourse on the Mount.

4.1.A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION RELATING TO LATE SECOND-
TEMPLE PALESTINE

4.1.1 Geography and Population

Late second-Temple Palestine was certainly an agrarian society. Of Galilee, Josephus (*JW*. III 42 & 43) writes that “this soil is universally rich and fruitful and full of plantations of trees of all sorts so it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle”. He also says of Samaria and Judea that “both countries are made up of hills

and valley and are moist enough for agriculture, and are very fruitful” (*JW*. III 49). This bounty was made possible by the geology of the region and an adequate, though limited, rainfall. The country consists of “the alluvial plain, the Tertiary slopes, and the mountains” (Postan in Oakman 1986: 20) making possible the cultivation of grain crops as well as the planting of orchards and vineyards.

Galilee is divided into two distinct geographical districts with Upper Galilee being “fairly rugged and mountainous terrain, relatively inaccessible, and yet with good opportunities for farming” while Lower Galilee “is a combination of low, east-west running ridges, fertile valley, and the plains of the Esdraelon Valley” (Oakman 1986:19). Lower Galilee, in particular, was extensively farmed while the fish-rich Sea of Galilee was surrounded by lands that “were adjudged extremely fertile in antiquity” (Oakman 1986:19). Judea, on the other hand, has its mountains running north-south with the east of the territory sloping towards the arid Jordan Valley and the west consisting of the piedmont known as the Shephdah. Like Galilee, “Judea too was intensively cultivated” (Oakman 1986:40).

Concerning the population of Galilee, Josephus (*JW*. III 43) writes that “the cities lie here very thick, and the very many villages there are here, are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contained above fifteen thousand inhabitants” Elsewhere (*Life* 235) he says, “there are two hundred and forty cities and village in Galilee”. Amongst these villages Josephus included Capernaum, Bethsaida and Cana, which with fairly large populations are termed cities in the gospels, while he calls Tarichaeae (Magdala) a village in spite of the fact that it had walls and a hypodrome (*Life* 138). This leads Freyne (1988:145) to comment that “the term village can cover a wide range of settlements” and to conclude “that villages are distinguished from cities in antiquity in terms of their internal organisation and political independence”, an issue to which we will return shortly.

For the present though, it is important to note that these population centres “must have been situated at close proximity across the landscape” and that there were “a number of villages in every area of Galilee” (Horsley 1995: 190). Concerning the size of the villages Horsley (1995:193), assuming a population of between 40 and 60 persons per acre, says that “the average village site of seven to twelve acres in Upper Galilee would have housed 300 to 700 people each” but given that the vast majority of villages occupied two to five acres, most villages “would have had fewer than 300 people”. The cities were generally larger than the villages but still small by today’s standards given

that “in most areas no more than 5 – 7% of the population lived in cities” (Rohrbaugh in Neyrey 1993: 133). Current indications are that Rome had a population of 200 000 and that very few cities exceeded 100 000. In Roman Palestine it appears that “no city exceeded 35 000 and that perhaps no more than two or three cities there exceeded 10 000” (Rohrbaugh 1993:133). This urbanisation was “the result, at least in part, of the organisation and appropriations by cities of an agricultural surplus produced in the hinterlands” (Rohrbaugh 1993:131). All of which leads to the certain conclusion that “Galilee, like Judea proper, was a traditional agrarian society” in which the “vast majority of people were peasants living in villages of varying sizes, farming the land or, near the lake, supplementing farming with fishing” (Horsley 1995:189).

4.1.2 Cities and Villages

As has just been indicated, the difference between Palestinian cities and villages does not relate to their relative sizes but to their respective roles in the political economy. Hanson and Oakman (1998:116) write that cities “as the dwelling places of elites, dominated the social and geographical landscape of Greco-Roman antiquity”. At the same time, rural peasants provided the raw materials by which the cities functioned. Along these lines peasants “were viewed as providers for the powerful, who could coerce or extract agricultural surplus from the peasantry” (Hanson & Oakman 1998: 117). The peasants themselves, by way of their labour, provided part of that “surplus”. As Rohrbaugh (in Neyrey 1993:132) explains, “pre-industrial cities existed in a system which required a socially and geographically fixed labour force” and that such labour, in the form of tradesmen, “primarily produced the goods and services needed by the urban elite” Above all, though, the cities were the centres for tax-collection since the “collection of taxes and tribute from the village and hinterland controlled by the city were the major source of income for the elite” (Rohrbaugh 1993:134). When it comes to the relationship between pre-industrial cities and agricultural hinterlands, then, the two were primarily “linked neither through the flow of labour and capital, nor by their mutual participation in a common marketplace, but through centralised land control and the religious/political systems of taxation” (Rohrbaugh 1993:132), i.e. they were two, albeit unequal, parts of a single social, economic and religious system. Within the cities there were essentially two different populations comprising “the elite, who occupied the centre of the city, and the non-elite who occupied the outlying

areas". The elite, being the only group to have any disposable income, "formed the only real market population in antiquity" a situation which was "usually legitimated by a religious and educational bureaucracy" (Rohrbaugh 1993:133). As a result "temple and palace became the twin foci of most pre-industrial cities" (Rohrbaugh 1993:134). The physical lay out of cities reflected this social stratification, with the central area containing the palace and temple as well as the residences of both the religious and political elites. Often these central areas were walled off from the rest of the city "to facilitate both communication and protection" (Rohrbaugh 1993:134). In the case of Jerusalem, Herod's palace dominated the upper class areas of the city while the Temple held a similar place in the lower class areas.

The outlying areas of cities were divided into sections by internal walls and "frequently separated ethnic or occupational groups" (Rohrbaugh 1993:135). These internal walls also served the purpose of providing a platform for watchman to both protect against external military threat and to "control traffic and communications between sections" (Rohrbaugh 1993:135). On the extreme periphery of the city, and often living outside the city walls, were the out-cast groups consisting of "ethnic groups, small-time merchants and those practising despised occupations" (Rohrbaugh 1993:135) such as tannery, begging and prostitution. The ultimate significance of this physical arrangement was social control by the elite since it ensured the regulating of "both land and the flow of resources", all the more important "when land and resources are in short supply" (Rohrbaugh 1993:136). Ironically this control "produced feelings of solidarity amongst people or groups which were differentiated by the system" (Rohrbaugh 1993:136), a solidarity which was bound to have repercussions in the event of social unrest. Which may indicate that Jesus' acceptance in the eyes of the audience of Matt 6:19-34, although within a rural setting, came about as a result of the audience hearing Jesus speaking out against their common opponents. This urban control also made it easier for the elite to avoid contact with the non-elite except for instances where goods and services had to change hands, usually in a common market place. In essence then, the city system was "characterised by the dominance of a small centre, by sharp social stratification, and by a physical and social distancing of component populations that were linked by carefully controlled hierarchical relations" (Rohrbaugh 1993:136).

This was not the way of things in the surrounding villages. According to Oakman (in Neyrey 1993:166), villages "as the primary social settings of the ancient Palestinian

countryside... seem to have been organised along kinship or quasi-kinship lines". Here villages often consisted of a single extended family or a number of such families which were grouped into larger class and territorial tribes" all alike "living in clusters of rustic stone houses linked by open courtyards and surrounded by a patchwork of pastures and fields" (Horsley & Silberman 2002:27). Generally speaking these villages appear to have lacked the "rationalised planning that one finds in cities founded in the Hellenistic period" (Horsley 1995: 192) and were often built on hilltops to afford some protection. This protection was augmented by walls or by "the outer walls and roofs of the houses or courtyards" forming a protective barrier, though larger "villages and towns were often apparently unprotected by anything more than the clustering of the buildings" (Horsley 1995:192) This need for protection appears to have been acute for, as Freyne (1988:153) notes, "attacks from passing robbers and highwaymen were frequent, explaining the location of some of the more remote settlements – away from the road and high up on a slope of the hills".

This isolation accounts for one of the most important aspects of village life when compared to city life i.e. the absence of a direct elite presence and control. As Horsley (1996:95) puts it, in "most traditional agrarian societies or 'aristocratic empires', peasant villages are semi-autonomous communities". In the case of Upper Galilee and by way of its topography and political history, the villages "maintained a traditional Israelite culture throughout the Roman period". In the absence of cities such as Sepphoris or Tiberius, the Upper Galileans were thus "living at a more comfortable distance (and) had little contact with urban culture"(Horsley 1996:95). Even in Lower Galilee, with its twin Hellenistic cities, the ruling elite was not part of everyday village life and this must have afforded the villages a social freedom not experienced in the cities. Villages would have been characterised, in other words, by an absence of social-stratification and the associated tensions.

This social geography of Palestine, it may now be said, reflects the underlying ideology of the ruling elites. These elites housed themselves in physically isolated neighbourhoods within the cities, from whence they interacted somewhat reluctantly with the rest of the population. They surrounded themselves with only as many of the "working" classes as would conveniently serve their immediate needs within the cities (e.g. artisans), while the rest of the further removed and rural population produced their incomes for them. This rural population, in turn, would have experienced the solidarity of a shared kinship of family and clan, largely outside of immediate contact with the

elites. Which tends to suggest that the audience of the Sermon was overwhelmingly rural, with the elites possibly being represented by a relatively small number of Pharisees and Sadducees.

4.1.3 Village Values

Horsley and Silberman (2002:27) point out the fact that agrarian cultures “are known to cherish one goal above all other: family survival on the land of ancestors, with generation after generation preserving ancient customs and social institutions and faithfully passing them on”. Family and land, then, were inextricably linked since the family, living on the land, “was the basic social unit, of production and consumption, of reproduction and socialization, of personal identity and membership in a wider community” (Horsley 1995:195), meaning that without land, the family could not survive. This survival was perpetuated by the twin strategies of inheritance and marriage. In terms of inheritance, land was passed down patrilineally “by primogeniture, the firstborn son inheriting twice as much as any brother (Horsley 1995:199), although daughters evidently could inherit land (cf. Num 27:5). Marriages, on the other hand, “were formed according to a strategy of keeping the inheritance of land within certain boundaries (Horsley 1995:196) i.e. within the extended family or clan. Along these lines, the “custom that a brother marry his deceased brother’s widow in order to raise posterity for the brother also had the purpose of preventing loss of tribal or family property” (Kaylor 1994:32).

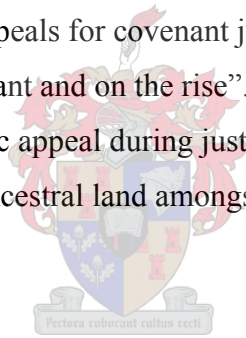
The most basic social form in Palestine, and indeed in the entire ancient Mediterranean world, then, was the patriarchal family. Under this arrangement a woman “was part of either the family headed by her father or the family headed by her husband “ (Horsley 1995:196). The eldest son, being principal heir to the land, was “responsible both to ancestors and descendants” (Horsley 1995:196) for the perpetuation of the family name, status and religious beliefs. For Jewish families this involved the continuation of those beliefs and behaviours that were embodied in their foundational tradition, the Mosaic covenant enshrined in Torah. In terms of this covenant, Jews were “convinced that as members of the People of Israel, they were heirs to the great promises given by God to their patriarch and forefather Abraham” (Horsley & Silberman 2002:27). Their responsibility was seen to involve faithfulness to the laws and traditions handed down to them by God and preceding generations. These laws and traditions “regarding social

relations, property rights, personal morality, festivals, Sabbaths and sabbatical years were not abstract religious dogma or standards of individual ethics” but “a down to earth constitution, a code of conduct and handbook of instructions by which they could survive on the land in their families and villages” (Horsley & Silberman 2002:27)

Again the importance of land comes to the fore. In terms of God’s promise to Abraham, the entire land of Canaan was to have been an everlasting possession “to you and your descendants after you” (Gen17:8). As with other peoples in the ancient Near East though, “the land belonged to the god(s) and was used by the people who then owed certain ‘offerings’ or ‘rents’ to their ‘lord’” (Horsley 1995:208). According to Joshua 14-19, the land of Canaan was divided, apportioned, used and “held in trust as an inalienable inheritance, by the particular lineages of the people, which in turn were broken down into families” (Horsley 1995:208). This arrangement seems to be in keeping with the “priestly statement of the Israelite covenantal mechanism designed to maintain the people on their family inheritance of land in Leviticus 25” (Horsley 1995:208). Under Solomon, however, portions of land, its produce and the labour of its inhabitants passed into the hands of the monarchy (1 Kings 4-5), and from there “to his courtiers and officers as the source of their income” (Horsley 1995:208). The peasants on such land were evidently not displaced but had to farm the land on behalf of the new “owners”. The vast majority of peasants, however, remained on “their traditional family inheritance” but were subject to “the tithes or taxes taken by the ruler (such as grain, wine and flocks) who used this produce to support his court, bureaucracy, and army” (Horsley 1995:209).

This system evidently persisted from the time of Solomon down through “second-temple times and was continued by the Romans even after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple” (Horsley 1995:209). The point here being that, and not withstanding the enormous pressure the peasant classes were under from the elite landowners, the majority of Palestinian peasants of this time were still independent landowners who understood that their land was a gift from God in terms of his covenant with them. From this we can assume with some certainty that Jesus, embedded as he was within a society still holding to the foundational traditions of Israel, would have been verbalising his Sermon with this understanding providing a basic point of departure. Precisely because this foundational ethic was being so widely violated, as we will see shortly, Jesus was addressing the material status of the largely rural poor from the basis of such violations representing a breach of covenant. More

broadly Horsley (1995:217) assesses the evidence to suggest “that Galilean villages must have been primarily ‘free’ peasants who, on the one hand hold certain traditional rights on the land, but who on the other hand, owed taxes or tribute to their rulers”. Without the land the peasants couldn’t survive as families. Which is precisely why Torah made provision for them to remain on, or at least regain, the land. According to Exodus 23:10-11, fields were to lie fallow in the sabbatical year and the poor were able to harvest from them; those who has sold themselves into slavery were to be released after seven years (Ex 21:2-6), and the year of Jubilee made provision for land to be returned to its ancestral owners, all Jewish slaves to be freed and all debt cancelled (Lev 25: 8-17, 23-55; 27:16-25; Num36:4). Whether these “sabbatical and Jubilee laws were ever fully functional in fact, or whether they merely stated ideals in the form of legislation, is a topic of debate” (Kaylor1994:33), but Jeremiah 34 and Nehemiah 10:31 suggest that they were at least sporadically applied. Most vitally though, and as Kaylor (1994:34) points out, the “importance of these traditions ... is that they provided a basis for prophetic appeals for covenant justice in a time of crisis, when injustice and inequity were rampant and on the rise”. The Sermon on the Mount appears to be a renewed prophetic appeal during just such a time of crisis, a crisis that was precipitated by the loss of ancestral land amongst the peasant class of Palestine, as we will see shortly.



4.1.4 City and Village Beliefs

Hanson and Oakman (1998:133) make the vital point, alluded to at various times already in this paper, that “ancient societies were used to religious institutions embedded in other frameworks. The two routine places for religious expression were at home (domestic, kinship religion) or in elite-controlled temples (public, political religion)”. This immediately draws attention to the dichotomous nature of religious belief and practice in the ancient world, a dichotomy often referred to as the great tradition and the little tradition. Redfield (in Oakman 1986:101) defines these traditions as follows:

in a civilisation there is a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition of the largely unreflective many. The great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples; the little tradition works itself out and keep itself going in the lives of the unlettered in their village communities.

Malina (2001a:88) maintains that, in the context of Palestine, the bearers of the great tradition, “with their position legitimated by the Old Testament writings, for the most part”, were the Jerusalem elites. In this role they perpetrated “the norms and values that gave continuity and substance to the ideals of Israelite society”. The city non-elites and the villagers, on the other hand, were the bearers of the culture’s little tradition that was “a simplified and often outdated expression of the norms and ideals embodied by the city elites” (Malina 2001a:88). Given the fact that “these low-status imitators imperfectly comprehended what they see and hear about the city elites, what they acquire from the city elites is reworked, simplified, and cut down so that these elements can be made to fit the less complex arrangements of village or non-elite existence” ((Malina 2001a:88). Such a reality reinforces, once again, the radical differences between cities and villages in such a world.

That said, however, all the Jewish residents of Palestine shared a common religious heritage. In terms of that heritage, and according to Freyne (1988:177), “Three symbols were absolutely central for all religious Jews of the period – those of temple, torah and land”. By way of a very brief look at the first two of these three symbols, given that the land issue has already been discussed, it becomes possible to identify the religious differences between the city (Jerusalem) and the villages along the lines of their respective traditions. In terms of “the ritual expression of their beliefs, the temple was undoubtedly the focal point for all Jews in the pre -70 period” (Freyne 1988:178). To the Temple the pilgrimages were made, the sacrifices brought and the half-shekel offering given. In addition “the scene of outrage at the very threat of its defilement” is “highly indicative of the emotional involvement with this centre by those who would regard themselves as Yahweh-worshippers” (Freyne 1988:178).

The centrality of the Temple in Jewish thought and practice undoubtedly gave it a place of unparalleled precedence amongst the Jews. By virtue of its sacredness, and given the complexity of human interaction with Yahweh, “it was necessary to have set apart a sacred priesthood, headed by the high priest, to serve before the altar and in the sacred precincts” (Horsley 1995:128). At the same time the will and way of Yahweh “was known through the sacred Teaching revealed to Moses, the Torah, of which the priests constituted the divinely sanctioned teachers” (Horsley 1995:129). Given this local pre-eminence it is not surprising therefore, that any “threat to Jerusalem or its religious legitimacy was inevitably treated with immediate hostility” (Freyne 1988:180) by these “divinely sanctioned teachers”. A problem emerged, however, and pertaining to an

unqualified acceptance of Temple rule amongst rural Palestinians, given that these teachers were part of a larger and more comprehensive elite rulership. As Horsley (1995:130) explains, from “its original conception and constitution the second Temple was an integral institution of imperial order in which the religious, political and economic dimensions were inseparable”, and which under Herod “became the central political-economic-religious institution of the province of Judea”, having jurisdiction over all of Palestine. When the nature and impact of this jurisdiction, especially in its financial dimensions, which will be examined shortly, are taken into account, the legitimacy of Jerusalem’s rule must have been increasingly questioned in the countryside.

Freyne (1988:182) seems to feel that the evidence for this rural, and especially Galilean, disloyalty to Jerusalem is lacking. He examines the evidence for Galilean involvement in the alternative centre of the “Samaritan cult on Mt Gerazim” and the equivalent centre on “the ancient site of Dan” and concludes that in neither case is there proof of Galileans deserting Jerusalem for these sites. He is also of the opinion that, all told, “there is little current evidence that the other attractions of hellenism had corroded the basic loyalty of Galilean Jews for Jerusalem and its temple” (1988:186). He (1988:187) does acknowledge that there was dissatisfaction with the temple and its priesthood, as evidenced by the Essene withdrawal, but puts this down to other factors and then concludes that, in spite of this “it is quite remarkable how stable the office of the high priest remained throughout the first century”. Horsley (1995:133) sees things differently. He maintains that the expansion of the temple-state under the Hasmoneans, the massive building programme of Herod in Jerusalem, and the “growing division between the wealthy ruling class ensconced in their upper city mansions and Herodian or temple/city-priestly positions ... and the mass of Judeans, Idumeans, Samaritans, and Galileans whose produce in taxes and tithes provided the economic base for the whole”, as driving an ever larger wedge between Jerusalem and the countryside. This dimension of the relationship between the two groupings probably has most significance for Jesus ethic in Matt 6:19-34 since it was material deprivation that he was addressing here. Horsley (1995:133) cites the evidence of the late prophetic texts “such as ‘Third’ Isaiah, ‘Deutero’ Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi” as indicating that there were “dissident voices from the very outside of the (re) founding of the temple-state in Jerusalem”. Then (199:135) he points to the evidence of the Pharisees who “came into conflict apparently first with John Hyrcanus and particularly with

Alexander Jannaeus” as demonstrating a local (Jerusalem) resistance to the status quo. Finally, and as it relates specifically to Galilee, he maintains that the number of Galileans visiting Jerusalem for the feasts was minimal, thereby indicating their disenchantment with Jerusalem. He (1995:145) says “it seems likely that if Judeans came to Jerusalem at festival times by the thousands, Galileans would have come only by the hundreds”. More tellingly, he (1995:146) insists that nearly “every one of these limited references to pilgrimage festivals, including the handful of references to Galileans involved, indicates that they were charged with (potential) political conflict”. Certainly this was the case with Jesus’ visit to Jerusalem recorded in Matt 21 at the time of Passover.

In sum, then, and as it relates to the Temple, the evidence would seem to suggest that in spite of a common religious heritage, and an undoubted involvement by all Jews in the Temple cultus, there was a growing reluctance on behalf of the peasant classes to afford legitimacy to the political-economic-religious rule being exercised from Jerusalem. The expression most used of this phenomenon seems to be “an ambivalent attitude’ (Horsley 1995:146), on behalf of the people towards the high-priestly rule. The political and economic dimensions were increasingly subverting the religious dimension of the common life, and a pull-push/love-hate attitude developed amongst the peasant classes.

In terms of Torah, the great and little traditions, as defined above, seem to diverge as much as they do over the Temple. Freyne (1988:199) points out that Torah, in the sense of the Pentateuch, represents “the official account of Israel’s election and constitution in the land by Yahweh’s gracious goodness, with all the attendant responsibilities that were involved”. Torah is “at once the foundation-myth and a description of a way of life”. During the second Temple period, however, developments occurred “in regard to what should constitute torah in the narrow sense of ‘God’s will for Israel’” (Freyne 1988:199), i.e. how God’s revealed will could be applied under specific and local conditions. Along these lines a scribal class developed, amongst whom were Pharisees who “in addition to their professional and advisory role in the various administrations, were also involved in fashioning a way of life for the pious Jew, even away from the temple and land” (Freyne 1988:201). The Pharisees were part of the so-called retainer class who “served the needs of the ruler and governing class (Saldarini 1988:41) and appear to have been concerned “about ritual purity, tithes and other food laws, Sabbath and festival observances” (Horsley

1995: 149). Josephus (*Ant.* 13.297) describes them as interpreters of the “laws of Moses” and says that they also “have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses”. They appear to have been active in Galilee particularly at the time of Alexander Salome and Herod, in more than “some presumably ordinary administrative capacity representing Jerusalem’s interest” i.e. by way of “pressing the ‘laws of the Judeans’ upon the inhabitants” (Horsley 1995:151). The point being that the Pharisees were active in propagating an interpretation of Torah that would have been both a reflection of Jerusalem theology and their own particular tradition. As such, and has been noted, Jesus’ repeated and public refutation of their teaching and religious observances must constitute a dismissal of their own particular theologies and those of their religious masters in Jerusalem.

The interpretation of the Pharisee’s could only have differed markedly from the Galilean tradition for as Horsley (1995:151) points out, the Galilean peasants “would presumably have continued their Israelite traditions after the elite of the kingdom of Israel were deported by the Assyrians”, but in such a situation they were “living under foreign imperial administration, without a native (priestly) autocracy that cultivated an official tradition parallel to their own popular tradition” (1995:148). Under these circumstances their popular Israelite tradition “may have been all the more self consciously cultivated in a way of maintaining their own identity against the foreign culture of the imperial administrators” (Horsley 1995:149). In addition the Mishna evidently provides proof of the fact that Galilean customs differed from those of the Judean peasants in the areas of marriage and weights and measures (Horsley 1995:149). Most tellingly, though, the Galileans only came under direct Jerusalem, and hence “orthodox”, rule under the Hasmoneans. As such their traditions would have differed even from those of their Judean counterparts given “the Judean’s centuries of interaction with and adjustment to the official Jerusalem tradition” (Horsley 1995:149). Whatever the precise form of the Galilean popular Israelite tradition, however, it was propagated in both the home and the synagogue. As Freyne (1988:204) indicates “together with the synagogue, the home was central to the educational system of Judaism, insofar as knowledge of torah was absolutely fundamental to the Jewish way of life and therefore taken seriously as part of parental responsibility”. The home was also the place where the next generation of Jewish children learned about the “celebration of marriages, funerals and circumcisions” (Freyne 1988:204), meaning

that any threat to the home constituted a massive threat to the stability and continuance of the Jewish identity and socio-religious way of life.

The synagogue, according to Ferguson (2003:575) “was the centre of community, religious and social life for the Jewish people. It served as the schoolhouse (*beth midrash*), house of prayer (*beth teffila*), meeting house (*beth kneset*), and house of judgement (*beth din*) for administering community discipline”. Horsley (1995:222) argues very insistently “there is little or no solid evidence for the existence of synagogues as religious buildings in Galilee before the third century C.E.” and maintains that the word *synagōgē*, in the Diaspora, refers to the “assembly or congregation of people”. As such synagogues were actually “social-ethnic, one might even say quasi-political, communities of Jews resident in a particular city attempting to run their own affairs insofar as the imperial and civic authorities would tolerate” (Horsley 1995:223). If this is true of the Diaspora, reasons Horsley (1995:224), “we would expect that a *synagōgē* would be a social-economic as well as religious congregation even more clearly in Palestinian villages, each of which was a semi-autonomous community”. Accordingly he (1995:227), concludes apparently in agreement with Ferguson, (with the exception of Ferguson’s notion of synagogues being physical buildings), that they were “the principal social form of the local community in Galilee, providing governance as well as collective expression and group cohesion for the village or town”.

The importance of synagogues, in this form, for the rural population of Palestine and especially Galilee can therefore hardly be overestimated. Given that local communities were not directly ruled by the imperial powers and remained semi-autonomous, and given the embeddedness of religion in wider spheres of political-economic realities, the leadership provided by this form of “local” government would have provided “a persistent continuity of local social forms over the generations and centuries” (Horsley 1995:228), social forms which would have differed from those of the Jerusalem elite and their Pharisee evangelists. Leadership of these communities was evidently provided by the “ruler of the synagogue” (*archisynagogas* or *rosh ha-kneset*), sometimes more than one in number, who was responsible for presiding over and arranging the conduct of religious services as well as “maintaining the traditional Jewish life and teaching” (Ferguson 2003:581). The “servant” (*hazzan/hyperetes*) of the synagogue evidently had a number of roles including oversight of the scrolls of Scripture, (later) care of the buildings and their associated purchases, administration of

punishments handed down by the court, teaching of the law and leading of the religious services (Ferguson 2003:581). In addition there were *parnasim* and *gabbaim* who were responsible for “the collection of goods for distribution to the local poor or vagrants” (Horsley 1995:229). *Parnasim* also appears to have been “representative members of the local village court, acting as the leading members and the executive officers of the *bet din*” (Goodman in Horsley 1995:230). All in all it would appear that local government “and cohesion of village and town communities ... [was] provided by local assemblies (and courts) operating more or less democratically with certain officials ... supervising communal finances, aid to the poor, public works, and religious matters” (Horsley 1995:232). This communal involvement also reached into areas such as “clothing the needy, caring for the sick, burying the dead, ransoming captives, educating orphans and providing poor girls with dowries” (Ferguson 2003:576) and which, as we will see shortly, has profound implications for the well-being of the entire community in the event of the breakdown of this institution.

Concerning the actual teaching of the faith, Freyne (1988:205) says that it is all but impossible to say “who precisely performed the role of *meturgamen* or interpreter in the early period” but that it is highly likely that “at least in Galilee, the synagogues had their own distinctive personnel, other than the scribes and Pharisees. Horsley, for once, agrees! He (1995:234) says that given “the early rabbis’ own testimony that they were not leaders of local synagogues, it would seem difficult to argue that their supposed predecessors, the Pharisees, were”. The evidence from the gospels plays an important part in Horsley’s stance, and he (1995:234) maintains that Matthew “has the Pharisees more explicitly based in Jerusalem with the chief priests as the rulers” while “Otherwise in the synoptic Gospels, it is difficult to find passages that even link the scribes and Pharisees with synagogues” (1995:235). The synagogues, then, and especially in Galilee, appear to have been the locus and expression of local Jewish community and kinship. This was community and kinship outside of the Imperial, Jerusalem temple, and client-king orbs; a community of kin which was desperately fighting for economic, social and religious survival and employing every tool at its disposal, including a united interpretation of Torah, as might be expected in terms of a little tradition.

4.1.5 Relevance for Matt 6:19-34

The sharp social stratification within Palestine, as identified by its social geography, finds symbolic expression in terms of the differing values and beliefs of the elites and non-elites. For the peasants there was little of greater importance than maintaining their status on the land of their forefathers; land given to them by Yahweh. As such they must have been horrified by the apostasy of the Jerusalem elites whose behaviour, as we will see shortly, in dispossessing them of their land, constituted a direct violation and negation of the instructions of Torah, an interpretation of which would have been reinforced by their little tradition. As such the current elite were no different to the elite under Solomon, who initiated the process of dispossession centuries earlier. In terms of their view of the Temple, the peasants were no doubt in two minds. On the one hand, both Torah and tradition would have dictated its centrality in terms of the worship of Yahweh. On the other hand, the association of the Temple elite, and the Jerusalem elites in general, with their Greco-Roman patrons must have caused the peasantry much anguish. As such it is not difficult to imagine that the synagogues would have resisted the advances of the visiting Pharisees, bringing with them as they were their particular brand of Jerusalem theology. Perhaps this would account for the apparent absence from the synagogues of the Pharisees according to the gospel records.

Jesus himself, by way of contrast, was no stranger to the synagogues. Being a Galilean Jew, embedded in the culture of the little tradition, he “went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues” (Matt 4:23). In terms of the content of his teaching, the Sermon here gives every indication that Jesus was fully conversant with Jerusalem’s theology and practice (5:20; 6:1ff), and, given his little tradition background, there can be no doubt that his view of the land, and of the God-given right of people to remain on it in perpetuity, would be reflected in his teaching in 6:19-34. He was the latest in a long line of “dissident voices” speaking out against the selfish practices of the Jerusalem elites in terms of their treatment of the remainder of the people of God.

4.2 THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LATE SECOND –TEMPLE PALESTINE

Hanson and Oakman (1998:101) point out the fact that our modern word “economy”, as a combination of the Greek words *oikos* and *nomia*, means “household management” and as such, “indicates the core concern of the ancients with

provisioning and sustaining the family and household”. The ancients, however, did not live as isolated families and households but as part of a society that “had elites who dominated other families” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:101). Accordingly the agrarian economy of late second-temple Palestine is classified as a political economy. In terms of this political economy, society was divided into two social classes, i.e. “a small ruling elite in the cities and a mass of toiling agriculturalist in the village whose labour and product support the elite” (Oakman in Neyrey 1993:155). Put another way, the elite controlled most of the land and the mechanisms whereby the produce of that land was distributed, while the toiling masses were largely the instruments of production, either on their own land or land belonging to the elites. As such this type of economy has also been classed as “redistributive” or “tributary” (Horsley 1996:77). Several salient features of this type of economy need to be isolated, viz. production, distribution, taxation and mechanism of control.

4.2.1 Production

Production, say Hanson and Oakman (1998:101), “refers to the interactions with the natural environment humans regularly require in order to transform new materials into food, clothing, shelter and other things considered essential for life”. Being an agrarian-economy, the principal product of Palestine was food while the “peasant family supplied the backbone of the labour force” (Oakman 1986:22), supplemented by animals. Attempts were also made “to harness the force of gravity and wind for channelling water or other purposes” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:103). Given the limits of this technology, the relative fertility of the soil, and the (generally) low rainfall, harvests were limited. In terms of the staple grain crops such as wheat and barley, the “average returns in Palestine were around fivefold. If approximately 2 – 12 bushels of grain per acre constituted the normal seeding rate, an average yield was around eleven bushels per acre” (Oakman 1986:22). In addition to the cereals, other major subsistence crops included grapes, olives and figs while Jewish farmers also grew “vegetables like leeks, onions, turnips, cucumbers, and condiments like mustard, cumin, coriander, chicory and garlic” (Oakman 1986:26).

As has previously been noted, Josephus describes the fact that Palestine was extensively cultivated, and this seems to be borne out by recent studies. So, for example, “Broshi estimates that ancient utilization of land for agriculture was 65-70

percent” (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:105), but it must be remembered that as much as fifty percent of land lay fallow at any time. Given the assumption that 381 000 hectares of land was cultivated at any one time in Palestine, and that it was seeded at a rate of 150 kilograms per hectare with a five fold yield, “Hamel obtains 230 000 metric tons available for consumption” (in Oakman 1986:28). In terms of this he calculates that Palestinian agricultural production could thus have supported a population of one million people. This presumes, of course, that such a crop was uniformly distributed which, as we shall see shortly, was definitely not the case.

In terms of who produced this crop, “comparative studies suggest that 80 – 90 percent of the populace in Jesus’ day regularly engaged in agricultural work (Hanson & Oakman 1998:104). Given the fact that the elite five percent of the population “did not regularly do agricultural work” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:104), indeed they despised it, this meant that agricultural production was carried out almost exclusively by the peasant classes. Indeed in “early Roman Palestine, the peasant male concerned himself primarily with agricultural tasks throughout the year” while “the female occupied herself with preparing food, making clothing and tending children”. Together married females and their older children “also contributed their labour to the fields when needed” (Oakman 1986:23). This meant that the peasant household “was the fundamental unit of production and consumption” (Horsley 1995:203) in ancient Palestine.



There does appear, however, to have been some “division of labour within village and society and some marketization.” This marketization was as a result of increasing volumes of cash in the economy and an increase in cash transactions brought about largely by “pressures by the elites towards cash cropping” (Oakman 1986:23). In terms of a division of labour, most of the rural population practiced basic trades and crafts associated with agriculture but “there were a few complex but necessary skills available to the village primarily through travelling artisans” (Oakman 1986:23). These artisans apparently included “pot-sellers” and “peddlers” who carried “specialised lightweight items such as cosmetics and spinning goods to women in outlying settlements” (Horsley 1995:206). In addition there were specialised weavers, dyers, tanners and shopkeepers, but the general pattern appears to have been “that most things needed in a village or household were locally made” (Horsley 1995:206). Furthermore it appears that whatever specialisation did occur “was more likely a function of

underemployment and the demands for labour on large estates” (Oakman 1986:23), than a trend towards a “market” economy.

As important as it is to recognise that the peasant classes were the principal agents of this production, however, it is equally important to account for how this production was actually organised. When this is done, it becomes immediately apparent that increasingly in Palestine “production no longer reflects what the ordinary person wants or needs. Most want to produce for household consumption, but power relations prevent realisation of this subsistence economy” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:106). And here the fishing industry provides an ideal example of a regulated system of production. Hanson (1997:100) says that fishing was a vital part of the Galilean economy, but not in the sense of the fishing industry of today being a part of the free-market economy. Rather, even fishermen “who may have owned their own boats were part of a state-regulated elite-profiting enterprise, and a complex web of economic relationships”, implicit in the arrangement of an embedded economy within an aristocratic empire. In terms of this economy, the Roman emperors were “wealthy beyond imagination” (Hanson 1997:101) as a result of their patronage relationships with their client-kings. These client-kings contributed to the emperor’s wealth by way of a tribute on land and on persons, by way of indirect taxes “including customs fees at ports and roads” (Hanson 1997:102) and by way of their own wills.

Herod Antipas, as has already been noted, became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C.E. to 39 C.E. and had, over time, the emperors Augustus, Tiberius and Caligula as his patrons. Josephus (*ANT.* 17.318 in Hanson 1997:102) “estimates the annual revenue of Herod Antipas from his tetrarchy at 200 talents: 1.2 million denarii”, much of which will have come from the Galilean fishing industry. Herod Antipas sold the fishing rights on Galilee to brokers or *architelônai* (also known as ‘tax collectors’ or ‘publicans’), who “in turn contracted with fishers” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:106). These fishermen then “received capitalization along with fishing rights and were therefore indebted to local brokers responsible for the harbours and for fishing leases” (Hanson 1997:103). In terms of this arrangement Levi, as a tax-collector in Capernaum (Matt 9:9), would probably have been involved in selling fishing contracts to local fishermen. Fishermen, “in order to bid for fishing contracts or leases” (Hanson 1997:105), would then often form “co-operatives” which may be what Luke has in mind in 5:7, 9-10(a) in connection with Simon and the sons of Zebedee. In any event, the fishermen would then hire labourers whose situation was understandably precarious

given that “this work was likely seasonal” (Hanson 1997:105). These hired labourers “represented the bottom of the social scale in the fishing sub-system” (Hanson 1997:106) and were also used by farmers, presumably during the harvest. Fishermen required resources from both farmers and artisans in the form of “flax for nets, cut stone for anchors, wood for boat building and repairs and baskets for fish” (Hanson 1997:106), thereby drawing the larger community into the enterprise. Once the fish were landed they were processed and sold and had, by the time of Jesus, “become a food staple throughout the Mediterranean, in city and village alike” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:109). This resulted in yet another dimension to the fish-economy, a web of “government approved wholesalers” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:109). The situation now existed where there were “trade distinctions between those who caught fish, those who processed fish, and those who marketed fish” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:109). The fish themselves were “processed for preservation and transportation as cured and pickled or dried and salted” (Hanson 1997:106). The materials required for this processing were supplied by “(possibly government agents), merchants, farmers and artisans and included salt, wine and amphorae and possibly olive oil” while the processed product was “distributed among merchants throughout Galilee and the rest of Palestine” and transported by “carters and shippers” to a wider market (Hanson 1997:107).

This description makes it possible to view the fishing industry in Galilee at the time of Christ as being a highly regulated and, above all, a highly taxed, state controlled production mechanism. Fishermen, assisted by their day-labourers, paid to fish and then paid, effectively, for their fish by way of their “surplus” catch. As the product then made its way through the processing chain, every stage became an occasion for further tax, with the elites being the ultimate beneficiaries at every stage. This means that by no stretch of the imagination can fisherman be considered to have been “entrepreneurs” or to have been wealthy, even, “middle class” (Hanson 1997:108). Rather this production mechanism would account for the antagonism of the population in general to the highly exploitative nature of the tax system in its entirety. Of this antagonism, Hanson (1997:109) says the “hostility of the general population in both Judean and early church documents towards the tax and toll collectors may have stemmed originally from the conflict between the political-economy and the domestic-economy”.

4.2.2 Distribution

Polanyi (in Oakman 1986:78) has accounted for this conflict between the political-economy and the domestic-economy as stemming from the differences between three basic types of distribution inherent in pre-industrial economies. These are “redistribution through a central institution, distribution on the basis of reciprocal exchange, and distribution through the market”. Redistribution was the way of the political-economy and “describes what is happening when rents, taxes and tithes from agricultural producers are moved to urban areas, temple complexes or state coffers, and then redistributed for ends other than meeting the material needs of the cultivators” (Oakman 1986:78). Which is precisely what was taking place in Palestine. The cities of Palestine, like all other Hellenistic-Roman cities, have been termed “consumer” cities in that they, as the dwelling place of the elites, did not add any value to the economy by way of production but merely took from it by way of consumption (Horsley 1996:79). And into these cities flowed the rents, taxes and tithes produced by the countryside. These revenues termed “surpluses”, “which might have gone to feed extra mouths in the village, ended up being redistributed for other ends by the ruling groups” (Oakman in Neyrey 1993:56). Amongst those other ends were “conspicuous consumption, social status and political honour towards profitable investment” (Garnsey & Saller in Horsley 1995:177). Bearing in mind that Herod Antipas, for example, had only the “surplus” agricultural products of Galilee and Perea at his disposal, his massive building projects, especially the reconstruction of Sepphoris and the establishment of Tiberias, would have represented a conspicuous and costly exercise in redistribution and resulted in “intensified economic pressure on the producers” (Horsley 1995:178) i.e. the peasantry.

Distribution on the basis of reciprocal exchange, on the other hand, was the way of the domestic-economy and took place amongst “close kin in a peasant village” (Oakman in Neyrey 1993:156). In terms of this exchange, economic transactions took place “with other households or lineages on a quid pro quo basis” (Oakman 1986:79). These transactions were

not those of monetarized exchange, but primarily those that arise in the production process: borrowing and lending of produce or animals or labour, hiring of temporary help, leasing of land, compensating for damages done by draft animals to crops or humans, finding lost objects, and building-

maintenance problems of shared courtyards and adjacent houses.

(Horsley 1995: 204)

Given the explorative forces at work in the dominating political-economy, it is not surprising that this form of distribution came under immense pressure in Palestine during the time of the Roman Empire. The effect of the forces “undoubtedly disturbed village relationships and threatened ancient economic values through the impoverishment of the cultivator and expropriation”(Oakman 1986:79).

Distribution through the market did take place in Palestine at this time, but only “in ways severely circumscribed socially and culturally”(Hanson & Oakman 1998:113). The Roman Empire encouraged trade but it was always controlled by “small numbers of powerful family interests” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:113). In the villages, as has been noted, barter or reciprocity was the way of exchange but this did not relate to “land, labour or capital markets as today” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:113). Labour, however, was required by the large agricultural estates and in the cities in the form of administrators or craftsmen. This labour, particularly in the cities, was paid for in cash from the rents, taxes and tithes already present in the cities, and thus constituted a form of market distribution.

In summary, then, it may be said of distribution within the Palestine economy that the Herodian centres as well as the cities of the Dekapolis had helped in the development of a redistributive economy for Galilee itself, giving rise to store-houses, market places, a scribal bureaucracy and large estates (while) the old, reciprocal form of exchange continued in the villages.

(Freyne1988:157)

The net result was that the elites were able to continue living “their valued leisure lives” while peasants were being progressively pushed towards “a survival level” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:113).

The dichotomous nature of Palestinian society, reflected by the social geography and symbolized by the differing values and beliefs, finds concrete manifestation in the realities of the political-economy. The elites were totally in control of the economy from the production to the distribution to the consumption of goods and services. This political-economy, structured expressly for the material, and so status, benefit of the elites, was intensely selfish in that the needs of those who actually generated product and supplied service were totally ignored; these people were regarded as simply part of

a wealth-generating mechanism. More, this mechanism saw the traditional practices of distribution, which made life and status for the peasants possible, replaced by a mechanism that increasingly made life and status impossible for that peasantry. As such the teaching of Jesus in Matt 6:19-34 about a selfish storing up of treasure on earth can only be interpreted as a categorical censure of the entire political-economy and, most importantly, of those who controlled the economy i.e. the elites. The system being condemned by Jesus was one that had been established by the elites, for the elites, to the detriment of everyone else.

4.2.3 Taxation

At the heart of the redistributive economy, as has just been noted, was taxation. Just what the levels of taxation were and what forms they took thus become vitally important in understanding the financial plight of the peasantry of first-century Palestine. By way of a summary of the situation, Lenski (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:114) (*italics his*) has written:

On the basis of the available data, it appears that the governing classes of agrarian societies probably received at least a quarter of the national income of most agrarian states, and that the governing class and ruler together usually received not less than half. In some instances their combined income may have approached two-thirds of this total.

Given that the governing class and rulers together constituted approximately five percent of the population, these are sobering statistics, statistics, nevertheless, which can be verified. First Maccabees 10:30 “suggests that prior to the Hasmoneans ... the Syrians regularly took 33 percent of the grain and 50 percent of the fruit”. (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:114). With the Hasmoneans “we can assume that the peasantry became free of imperial tribute – as it was replaced by Iturean and Hasmonean claims” (Horsley 1995:217). Roman rule, however, saw the re-imposition of imperial taxation and under Herod the Great this consisted of “25 – 33 percent of Palestinian grain within his realm and 50 percent of the fruit from trees” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:114). This was augmented by a tribute to Rome “to the amount of one-quarter of the crop every second year, except for the sabbatical year” (Horsley 1995:217). This tribute was vigorously collected by the client rulers since the “Romans considered the non-payment of the tribute tantamount to rebellion” (Horsley 1995:217). In addition there

was a further direct tax levied “on the land or per capita” and an indirect tax that “comprised all of the tolls, duties, market taxes inheritance taxes and so forth” (Oakman 1986:67). Finally, as will be more thoroughly examined shortly, “the temple establishment claimed ‘taxes’ in kind (sacrificial goods) and money (the half shekel) on top of the rest” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:114).

In trying to meaningfully quantify these taxes, Oakman (1986:70) examines the revenues that Herod the Great received annually from Palestinian sources and which amounted to 1000 Syrian talents (talent = a measure of precious metal). This equates to the price of 200 000 cors or 2.2 million bushels of wheat annually. By way of comparison the whole of Jerusalem, during the same period, imported only 120 000 cors or 1.32 million bushels annually (Oakman 1986:70). Similarly, estimates of a Roman senator with a capital fortune of 8 million *sesteries* computes to the equivalent of 14,000 – 29,000 metric tons of wheat, while Herod’s annual income had a comparable value of around 61 000 metric tons. “Herod, then, was as wealthy as the wealthiest senators of the early empire” (Oakman 1986:70). When this is compared to the peasant farmer reaping something in the order of 300 kilograms of grain per acre, and after his production and taxation costs were applied, the disparity between these two extremes is shocking. Small wonder that Josephus (*Ant.*17: 307) was able to write of Herod “that whereas when he took the kingdom it was in an extraordinary flourishing condition, he has filled the nation with the utmost degree of poverty”.

This situation evidently did not improve after Herod for, in the case of Galilee and Perea, Antipas extracted annual revenue of 200 talents from a far smaller tax base than his father had exploited. (Horsley 1995:218). Moreover, under the Romans a more effective tax collection mechanism seems to have been developed (Hanson & Oakman 1998 :115). While Judea was under the control of the prefects (6-40 C.E.) the Romans “identified a hierarchy of people responsible for tax collection” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:115) amongst whom were member of the Temple elite, who evidently bought or leased the tax burden. They then “made sure other did the dirty work, compelling heads of Judean villages and families (elders) to participate as agents for tax collection” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:116). Although this arrangement did not apply to Roman tax collection in Galilee under Antipas, the collection of the Temple tax there seems to have gone ahead uninterrupted, given the fact that Josephus (Horsley 1995:218) seems to have easily collected this revenue when sent to Galilee for that purpose by his colleagues in 66 C.E.

The expenditure of the massive tax revenues would only have added grist to the mill in terms of the peasants' feelings towards the tax regime. Of the Jerusalem Temple which Herod built, Horsley (1995:134) writes that the "scale of the construction (which took nearly eighty years) was truly astounding. It was twice the size of the new Forum built by Trajan in Rome. Only in archaic Egypt were these temples of corresponding size". Then he "mounted a massive building programme of monuments to Augustus Caesar and Roman-style theatres and amphi-theatres" (Horsley 1996:31). In addition "he lavished munificent favours on cities around the eastern Mediterranean where there were large Jewish diaspora communities, posing as their protector and fostering their attention – and pilgrimage – to his glorious Temple" (Horsley 1996:31). Although Herod did not construct public buildings in Galilee, his son Antipas did. In fact he built "royal capitals at Sepphoris and Tiberias that bore down heavily on the people both visibly and materially" (Horsley 1996:36). These, and other Galilean cities "boasted most of the typical Hellenistic-Roman urban institutions that made a city a *polis*: courts, theatre, palace, colonnaded streets, city walls, markets, archives, bank, amphitheatre, aqueduct, stadium" (Horsley 1996:44). Given that the peasants tended to avoid the cities, it is none the less true that they must have been acutely aware of this lavish expenditure of their tax revenues since, apart from their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, many Jews were actually involved in the construction of these cities. So, for example, Josephus (*Ant.*20.19-22) reports that after the completion of the Temple and just prior to the great revolt, 18 000 people were put out of work. Oakman (1986:67) speculates that were such pre-70's people to have asked about the levels and usages of their tax revenues, the ruling families who collected such taxes would have "argued that the tax was to ensure the Pax Romana and participation in its benefits". Indeed he quotes Balsdon (in Oakman 1986:67) as saying that "taxation was to be viewed not as arbitrary imposition but as the individual's reasonable subscription to the upkeep of the armed forces ... this from Cicero onwards, was the government's retort to those who objected to paying their taxes".

4.2.4 Mechanisms of Control

Hanson and Oakman (1998:116) make the point that taxation "in Roman Palestine was extractive, that is, designed to assert elite control over agrarian production". But this

was not the only mechanism of control used by the elites. Taxation was augmented by the elites' control of the land, of labour and of money.

4.2.4.1 Control of Land

What has been established to date is the fact that the elites controlled the cities. “Elites built, controlled, and inhabited the cities” say Hanson and Oakman (1998:116). The peasants, on the other hand “controlled” the villages in the sense that they lived there semi-autonomously and were still largely independent landowners (Horsley 1995: 217), albeit that they were locked into the political-economy. What hasn't been noted yet, however, is the fact, that massive swathes of countryside were in the hands of the elites in the form of “estates”. An estate “was a political, and in Roman law a legal, entity referring to land and product controlled by the elite” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:117). This arrangement has a history stretching back to the time of Solomon. Solomon claimed some of the land of Israel, “originally probably land of the Canaanite city-states or petty kings conquered by Solomon” (Horsley 1995:205), which was designated “royal land” and was worked by peasants “who had little or no ‘rights’ of their own vis-à-vis the ruler” (Horsley 1995:205). Then Solomon expropriated other land, from his subjects, which he “assigned to his courtiers and officers as their source of income”. This was worked by those who had formerly owned it, under some form of tenancy arrangement (Horsley 1995:208). Finally the vast majority of peasants remained “on their traditional family inheritance” but by now subject to imperial taxation. This system remained in place down to Roman times and even “after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple”, so that the royal lands of Solomon continued to exist “under the Hasmoneans, Herod and the Romans” (Horsley 1995:209). What is not clear is whether the peasants living in villages on the land surrounding the cities (*chōra*) continued under the arrangement of “royal land” or whether they had moved back to being “private” individuals on “independent” land (Horsley 1995:209). In Palestine, Julius Caesar “inherited” lucrative estates from the Hasmoneans in the Esdraelon Plain and the Jericho area” (Oakman in Neyrey 1993:164) while the rest of the land was nominally under the control of individuals in Rome but “in practice it was controlled by the local elites of Palestine who acted as Roman agents of subjugation (even if unwillingly)” (Oakman 1993:164). In terms of this arrangement the Gentile cities of Palestine controlled land along the Mediterranean coast, in Samaria and

Transjordan. The Jewish areas “were controlled for the most part by the Herods, with oversight from imperial agents like Pontius Pilate” (Oakman 1993:164). Smaller parcels of this land was given to “political subordinates – stewards of Caesar’s estates and to other ‘secular’ landowners (Herodians, Elders of the Jews, Scribes etc)” (Oakman 1993:164), while the high priestly families, who owned ancestral lands “perhaps increasingly augmented (this)... by land acquired through default on debts or temple dedications” (Oakman 1993:165). Of all the royal land under Jewish (Herodian) control, however, very little appears to have been in Galilee. Evidence for royal land/estates can “be documented in Judea and Samaria and the Great Plain and east of the Sea of Galilee... but not in Galilee” (Horsley 1995:210). This can be accounted for by the fact that historically there had not originally been royal land in Galilee, and the fact that the royal land in Judea had included “the world-famous balsam plantation” around Jericho while in Samaria the Great Plain had been extensively developed by the Hasmoneans (Horsley 1995:210), i.e. these were both historically profitable sites for royal land. In addition it would also appear that “Galilean villages were not part of the *chōra* of a city in late second-temple (early Roman) times” (Horsley 1995:215). What all this implies is that, unlike the areas containing royal lands, the poverty of the Galilean peasants needs to be explained by factors other than heavy taxation and the rampant exploitation of the peasants living under the arrangement of estates/royal estates i.e. by the debt mechanism, which will be considered shortly.

In terms of these estates, and has been previously noted, the owners lived in the cities and the estates were run by trustworthy “managers” or “stewards” (*oikonomoi*). These managers ran the estates for the purpose of providing “for the elite all of the goods of life, as far as this was possible in any given locale” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:119). The reality of this cannot be overstated; these estates existed solely for the purpose of further enhancing the status of the elites in that they constituted a huge source of income. It stands to reason, therefore, that the larger the estate, the larger the owners’ income. As Oakman (1986:38) puts it, “the income of the elites stood in direct proportion to the territory they controlled”. Which would explain Herod the Great’s apparently insatiable appetite for such lands. Concerning the (presumably) royal lands controlled by the Hasmoneans, for example, Herod “simply killed the Hasmonean family and officers, expropriated their land and property, and then granted his own family members and high ranking officers various estates” (Horsley 1995:213). In

addition he leased the hugely lucrative balsam plantations around Jericho from Cleopatra but “later apparently took full control” (Horsley 1995:210).

The mechanisms by which these estates proved so profitable was a share-rental agreement. In terms of this, the estates employed tenant workers and the owner “was entitled to agricultural produce by written agreement or (more often) by custom” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:117). This tenancy “implies the transfer of primary productive decisions to the landlord/creditor”, meaning that tenants were not free to produce what they needed for their families but only what the landlord decreed. Landlords, in turn “especially if they are interested in commerce, are tempted to plant cash crops (olive, vines, wheat) rather than subsistence crops (barley, beans, figs)” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:119). To make matters worse, the tenant farmers lived in villages either on or just off the estates along with the seasonally hired day labourers and both alike paid rental for their accommodation (Hanson & Oakman 1998:119). In attempting to quantify the total cost of a share-rental agreement to the tenant farmer, Oakman (1986:72) concludes that this amounted to between “one-fourth to one-third of the produce” of the estate. When the share-croppers’ other tax obligations are taken into account, however, the picture changes dramatically. Oakman (1986:72) suggests that “on the low side we have one-tenth (Roman tribute) and one-tenth (Herod, procurators) and one-fourth (land rent to large landowners) = one-half (approximate)”. Fully one half of a share-croppers’ agricultural production fed his tenancy and tax obligations.

4.2.4.2 Control of Labour

In spite of this massive tax burden, and given the reality of an increasingly large population which resulted in freehold farms becoming smaller in size, Kaylor (1994:30) maintains that the prevalence of debt “among urban and rural poor suggests the need for a further explanation”. He credits Goodman (in Kaylor 1994:30) with identifying “that the crucial element in the growing problem of landlessness was increased wealth and its uneven distribution”. Goodman argues that “the debt of farmers increased not only because the poor needed loans but also because the wealthy need places to invest surplus income profitably”. Both elements of this explanation need to be clarified.

In the case of the freehold landowning peasants of Palestine, the pressure on their productivity was enormous. First and foremost they had to produce enough to feed, clothe and house their families. Then they needed to pay for their input costs on products such as seed and livestock feed, and to have sufficient surplus to barter or trade for those products which they did not produce themselves (Oakman 1986:49-51). Finally, and most expensively, they had to meet their tax obligations. When these expenditures are tallied, and bearing in mind that productivity was always dictated by the amount of rain they received, it become clear that many farmers will have required financial assistance from time to time. Having exhausted the meagre resources available in the village, they will then have had to turn to those who had access to such resources, i.e. the elites. “Peasants in need, quickly exhausting the limited resources of their neighbours, sought loans from those with access to resources, for example the wealthy and powerful” (Horsley 1995:215). The wealthy and powerful were just that because they had control of the entire economy, specifically the tax-mechanism and the land. Horsley (1995:215) suggests that even “commanding officers of garrisons along the frontier may have been in a strategic position, since they were likely in charge of tax collection and storage depots in the district under their oversight”.

Such individuals, controlling increasing volumes of wealth, then made loans to the peasant farmers. These loans, and the interest which was attached to them, led “to the establishment of a relationship of dependence” (Oakman 1986:55) by the farmer with his creditor. The end of this relationship, in the likely event of the farmer being unable to repay the debt, was that the creditor took ownership of the peasants’ land. Horsley (1995:215) says that “already wealthy and powerful figures could expand the land and labour they controlled by this means” and suggests that this is the specific mechanism by which so many Galilean farmers (as mentioned above) came to loose their ancestral lands and into a situation of tenancy. Concerning this type of tenancy it is important to note that it involved not the physical transfer of land, perhaps to a neighbouring estate, but the transfer of the power over that land into the hands of the new owner (Oakman 1986:55). In this manner the elite came to have increasing power and control over the labour force of Palestine. The newly disenfranchised farmers, the share-croppers of the estates and the rural and urban poor all alike became dependent, through debt, upon the urban elite. Small wonder then that “ ‘release from debts’ and ‘redistribution of land’

became standard demands in the revolutionary movements of antiquity” (Oakman 1986:73).

Again Oakman (1986:73) tries to quantify the level at which peasants were losing their land in Palestine at his time. He says that “evidence for a debt problem and the growth of tenancy is for the most part indirect, and mostly pertinent to Judea”. The indirect evidence includes indications of “a tremendous growth of large holdings in early Roman Palestine” and the concomitant “increase in the numbers of tenant farmers on the property of others” (1986:75), although no actual figures are given. Perhaps, though, the eruption of civil unrest particularly in Judea at this time is indication enough that the situation was untenable as far as the peasants were concerned.

4.2.4.3 Control of Money

Oakman (in Stegemann et al 2001:343) says, “Money in Jesus’ day was an elite political tool, not a universal economic medium”. In the ancient world, gold and silver were “employed regularly as media for storing ‘value’... by those who had precious metals to hoard” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:122). In the context of the core values of honour and shame in the Mediterranean world, wealth (Aramaic = *mamona*) in the form of money was seen as “the storage of resource values for creating, preserving, displaying or recovering public reputation (‘honour’) and for protecting the economic integrity of family and household” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:122), which has direct implications for Jesus’ teaching on the impossibility of serving both God and Mammon. Bearing in mind that in Mediterranean culture all goods were perceived to exist in limited quantities, such storing up of “value” would also have reinforced the perceptions of the poor that the rich were engaged in such practices at their expense.

In addition to silver having the functions of storing value, it also served as a standard by which the value of goods could be measured (Hanson & Oakman 1998:123). So, for example, in Mark 6:37 the amount of bread required to feed the crowd was costed by way of this comparison. Finally, silver coins were a standard of payment. In terms of this, money was required first and foremost to pay taxes since the Romans demanded that their tribute be paid “in official imperial coin” (Mark 12:15) and the “priests demanded that the temple tax be paid in an official medium” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:123) i.e. the Syrian half-shekel. Similarly debt contracts in Roman

Palestine were calculated in terms of denari (Matt 18:28) and presumably paid in that form. Payment of wages to estate labourers was also made in denari, but most other “peasants would be unfamiliar with the coin”. Importantly, money was only rarely exchanged for other goods and in Matt 27:10 “the priests (that is, members of the elite) are in control of the means to buy” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:124).

Bronze coins were the currency of peasants and even these were employed to their disadvantage. Under normal circumstances in the household-economy goods were bartered for other goods and loans were made and repaid in the form of goods. When peasants interacted with the political-economy, however, they required money (to pay debts and taxes) and hence they “were forced to get money by selling or borrowing”. In this way peasants came to “hold a token in place of real goods but cannot eat a token” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:125). Similarly in buying the cash crops of the estates, peasants had first to expensively convert their own crops into cash in order to make the transaction. By way of the introduction of money, in other words, the informal barter economy was increasingly replaced by a system of coin exchange which was easier to account for and hence to tax. Like every other aspect of the political-economy, money was a tool of the elites for use against the peasantry. This makes Jesus’ prohibition, in Matt 6:19, against the storing up of treasures, in the form of gold coins at least, a certain reference to the practice of the elites. Elites alone store up coins and the prohibition thus constitutes a strong censure of the political-economy as a whole. Specifically, and as has already been noted, money served the purposes of those who, ultimately, minted it i.e. the Romans. Money, as one of the mechanisms of pax propaganda was at one and the same time a visible reminder of the power of Rome and as a physical symbol of subjection in the hands of those who employed it in order to stay alive. Of the political-economy as a whole, then, it can certainly be said that it was redistributive. The taxes and rentals, the tributes and tithes, all “flowed relentlessly away from the rural producers to the storehouses of cities” (Oakman in Neyrey 1993:156).

4.2.4.4 Control and Matt 6:19-34

If the political-economy was the mechanism by which the elites generated wealth for their own selfish ends, at the expense of the rest of the people of Palestine, then taxation and the other control mechanisms of land, labour and money were the means

by which this was accomplished. The net outcome of the employment of these various mechanisms was the total subjugation and dehumanisation of the rest of the population, as we will see more adequately below. This has great relevance when we consider the words of Jesus in Matt 6:25&26: “Is not *life* more important than food, and the *body* more important than clothes...are you not much more important than they?” (i.e. the birds). The very fact that many in Jesus’ audience were so full of anxiety is tangible testimony to their humanity, in that the birds of the air do not worry ever for the simple reason that they are not human. But, by totally discounting the worry of the peasants, indeed in causing that worry in the first place, in that they clearly didn’t care how the peasants survived, the elites gave ample evidence of their understanding that the peasants were somehow less than human. More, their total preoccupation with accumulating money gave equally ample evidence of their understanding of who/what god really was and of what, therefore, life was really all about i.e. nothing more than purely physical existence. But it was physical existence of a particular quality. Money meant power over others and power was the means by which more money could be made from others. Money and power, in other words, were the inseparable elements of elite existence. Which puts this teaching of Jesus into a very specific socio-material context and his material ethic into a very specific religious framework. Jesus understood that human life was way more than just physical existence, however much power and money a person had or did not have, given the immeasurable worth of all people to God. But, at the same time, he also thereby elevated the material aspects of human existence to a distinctly spiritual plane in that their ethical employment would afford dignity to all while their selfish employment meant ruin for others.

4.3 THE RELIGIOUS ECONOMY OF LATE SECOND TEMPLE PALESTINE

Ferguson (2003:562) writes that as “the goal of the pilgrim festivals, the seat of the Sanhedrin, and the site of the sacrificial cultus, the temple was the focal point of world Jewry”. What this eloquent description does not overtly indicate, however, is the most basic characteristic of the Temple i.e. that it was a political institution.

Hanson and Oakman (1998:135) correct this understatement when they write that the

“Judean temple in Jerusalem was a political institution in numerous senses, by virtue of it’s founding by an Israelite king (Solomon) and re-founding later under Persian auspices (Cyrus), by virtue of it’s privileging a certain class of

people by divine right, and by virtue of its co-optation in Jesus' day
by Herodian-Roman interests”.

The focus now will be on this privileged class of people and the nature of the co-optation by the Herodian-Roman interests, in order to identify their role in the economic plight of the Jewish peasantry of Jesus' day.

4.3.1 Administration

Describing the relationship between the cultic significance of the Temple and those who administered it as “the great paradox of the Temple”, Horsley and Silberman (2002:75) speak of the fact that

a huge bureaucratic organisation had arisen at the central cult place, maintained by a vast civil service of scribes, administrators, accountants, service personnel, temple officers and high priestly families who were all dependant on the Temple revenues for their support.

At the centre of this bureaucracy was the high priest surrounded by “other members of the high-priestly families” (Horsley 1995:132), who were all under the oversight and power of the Roman prefect. Furthermore the bureaucracy can be conveniently divided into three major divisions, the Administrative, the Economic and the Ritual, each with their own function and personnel.

The Ritual division was headed by the high-priest and consisted of chief priests and regular priests together with Levites. The high-priest, as has been mentioned, was a Roman appointee and “Herod the Great and his Roman successors changed high priests with some frequency – there were twenty-eight from Herod to A.D. 70” (Ferguson 2003:565). The chief priests were probably “the permanent staff of officials at the temple who also had seats in the Sanhedrin” (Ferguson 2003:565) and had cultic as well as administrative duties. The normal priests were “divided into twenty-four courses, each of which was responsible for conducting the temple rituals for one week a year at a time, twice a year, and all were to be available at the great pilgrim festivals” (Ferguson 2003:565). These priests, who lived largely outside of Jerusalem, became temporarily resident in the city in order to offer the twice-daily whole burnt offering (*Tamid*) and to “assist when individuals came to make guilt, votive, or thank offerings”. Also amongst their duties, it would appear, was the twice-daily sacrifice “for Caesar and the Roman nations”. This sacrifice “was accepted by the Roman

authorities as a sufficient expression of loyalty” (Ferguson 2003:567) by the Jews. Of importance to note is the fact that these rural priests “did not share equally in the income of the Temple” (Kaylor 1994:28), and that there “was a considerable social gulf between the priestly aristocracy centred on the temple and the ordinary priests scattered throughout the country” (Ferguson 2003:565). The Levites, finally, were also divided into twenty-four courses and “provided music for the different services, certain physical and custodial duties, and police functions” (Ferguson 2003:566).

The Economic division “dealt with the animals and gifts that were essential for the temple’s operation” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:142). Here the high priest “had at his disposal two general inspectors, seven accountants and other scribes who were responsible for keeping track of offerings and gifts, three major treasurers and people in charge of specific treasuries (bird offerings, libations, clothing for priests), and money changers” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:142). Also allied to this division were three “functional groups ... that provided economic support to, and received economic benefits from, the temple” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:150). The “logistical group”, made up of select families, “made the ritual breads; provided ritually pure oil, flour, wine; made the incense; provided wood for the sacrifices; gathered straw for temple animals; and acquired and kept herds of animals that were ritually acceptable for temple sacrifices” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:150). A “technical group”, of architects, engineers and specialized artisans, “worked on the temple from the time of Herod the Great to just before the First Judean Revolt” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:150).

Individuals who supplied the raw materials and the labourers who physically transported such materials supplemented these. The “infrastructure group”, consisting of innkeepers and food shopkeepers, was “devoted to supplying the needs of pilgrims and visitors – room and board, food, copying sacred writings (scribal activities) for wealthy pilgrims, and other services” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:150). The make up and activities of this Economic division and its ancillary functional groups points strongly to the functioning of the Temple as a massive commercial enterprise.

The Administrative division of the Temple bureaucracy was concerned with the smooth running of the enterprise. Here the high priest relied on other priests to maintain “order within the temple complex and even throughout Jerusalem” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:140). This took place under the leadership of a prefect/captain, known as a *stratigos*, who commanded “ ‘police’, supplied from the Levitical families” who, in

turn, kept order, maintained Temple purity, and even had authority to execute those Gentiles who transgressed the sacred space. Given the embedded nature of Jewish religion, the temple Administration also had links with “judicial institutions and authority” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:140) on a wider plain. Along these lines the high priest oversaw the Sanhedrin, the “supreme court” of the Jewish people, which was made up of “the chief priests, elders of the people (lay aristocracy around Jerusalem), and scribes (sages learned in the law)” (Ferguson 2003:568). The chief priests were traditionally associated with the Sadducees “because of the great prestige of the ancient priestly family of Zaddok (1 Kings 1:34)” while the elders traced their “lineage back to important families in Israel’s past” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:147), and may have been somewhat ambivalent to what they saw going on in the Temple. The scribes, on the other hand, “were affiliated in nepotistic fashion with the high priestly families”. Some of these scribes were Pharisees whose principal concern was “to live out the holiness code of the temple in everyday life” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:149), which often brought them into conflict with the chief priests in terms of the ritual conduct of Temple affairs, but most scribes appear to have been Sadducees whose interests included retaining “the status quo and keep[ing] the focus of the nation (and potential kingdom) of Israel in this world, not in the next” (Saldarini 1988:300). The Sanhedrin, embedded as it was in the Temple organisation, seems to have been involved in largely judicial functions and, according to rabbinic literature, “tried cases dealing with a whole tribe, a false prophet, and the high priest” (Ferguson 2003:568).

Such, then, was the bureaucratic organisation of the Temple, a bureaucracy which “provided an important, even indispensable, part of the Roman control” (Kaylor 1994:34) of Palestine in that it represented concentrated power in the hands of a subjugated indigenous elite. This elite, the high priestly families, “constituted the upper stratum of Jewish society in the Second Temple period” and they “enjoyed luxurious living equivalent to the wealthy elsewhere in Roman society” (Kaylor 1994:35). This luxury was excavated on the Western Hill by Nahman Avigad (in Horsley 1995:133) who wrote, “the individual dwelling units were extensive, and the inner courtyards lent them the character of luxury villas ... equipped with complex bathing facilities, as well as containing the luxury goods and artistic objects which signify a high standard of living”. The source of this luxury and high standard of living needs to be accounted for.

4.3.2. Taxation

According to Kaylor (1994:35), the “priestly aristocracy received their support from rural areas, primarily through the tax on agricultural products intended to support the Temple”. This tax, as had already been noted, was made “in kind (sacrificial goods) and money (the half-shekel)” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:114). The half-shekel tax had to be paid by every “Judean male throughout the Diaspora.. to support the continuous sacrifices at the temple” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:151) while the sacrificial goods included “animals, wine, oil, frankincense, fine flour, wheat, and salt” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:150), which were sourced from throughout Palestine. Interestingly the excavations of the Western Hill, mentioned above, recovered numerous storage jars embossed with the word *Yehud*, meaning Judah or Jerusalem, from the villas of the elite and which appear to have had a taxation function. Their presence in these homes seems to suggest that wine, “paid as tithes or taxes to the (high) priesthood in the Temple were (sic) ‘redistributed’ directly to the principal wealthy and powerful officers of the temple-state” (Horsley 1995:133).

Because of the perennial “needs” of the Temple, the oligarchy evidently took steps to secure those requirements. Hanson and Oakman (1998:150) suggest that this was done through association with traditional estates in Galilee and “by longstanding commercial links with powerful families”. In addition they (1998:151) suggest the imposition of “liens” in terms of which cattle, birds, wood, incense, building materials, cloth for vestments, etc. could be requisitioned from the local population. This would have come on top of what amounted to a “hidden” cost to the Temple user. On top of the obligatory tithe, individuals brought votive (in fulfilment of vows) and thank offerings to the Temple, together with sin and purification offerings. These sin and purification offerings inevitably involved the sacrifice of an animal or bird, and, in the case of an animal, would have resulted in that animal’s skin becoming a source of revenue to the priests. Along with the nearly 1200 animals slaughtered over a year in the daily offering, these innumerable sin offerings would have generated a substantial revenue in hides (Hanson & Oakman 1998:145). Also, certain of the blood sacrifices could be eaten by the priests and “Talmudic tradition tells us that priests ate so much meat that they suffered from chronic sickness (*m. Sheqal.5.1*; Jeremias 1969:26)” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:145). Not all the meat was eaten by the priests and the excess was distributed within Jerusalem, while certain of the grain and fruit offerings

were also eaten by priests and participants alike, suggesting that they priests did not go hungry in the course of carrying out their duties!

That this form of taxation generated surpluses is suggested by the fact that the half-shekel tax was stored within the Temple complex, as was “lumber, stone, and other building materials dedicated to the temple” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:151), which again suggests Jesus is referring to an elite practice in Matt 6:19, this time in a religious elite environment. At least two Roman prefects (Pilate and Floras) “usurped funds from the temple” and when the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., “the Romans simply redirected the two drachma tax to Rome (the *Fiscus Judaicus*), where the money rebuilt the temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:152) all of which indicates that the Romans kept a close eye on the revenues of this tributary economy. Indeed Hanson and Oakman (1998:152) maintain that the “imperial prefects were auditors and overseers for the system”.

The temple tax regime seems to have reached its most exploitative and effective under Herod the Great. Horsley (1995:140) writes that far “from dismantling the administrative and sacrificial apparatus of the Temple, Herod expanded it”. This included an expansion of the high-priestly aristocracy to the point that by the end of Herod’s reign “there were four (instead of one) principal extended high-priestly families in Jerusalem” (Horsley 1995:140). These families, as has been indicated, ultimately oversaw the administration of the Temple, including the collection of tithes and taxes. Josephus (*Antiquities* 20:181) records that during Herod Agrippa’s reign high priests “had the hardiness to send their servants into the threshing floors, to take away those tithes that were due to the priests, insomuch that it so fell out that the poorest sort of the priests died for want”. Horsley (1995:140) interprets this incident as reflecting a later situation in which the usual collection mechanism had begun to break down given the impossible demands being made on the peasants, nevertheless it suggests the fact of an organised collection mechanism being in place. As early as Nehemiah’s time the record is that “We – the priests, the Levites and the people ... assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the Lord each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree” (10:34-35), and indications are that this arrangement continued given the fact that “it would have been physically impossible for all the people to bring produce (to Jerusalem) at the same time” (Horsley 1995:141). Concerning the situation in Galilee, it would appear that Galileans were expected to pay their tithes and other dues to the priests in Jerusalem during Hasmonean and

Herodian times, but “there is little evidence for the degree and manner in which such revenues were taken and the degree to which Galileans complied with Jerusalem’s demands or expectations” (Horsley 1995:142). Josephus’s tithing journey, mentioned above, indicates that “at least some tithes for priests was thus familiar in Galilee” (Horsley 1995:142) and yet later rabbinic records complain about the Galileans “extreme tardiness with removal of tithes and sacred produce, thus hindering the confession” (Horsley 1995:143). Given the fact that the Hasmoneans almost certainly “actively collected these and/or ‘secular’ revenues”, through their garrisons and fortresses, “the Jerusalem Temple and (high) priesthood very likely continued to receive a certain level of tithes and offerings from Galileans under Herod” (Horsley 1995:143). This collection would have been made in competition with Herod’s own taxation claims, a situation which would have been accentuated once Galilee came under Antipas’ rule and which would have increased “the usual peasant resistance to parting with its produce” (Horsley 1995:143). Perhaps the rabbinic records are a reflection of a situation in which “Galileans would likely have lapsed in their payments of tithes and other priestly and temple dues” (Horsley 1995:143) as a result of their financial exhaustion.

What seems certain, and of crucial importance, is the fact that the Temple system of taxation and the Roman (Herodian) taxation “were undoubtedly not clearly distinguished in the minds of priests or populace” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:152), since both had the same result i.e. riches for the elites and ruin for the populace. Fernando Belo (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:152) “has persuasively argued that the temple ideology correlated sin and debt such that a constant flow of goods to the temple centre remained under the control of the high priestly families”. The peasants, battling taxation from the Imperial and Temple rulers alike, were increasingly falling into debt to both institutions and losing control of more and more of their land. In addition the Temple, functioning as the judicial arm of the sacred economy, was active in the realm of this debt collection. For example, the “prosopol measure ... evaded the prescription of Deut 15:1-2 and permanently turned the debtor over to the creditor through the agency of the courts” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:152). The result of this mechanism was that “the debtor could be evicted from patrimonial land (becoming ‘landless’) or legally redefined as a tenant” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:152), and this led to “the expansion of large estates under the control of the Judean oligarchy” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:153). Under these circumstances the pressures on the peasantry must

have been unbearable given the fact that their Temple-directed revenues, viewed as their Covenant obligation for the expiation of sin and guarantee of Yahweh's material provision, were part of a tax regime that was, in its totality, ruining them. Perhaps this was what Jesus had in mind when he said "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat ... They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them" (Matt 23:2 & 4).

The true character of the Temple of Jesus' day becomes evident from this description of its administration and taxation. The first aspect of that character pertains to the fact that the Temple was, largely, a financial institution under the guise of a religious one. On the surface Yahweh was being lavishly and spectacularly worshipped in Jerusalem, but in reality He and His Temple were merely the vehicles for the generation of revenues that would enhance the social status of those elites who supposedly served Yahweh in his temple. Worse, those vehicles were being employed at the expense of the people of Yahweh across Palestine. This might provide the basis for understanding why Jesus said to the teachers and Pharisees: "you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law; justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matt 23:23). Then there is the fact that the Temple and Jerusalem elites were, in reality, the servants of Rome. Given that they prospered expressly as a result of the patronage of Rome, and that they didn't apparently consider the contradiction of serving Yahweh and Rome simultaneously pressing enough to reject Rome's patronage, suggests that when Jesus categorically insisted that "You cannot serve God and Money", he could just as easily have said "You cannot serve God and Rome". Rome or Money, or both together, were the counterfeit gods that Jesus must have had in mind as he declared his ethic. If the elites of Jerusalem were not prepared to make a stand for Yahweh, then Jesus certainly was. As were others immediately before him who began to register their protests against Rome and Jerusalem, even if not for quite the same reasons as Jesus.

4.4 SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ALIENATION IN LATE SECOND-TEMPLE PALESTINE

Before examining the phenomenon of Social Banditry, as an expression of the peasantry's reaction to the financial hardships they were facing in first century

Palestine, it would be helpful to isolate a number of social and religious experiences the peasants would have been undergoing at this time. This will assist in understanding the pervasive mood that must have characterised the lower classes of the day and who, largely, made up his immediate audience at the Sermon.

4.4.1 Social Insecurity

4.4.1.1 Hunger

Oakman (1986:62) undertakes a detailed analysis of the subsistence levels under which the peasantry were living and concludes that physical hunger must have been a factor in many of their lives. He starts with the assumption that 2500 calories would have been the calorific consumption required by the average male adult to enable him to complete a day's labour (1986:58). This represents an amount of 794 grams of wheat or 756 grams of barley per day and, totalled up for a year and averaged out across the whole population, amounts to 210 kg (8 bushels) of wheat per person per year. The amount is raised to 275 kg (11 bushels) when the other foods consumed in a day (fruit, oil, meat etc) are measured in terms of wheat's calorific content (1986:59). These figures seem to coincide with the consumption of the day given "the daily minimum meal ration for the pauper in first-century Palestine" amounted to 400 litres or 11.5 bushels per year (1986:60) as reported by Josephus.

The amount of land required to produce this amount of grain has been calculated at 1,35 acres per person and Eusebius (*E.H.3.20.1-11* in Oakman 1986:62) documents that the peasant families he was describing owned "as little as 6 or as much as 12 acres apiece", meaning that the smallest properties, under ideal circumstances, could have supported 4,4 adults. This makes it evident that even under ideal circumstances and at subsistence levels, the amount of food being grown by individual farmers barely met their own needs. When the realities of land lying fallow, weather conditions and tax obligations etc. are taken into account, this subsistence threshold had to be under severe pressure. Certainly the ownership by farmers of livestock for slaughter would have eased the pressure, as would have exchanges/borrowings from the local village, but in the final analysis the experience of hunger and the threat of starvation must have been an ever-present reality. Under these circumstances the "perennial problem" being faced by the peasants was "in balancing the demands of the external world against the

peasants' need to provision their households" (Wolf in Oakman 1986:79). The options that were open to them were "two dramatically opposed strategies"; either they increased production or they curtailed consumption (Oakman 1986:79). Given that production could not be increased in a world of "limited good", and the fact that no spare land was available in any event, decreased consumption must have become a reality. The resultant hunger must have played a major part in precipitating "a hopeless spiral of debt that led to the loss of the family plot" (Oakman 1986:80). The resultant hunger would also account both for Oakman's comment (in Neyrey 1993:175), that most "villagers in Jesus' rural environment would have been stingy, as are most peasants under the pressure of subsistence" and for what must have been a very prevalent emotion amongst villagers – fear. Faced with starvation, fear cannot have been too far behind.

4.4.1.2 Family Disintegration

The direct effect of the Imperial and Temple taxes was, as has been shown, increased indebtedness amongst the peasantry leading to increased loss of land. As such the tax burden represented a direct threat to the major goal of all peasants i.e. "family survival on the land of their ancestors" (Horsley & Silberman 2002:27). With more and more farmers losing their land there were now "large numbers of people looking for day-labour and increasing numbers of people who had become tenants on other's estates" (Horsley 1995:219), which can only have had a catastrophic impact on the composition and functioning of the rural family. Given that such families constituted the most basic form of society in that they were the economic, religious, sexual and organisational bedrock upon which the larger society was built, it is not surprising that the "pressures on and disintegration of the patriarchal family were the pressure points at which the wider social order would begin to break down" (Horsley 1995:196). And begin to break down it did. Specifically there was an increase in banditry and brigandage throughout the first century to the point that by 66-67 C.E. it had grown from endemic to epidemic proportions (Horsley 1995:258).

The dynamics by which this took place are well described by Horsley (1989:90) when he says,

as some families lost their land to, or came under the power of the wealthy and powerful creditors, village communities disintegrated. As fathers were unable to

maintain their hold on the traditional family inheritance, confidence in patriarchal authority deteriorated along with their own self-respect.

Remembering that every honourable person was “entitled to fulfil their inherited roles and hence entitled to economic and social subsistence” as the “active moral principle in peasant societies” (Malina 2001a:91), Horsley’s description does justice to the process. Farmers experienced the public shame of losing their means of subsistence and thereby simultaneously lost both their means of livelihood and their honour – perhaps even in the eyes of their own families. Under these circumstances the credibility of such farmers in providing religious and moral leadership within their families and villages must have been severely compromised. Equally, under these circumstances of radical change and chronic uncertainty, the rural population must have experienced a substantial measure of fear.

4.4.1.3 Religious Uncertainty

When it came to religious observance linked to the Temple, the twin pressures of the “great paradox” and the “great disappointment” would have confronted the rural poor. In terms of the “great paradox”, as described by Horsley and Silberman (2002:75), devout Jews were faced with a “vast ritual of hierarchical holiness and strictly divided spaces [which] appeared to be the very antithesis of the covenantal ideals of ... [those] who insisted that they had no lord to rule over them except God”. Instead of men standing in Godly solidarity with them and exercising a priestly ministry on their behalf to Yahweh, “the priestly hierarchy was seen living in luxury and passively acceding to the demands of the ungodly Romans by authorising a daily sacrifice for the well-being of the emperor.” (Horsley & Silberman 2002:75). This luxury and the demands of the ungodly Romans were, furthermore, destroying them financially. The “great disappointment”, on the other hand, is my reference to the fact that pious Jews were experiencing the loss of their ancestral lands and the disintegration of their families and communities, apparently in contradiction to the covenant promises of God. As Weber (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:153) has pointed out “Peasant religion has always been *ex opere operato* (based upon performance of sacred ritual) in orientation”. In terms of this orientation, as long as the priests satisfied God’s demands through the performance of rituals (*opere*), “things would be well with

weather, soil, and crops” (Hanson & Oakman 1998:153) for the peasants. Given that things were palpably far from well, the peasants could only conclude that either the priests were offering unacceptable sacrifices to God or that God had somehow abandoned His people. Considering the ease with which the afflicted conclude that God has abandoned them (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?” (Ps 22:1)), the peasants might well have been thinking the same thing. If they were, then they would also have been feeling anger and fear; anger at the priests for having precipitated this predicament, fear that there might now be no mechanism through which to regain God’s favour.

4.4.1.4 Social Insecurity and Matt 6:19-34

Hunger, in the face of obscene public displays of opulence and excess by the elites; family disintegration, in the light of the protective security afforded to the privileged families of the rich living in the cities; religious uncertainty, in the face of the conspicuous and confident workings of the cultus in Jerusalem – these three experiences of the peasantry had to have resulted in a variety of emotions being felt by them. From jealousy to anger, from fear to hatred and back again to fear, these would have been the emotional responses of the peasantry to the crisis facing them and concerning which, we can now assert, described the social experience Jesus was referring to specifically in Matt 6:25-34. Fear was a living reality in the lives of Jesus’ audience; fear caused by the attitudes and actions of the elites concerning material wealth. Such emotions cannot be suppressed forever, and indeed they were not. They bubbled over into various and widespread social upheavals, upheavals that Jesus must have desired to see come to an end, and that might indeed have ended, had the elites paid more attention to the ethic Jesus was addressing to them and to the crowd who were suffering the same religious perversion and exploitation as he was.

4.5 SOCIAL UPHEAVALS IN LATE SECOND-TEMPLE PALESTINE

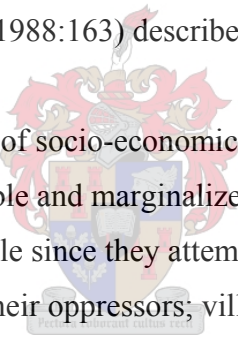
Theissen (1992:86), following Durkheim, suggests that the sociological model of “anomy” is usefully employed in explaining the social upheaval that took place in Palestine during the Roman period. Anomy “expresses a state in which individuals

are no longer able to behave in accordance with the norms of their group". Anomy takes place during a period of economic crisis and results in people being forced into groupings other than their usual social circles. The process begins when, because of financial pressures, people are no longer able to function "according to the norms of the social environment to which they belong" (Theissen 1992:87) and begin to exercise "deviant" behaviour. The next stage is reached when sufficient numbers in a given society begin to adopt these deviant behaviours (such as Josephus records in *Ant.*20:124 and which included an increase in robbery and brigandage in Palestine at the time). Then there is a high level of "mobility" amongst the populace in terms of emigration, robbery or begging. In the case of Palestine, evidently unusually, "this pattern of behaviour was imbued with religious significance, ... emigration was stylised and transformed into the settlement of a religious community, brigandage into religious and social resistance, and beggars into itinerant charismatics" (Theissen 1992:87). Finally, and as a result of a change in social status, there is a migration towards a new social grouping (Theissen 1992:87).

An analysis of the situation in Palestine identifies just such behaviours and social groupings. The Essenes, for example, provide an example of stylised emigration in that, in reaction to the religio-political situation, they withdrew "from society into a close-knit and tightly controlled community" (Kaylor 1994:37). In disgust they had "rejected the Hellenization of Israel represented in the Jerusalem priestly aristocracy" and sought to live as the community of God's people by "strictly following the Torah as the leaders of the community interpreted it" (Kaylor 1994:37). Significantly they practiced a common ownership of property, most probably not as a rejection of material wealth or as a model for a wider society, but as a "rejection ... of the current means the ruling elites used to control and distribute that wealth" (Kaylor 1994:37). The Cynics, on the other hand, perhaps provide an example of beggars become itinerant charismatics. Cynicism, originating with Diogenes in the fourth century B.C.E., was a popular philosophical movement "whose aim was to extricate people from a life of vice and set them on the road of virtue" (Fiore 2000:242). Espousing attachment to no city, since cities were against the natural order of things, they claimed to belong to a community of wise persons and "expected commonality (*koinonia*) of all goods as humanity's common patrimony" (Fiore 2000:243). Three particular features characterised their way of life; they were itinerant beggars who travelled only with a knapsack, cloak and staff, they identified with the slogan "be

countercultural” (*paracharaltein to nomina*), and they produced literature in the form of diatribes and “playful satire” (Fiore 2000:244). Viewed by Rome as subversives they were banished from the city, along with the Stoics, from 75-71 B.C.E., for “teaching doctrines inappropriate to the age and therefore subversive” (Fiore 2000:244).

Finally, in terms of religious and social resistance, a number of different groupings emerged, all of which could be described as being involved in peasant rebellion or social banditry. According to Eric Hobsbawm (in Hanson & Oakman 1998:87), peasant rebellion can be described as “pre-political” in that “peasants do not attempt ‘programs’ of political reform or focus on the larger political picture” but rather they “react against economic, military, or ideological pressures manifested in new or increased taxes, occupation by foreign troops, disruption of temple functions”. Social banditry, in terms of this definition, thus describes the reaction and behaviour of the materially and economically disenfranchised as they seek to survive and to strike back at the elites. Horsley (in Freyne 1988:163) describes the salient features of social banditry to include


 a general situation of socio-economic oppression that makes the peasantry vulnerable and marginalized; the bandits enjoy the support of the village people since they attempt to right their wrongs by violent reprisals against their oppressors; villagers and bandits share a common set of values and religious assumptions which justify their actions by appealing to a divine justice that is hoped for.

Crossan (1991:451-452) makes an extensive investigation into the types and frequency of social banditry in early Roman Palestine and provides the following synopsis:

protesters, of which there were seven cases between 4 B.C.E. and 65 C.E.;
 prophets, of which there were ten cases between c 30 C.E. and 73 C.E.,
 excluding Jesus;
 (social) bandits, of which there were eleven cases between 47 B.C.E.
 and 68-69 C.E.; and
 messiahs, of which there were five cases between 4 B.C.E. and 68-70 C.E.

Analysing these movements and incidents, Horsley (1995:264) makes a number of important observations. He says that despite Josephus’ numerous indications that banditry in Galilee was largely restricted to two periods, i.e. mid-first century B.C.E.

and mid-first century C.E., while it was widespread in Judea during the 40's, 50's and 60's C.E., "it is highly likely that banditry was moving from endemic to epidemic in Galilee as well" at this time. He says this on the grounds that Josephus' reports focus on the two periods that most interested him i.e. the fall of the Hasmoneans and the rise of Herod, together with his own involvement in Galilee in 66-67 C.E. (1995:258). In addition all the conditions that gave rise to social banditry, i.e. heavy taxation, insensitivity of Roman administrators and declining high-priestly legitimacy, were as prevalent in Galilee as they were in Judea proper. In such conditions "banditry escalated to epidemic proportions in Galilee as well as Judea during the years prior to the great revolt" (Horsley 1995:265).

Horsley (1995:259) also says that this banditry does not amount to "any organised and long-standing 'nationalist' or 'resistance' movement such as that imagined in the Zealot movement". He (1995:259) maintains this given the fact that it has recently been recognised that Josephus' term *testai* refers not to the Zealots per se but to social banditry in general, and the fact that "the Zealots did not even emerge until the middle of the Jewish revolt, apparently in Jerusalem during the winter of 67 – 68".

Furthermore, the fact that a large gang of brigands "sold its services to the staunchly pro-Roman city of Sepphoris in 66 – 67" (Horsley 1995:259) strongly indicates that banditry does not necessarily imply even an anti-Roman insurrection. All of which speaks to the fact that the century-long lead-up to the great revolt was characterised by popular movements writhing against the increasing constrictions of the Imperial and Temple economies and not by nationalistic movements seeking to affect a political regime-change. The great revolt itself may well have included other dynamics, but these are beyond the scope of this investigation. Perhaps, though, one incident in the great revolt of the summer of 66 C.E. speaks to the true nature of popular grievances up to this time. Josephus (*JW* 2. 423-427) reports that

the seditious party had the lower city and the temple in their power ... (they) then set fire to the house of Ananias the high priest, and to the palaces of Agrippa and Bernice after which they carried the fire to the place where the archives were repositied, and made haste to burn the contracts belonging to the creditors and thereby to dissolve the obligations for paying debts, and this was done in order to gain the multitude of those who profited thereby, and that they might persuade the poorer sort to join their insurrection with safety against the more wealthy.

Within this explosive environment, with all its diverse expressions of social banditry, Jesus both formulated and declared his material ethic of the Kingdom. There can be little doubt, given all that we have identified in this study so far, that the principal cause of the anomy was a protracted economic crisis that had forced people into behaviour patterns and social groupings that were largely abnormal for and foreign to them. Into this situation Jesus speaks a material ethic that has a specifically religious origin and orientation, and he does so because, ultimately, what lay beneath the social manifestations of anomy was a profoundly spiritual malady. This malady was, very largely, the responsibility of Jerusalem and, ultimately, Rome. To both Jerusalem and Rome, as well as to the crowd in front of him, he speaks an ethic which all need to hear and implement if good is to come to the whole of their society.

In essence, then, and as it relates specifically to the problem identified at the outset of this paper in B. above (concerning the somewhat abstract interpretation given to this material ethic by traditional scholarship), we have just identified a very specific and dynamic context in which Jesus spoke these words. His was a society dislocated by anomy; a dislocation being endured by largely rural Jewish peasants and that had been caused by their physical experience of hunger, their social trauma of family disintegration and their spiritual anxiety relating to their status in the eyes of Yahweh. To this audience Jesus addresses an ethic of hope. To those who were directly responsible for causing the anomy, however, this same ethic provides explanation, condemnation and correction. This ethic will now be considered in some detail.

CHAPTER 5:
THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC ETHIC OF JESUS IN MATT
6:19-34

Having recovered sufficient of the unique social, political, religious and historical contexts in which Jesus lived and taught, through the various analyses made above, I now intend to re-read the discourse and bring to bear the findings of these analyses, so as to suggest how the ethic articulated in 6:19-34 might have sounded in the ears of the original, first-century audience to whom it was initially addressed. Perhaps the best way to recover something of that sound would be by locating Jesus himself in this specific context, then by recognising his rhetorical stance as described by the text and, finally, by giving substance to his teaching in light of the now partially recovered pre-understanding of the audience and their unique socio-economic and religious contexts taken into account.

5.1 THE PERSONAL SETTING OF JESUS

The author of Matthew's Gospel tells us that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod" (2:1) i.e. prior to Herod's death in 4 B.C.E. Following Herod's death, and because "Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod" (2:22), Joseph took the child and his mother and "withdrew to the district of Galilee and ... lived in a town called Nazareth" (2:23). Nazareth, in Lower Galilee and within 25 kilometres of the Sea of Galilee, then, was where Jesus spent most of his early life. Matthew also tells us that in Nazareth Jesus was assumed to be "the carpenter's son" (14:55), thereby locating him in a specific social context. If we follow Oakman (1986:23) that carpentry, as a form of specialised craft or trade, "was more likely a function of underemployment and the demands for labour on large estates", then we can conclude that Jesus grew up in a poor, even despised, home surrounded by peasant neighbours. This immediately suggests that from an early age, he was well acquainted with the material deprivations and humiliations suffered by all peasants at this time. This also suggests that as he learned the craft of his "father" Joseph, he would have been personally familiar with the tax regime of Rome as it levied its poll and production-surplus taxes from him.

Such an embedded social location would also have automatically exposed him to the traditional values of a rural Israelite culture. As a product of the “little tradition” he would have been instructed, both at home and through the local synagogue, on the role of Temple, Torah and land in the life of his kin and clan. That his family was committed to the Temple, in terms of its cultic efficacy for Israel, is evidenced by Luke’s account of his dedication in the Temple at the age of six weeks (2:22) and when he was twelve (2:42). His own final analysis of the Temple as a “den of robbers” (Matt 19:45), however, is his clear condemnation of the Hellenised-elite business enterprise that it had become for most rural Jews.

His instruction in Torah by his “father” and local synagogue meturgamen would have alerted him both to the “foundation-myth” (Freyne 1988:199) of Israel as God’s elect occupying their own land in perpetuity, and to the more localised traditions as they had developed in Galilee over the centuries. He will have been familiar, therefore, with the stance taken by the prophets of Israel who constantly charged the Jerusalem elites with breaches of covenant in terms of their exploitation of, particularly, the rural peasantry, and indeed adopts this very stance himself. Furthermore, living as he did amongst peasant farmers, he witnessed the increased poverty of his peers at the hands of the agents of the Jerusalem elite who enthusiastically extracted the tithes but were themselves “not willing to lift a finger to move them” (Matt 23:4).

This taxation, as has been clearly shown, came on top of the taxation made by Rome and the Herodians and was, collectively, responsible for the peasantry falling increasingly into debt and so losing their land. Perhaps it is here that Jesus and his peers most painfully encountered the individualistic spirit of Hellenism that threatened to destroy the rural communities of Israel. The Hellenised elites, both Roman and Jewish, were assiduously and selfishly storing up for themselves treasures on earth. Their greed, their rampant attempts to secure greater and greater guarantees of status, their callous employment of the debt mechanism, all were selfishly directed against the lower classes who were the very source of the elites material well-being. Worse still, their ostentatious and selfish employment of that wealth was a constant reminder to the peasantry of the total insignificance in which they were seen in the eyes of the elites. In the process of this crass exploitation the lower classes were being destroyed as heads of families and clans lost land, as the basis of their ability to maintain social status and material existence, and they were thus increasingly unable to perpetuate the way of life and systems of belief such as had been passed down,

from Yahweh, through their forefathers. Bearing in mind that extended families, living in synagogue communities, constituted the physical, spiritual and moral safety nets of the community, their destruction must have impacted heavily on Jesus as he watched these institutions being undermined before his eyes.

Outwardly, too, the Roman pressure on the Jews of Palestine would have become increasingly obvious to Jesus as he grew up. The Hellenised cities and buildings, including Jerusalem's own Temple, the games, the coinage, the tax booths, all would have spoken of the mastery of Rome. In Galilee, traditionally isolated, there was no mistaking the message as Antipas rebuilt Sepphoris and then constructed Tiberius on top of a Jewish cemetery during the lifetime of Jesus, as the cities through which he would rule the Galilee for Rome. Behind all of this visible evidence of Rome's supremacy, and increasingly obvious to those who were capable of recognising it, was the Imperial theology that insisted that Rome ruled Palestine, for the good of the Jews, at the behest of the gods/God. The evident acceptance of this theology by the Jerusalem Temple-elite, in the form of a twice-daily sacrifices on behalf of Caesar and Rome, had to have impinged on Jesus' consciousness. Finally, and ensuring that Rome's rule would be sure to continue, there was the threat of terror. The occupation of Palestine, in the eyes of the Romans, ought to have been graciously received by its inhabitants but when it was not, as was case for example in 4 B.C.E. after Herod died, Roman brutality was visited on them. There would not have been a resident of Nazareth alive who had not personally survived, or heard about from a survivor, the retribution visited on nearby Sepphoris and its surrounding villages (including Nazareth) under Varus' son at the beginning of Jesus' own life. This episode alone would have terrorized the current generation into a fearful submission. When the fear of hunger, fear of family disintegration and fear of having possibly lost the means of relating to Yahweh are combined with this particular fear, the overall mood of the people must have been palpable. Jesus could not possibly have been unaware of the degree of fear that permeated his community and this is certainly reflected by his six-fold reference to fear in 6:25-34.

5.2 THE RHETORICAL STANCE OF JESUS IN MATT 6:19-34

Again the author of Matthew provides the location in which to set Jesus' teaching. He records that "Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John" (3:13).

Following the arrest of John, he “returned to Galilee” and leaving “Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake” (4:13). His relocation to Capernaum exposed him first-hand to the workings of the imperial-economy as it controlled the fish industry. Here were peasant fishermen suffering the same social and economic injustices as their agrarian brothers. Specifically they were withering under the destructiveness of the elites’ tax and debt mechanisms. From here Jesus launched his public teaching ministry that involved travel “throughout Galilee” (4:23).

Somewhere in Galilee, presumably not far from Capernaum (8:5), “he went up on a mountainside and sat down ... and he began to teach” (5:1) what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount.

In so doing, and as has already been established, Matthew presents Jesus as a speaker of exalted status. His bloodline extends right back to Abraham, through King David; his authority has been declared by the Baptist and confirmed by his own healings and exorcisms; his physical posture on the mountain has identified him as a type of Moses declaring a New Law. His ascribed and acquired status, in other words, identified him as a member of the social elite, however, and as we have already seen, his challenges to the crowd immediately constituted a breach of elite etiquette and so represented him as someone who was prepared to relate to this usually despised social grouping. His words also identified him as being someone out of the ordinary, a fact that was recognised by the crowd who “were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law” (7:28). This authority, made implicit by the content of the Sermon, is delegated by none other than “your heavenly Father” (ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος) (6:26). And so Jesus declares this Sermon from the perspective of God’s intermediary; he is the authorised Broker of the Divine Patron. Evidence for this abounds in the text itself. To begin with, Matt 6:19-34 is punctuated with imperatives. The audience is instructed: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but (do) store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς... θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ,) (6:19&20), and “do not worry about your life” (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν) (25), and “Look at the birds of the air” (ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) (26), and “See how the lilies of the field grow” (καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ) (28), and “do not worry” (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε/μὴ

οὐν μεριμνήσητε) (31+34), and “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”(ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ) (33). These are not idle suggestions, but categorical instructions. Then, as authorised Broker, Jesus speaks in the first person twice, “Therefore I tell you”(Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν/ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν) (25 & 29), claiming the same authority for himself as the heavenly Father possesses. Then there is the weight added by the inclusion of a complete argument in 25 – 34 that, as has been noted, represents the weightiest rhetorical device available to rhetoricians of the time. Finally, and as identified by the Social and Cultural Texture of the passage, there are strongly reformist and thaumaturgical tones in evidence here. Given the dynamics that Jesus has isolated in his society of widespread and selfish accumulation of earthly treasures, of ever increasing meanness, and of attempts to serve God and money simultaneously, he calls for a radical change of attitude and behaviour. The closing and clearly thaumaturgical tone then conveys an absolute assurance that, provided an individual seeks the rule and righteousness of God as an absolute priority, that individual need have no fear of material want since the heavenly Father will provide for him. Jesus rhetorical stance, then, is unquestionably authoritative but, and crucially, he speaks to the largely disenfranchised in his hearing as one of them and yet as brokering a patronage that will substantially and materially benefit those who are prepared to accept his message.

All of which speaks to the extraordinary vantage point from which Jesus both formulates and expounds the financial/material ethic of the Kingdom in the Sermon. He is both a descendant of Abraham who has personally experienced the ravages of an apparently failed covenant and the Divinely appointed messenger of a new dispensation in the coming Kingdom. From that unique vantage point he is able to identify the causes of the apparent failure and to isolate the safeguards that will guarantee the success of the new order. Both approaches are evident in the text of Matt 6:19-34 and in employing them Jesus adopts a prophetic stance. Following the pattern of Israel’s traditional prophets he speaks directly against those socio-economic attitudes and behaviour patterns which are causing havoc in the material, social and spiritual lives of God’s covenant people, and he holds out a message of hope for those who are prepared to change. If the audience will accept the entrance requirements of the coming Kingdom (5:3-10), and specifically, if individuals entering the Kingdom

adopt the heart-forms required to practice Kingdom economics (6:19-24), then the heavenly Father will provide what no human patron can i.e. material sufficiency (6:25-34). He is indeed “a prophet of the justice of the reign of God” (Herzog 2004: 47).

5.3 THE MATERIAL ETHIC OF JESUS IN MATT 6:19-34

The prophetic word of Jesus automatically focuses attention again on the audience to which it was addressed. As has been established, this audience consisted of a small group of Jesus’ disciples and a much larger and more varied group. Amongst the latter were Jews and Gentiles from a broad cross-section of Palestinian and, particularly, Galilean society. They consisted of representatives of the Pharisees, Sadducees, tax collectors, Roman soldiers and, now, peasant farmers, fishermen, share-croppers, day labourers and outcasts. A reading of the text, however, and as will be demonstrated shortly, gives us to understand that Jesus was also addressing groupings of people who were not necessarily physically present but to whom the message very specifically applied i.e. the Roman and religious elites. Certainly the presence of Pharisees and Sadducees indicates that the religious elites were represented in the crowd, but the Jerusalem power-elites themselves, and their Roman counterparts and masters, must have been part of Jesus’ target audience since they were largely responsible for the economic calamity befalling the vast majority of Palestinians. Jesus, as has been mentioned, was not averse to registering his protest against them, but had simply made “a conscious decision not to become directly embroiled in a confrontation with Herodian power” (Freyne 1988:140). Here he was, then, directly addressing the crowd in his presence and, from the margins of the countryside, indirectly addressing the power-elites in their gilded palaces and villas in the cities.

By virtue of the fact that something of the pre-understanding of the audience has been recovered, through the various analyses made above, the high-context and thus somewhat cryptic sayings of Jesus can now be re-read and understood in some measure as this address might have been heard by it’s original audience.

5.3.1 19-20

19(a). Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

(b) ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρω̄σις ἀφανίζει
καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσι.

20(a). θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῶ,

(b) ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρω̄σις ἀφανίζει
καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν.

21. ὅπου γάρ ἐστιν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου.

This pericope is addressed, as has been shown, to the entire audience. However, the specific content of 19(a) makes it plain that the intended audience is the absent elites for the simple reason that they were the only ones capable of accumulating material goods in Palestine. The peasantry, by way of sporadic rainfall, fallow lands, a three-tiered tax mechanism, banditry and the like, were losing the little that they had, to the point of destitution and hunger. The elites were the only ones doing the accumulating through the mechanisms of taxation, control of land, control of labour and manipulation of money. Furthermore, behind the mechanisms of accumulation, was the propaganda of both Rome and Jerusalem that justified such accumulation and, reinforcing this, the threat of violence that perpetuated and guaranteed that accumulation. The peasants were caught between the anger and fear of having to part with their surpluses and so face starvation, and the fear of reprisals if they did not do so.

In addition, the corrosive agents that attacked this wealth (moth and rust/ σῆς καὶ βρω̄σις) identify the forms in which it was being stored up (fine linen and gold), commodities that only the elites had the wherewithal to accumulate. By the same token, the open-door policy of the rural peasantry made it highly unlikely that thieves would need to tunnel into such homes in order to steal from them. Only the villas of the wealthy contained those commodities that required effort to misappropriate. Finally, the personal pronoun “for yourselves” (ὕμῖν) speaks directly to both the behaviour of the wealthy and to the problem that Jesus and the heavenly Father had with it. The elites were systematically stripping the countryside of its surpluses and

channelling them directly into their fortified cities and homes. This was rank selfishness and greed in that the wealth of a nation was progressively passing into the hands of some two percent of the population, while some ninety-two percent of that same population was being driven towards destitution as a result of land losses.

The importance to the elites of the commodities being accumulated, especially gold, has been identified. Gold was a mechanism by which the wealthy stored value i.e. it was the very means by which they made secure their ability to acquire further honour. With their growing fortunes taking this stable and material form, the elites were now apparently in the guaranteed position of being able to use their wealth to secure greater and greater honour in the eyes of society. So, for example, they were increasingly in a position to be able to enter, as patrons, those dyadic relationships that raised their social profiles and so increased their public measure of honour. By the same measure, this accumulation of stored value for the elites meant increasing shame for the peasantry. The more the peasants had to make use of these dyadic relationships, the further they became indebted to their patrons and so lost honour. No longer able to maintain their meagre social status as a result of debt and the resultant loss of land, the material, social and religious worlds of the peasants were disintegrating.

And here is the very core of this issue and the emergence of Jesus' ethic; wealth should not be generated or accumulated at the expense of another. When an individual acquires and holds wealth to the detriment of another individual, those activities are unacceptable to God. Which is not to say that wealth, even very large measures of wealth, are not to be generated and accumulated by individuals, but only that this cannot be done to the detriment and deprivation of others. This suggests that, in addition to earning and storing wealth in ways that do not hurt others, another element is required to make surplus earnings and savings pleasing to God. Such an element would be generosity, as indicated by both the prohibition against selfish accumulation (storing up for *yourselves*/ *θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν*) and the injunction towards generosity in 22 - 23. When an individual can make and save money without harming another, and when that money can be viewed as the very means through which to help others, by way of its generous deployment, then that individual is practicing a Kingdom ethic. Furthermore, such an ethic can be considered to be an enduring one, and not simply an interim or situational ethic, since it transcends

culture-specific views of wealth. In the case of first century Palestine the cultural view of wealth, and so the view in which this ethic was formulated, insisted that it existed in limited and finite quantities.

This contrasts radically with our twenty-first century Western view of the virtually limitless potential that exists to generate more and more wealth. And yet both worlds are characterised by chronic inequalities between those who hold wealth and those who do not. In both cases the problem does not lie with the available quantity of wealth, but with the relative quantity that is selfishly appropriated and employed by the power-elites. This inequality is always to the detriment of the powerless and can lead, as in the case of Palestine, to financial, social, religious and moral collapse.

The alternative, provided in 20(a), is for everyone to be storing up “for yourselves treasures in heaven” (ὑμῶν θησαυρούς ἐν οὐρανῶ). Again the fact that this “selfish” (for *yourselves*/ ὑμῶν) accumulation is not sanctioned in any way suggests that, whatever activities are envisioned in this exercise, such a storing up would involve not depriving or harming others. Just what those envisaged activities are is not specified but, given the textual context, it would be reasonable to assume that among them would be the socially-sensitive generation and employment of income by individuals on behalf of others. This would be supported by the underlying socio-religious context since it was the very neglect of the covenant obligations by the Temple-elite that was precipitating and accentuating the social crisis amongst the Jewish peasants of Palestine. No longer were debts being forgiven, no longer were bonded lands being returned, no longer was one generation safe from the debts of the previous generation. No longer, in other words, were the poor being taken care of by the wealthy, a fundamental covenant duty of all Jews as the people of Yahweh. In terms of the covenant Yahweh undertook to provide for His people, but only in as much as they then reciprocated by meeting their obligations to Him, partially expressed as the care of others (Lev 25-26) Given both these contexts, then, it would be reasonable to assume that laying up treasures in heaven would include a view of material wealth that would have it earned and employed for the material well-being of others.

In terms of the prevailing situation, however, this was not happening. Rather the surpluses provided by the peasants were making their way into the store-rooms of the

elites where, in the form of fine cloth and gold, they were receiving the attentions of moths, rust and thieves. The imagery here graphically portrays a restless, relentless erosion of those commodities in which the elites, literally, set such store. In so doing the imagery highlights the appalling waste of such under-utilised resources. They may well have been the apparent guarantees of elite status, but they were also being eroded because they were not being utilized as they had ultimately been designed to. Such a situation is graphically mirrored in James 5:2-3 where the lament, directed at the wealthy, concerns the fact that “Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days”. The specific reason given for this condemnation is the fact that this hoarding has been done at the expense of others – specifically “the workmen who mowed your fields” (v. 4) and the harvesters.

Such a situation provides the rationale for the concluding thesis of this pericope found in 21. The nature and location of a person’s storehouse will always reveal where that person’s affections lie. Where there is selfish material accumulation, the affections of the owner will always be focussed on generating and storing further wealth. Where there is determined accumulation of a treasure that rewards eschatologically, the owner’s affections will be on ensuring its increase. Here the true nature of the reality being addressed by Jesus finds expression. For all the apparent “worldliness” of earning and storing material wealth in the present time, its employment has consequences beyond time since it is under the stewardship of human beings, either for good or for evil. Employed for the good of others, and therefore for the building up of a more equitable society, material wealth can be timelessly rewarding for the wise steward. Employed selfishly, thereby resulting in its own erosion and the disintegration of an increasingly needy society, material wealth will be its own time-bound reward for the unwise steward as he frantically attempts to preserve and protect it.

5.3.2 22-23

22(a). Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματος ἐστὶν ὁ ὀφθαλμός.

(b) εἰὰν οὖν ἦ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς,

- (c) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται.
- 23(a). ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς σου πονηρὸς ᾖ,
- (b) ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται.
- (c) εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον.

Here the address is focussed more narrowly, to include each person within the physical and envisaged audiences, in that it addresses the inner motivations of the individual soul. With 19-21 providing the immediate pretext, the disposition of generosity or meanness concerning material wealth is examined. Employing the culturally recognizable metaphor of the “evil eye” (πονηρὸς) as being “an eye that enviously covets what belongs to another, a greedy or avaricious eye” (Hagner 1993:158), Jesus contrasts it with the “single” or “good” (ἀπλοῦς) eye. In both cases, and of the utmost importance, is the fact that both types of eyes are informed, are constituted, by a more fundamental inner disposition. Where an individual is possessed of a generous nature and disposition, then that individual’s eye – his outward gaze towards humanity - will be characterized by generosity and largess. Alternatively, where an individual is inwardly covetous and mean, then that individual’s eye – his view of others- will take on an element of selfishness and a reluctance to share. Presuming a dark and selfish disposition is present within an individual, then that darkness may deepen to the point of becoming all consuming. Which appears to mirror exactly what was taking place within many in the society of Jesus’ day. The behaviour of the elites, specifically the behaviour of taking more and more out of the economy and so away from the peasant classes, speaks of the existence of a rampant inner selfishness. In a similar way the emerging behaviour of many peasants in the form of what Oakman (in Neyrey 1993:75) calls “stinginess”, although entirely understandable under the circumstances, points to a deeper disposition of selfishness within those people. Furthermore, human nature being self-serving as it is, there is no reason to suppose that a peasant’s stinginess would not convert to rampant selfishness in the event of that person acquiring an elevated status within society, however unlikely that may have been in this context. The fact that the inner disposition of darkness (selfishness) can degenerate to a “great” darkness (τὸ σκότος πόσον) also suggests that it is capable of being reformed to the

point of becoming light (generosity), which is surely what Jesus is advocating in this particular teaching. When people recognize their own selfish behaviour for what it is, i.e. a physical expression of mean-spiritedness, then they are in a position to choose either to continue down the road of ever increasing darkness or to work back towards light. How they choose to behave, in terms of such a scenario, will probably be determined by where their hearts are and, most importantly, by who or what they have chosen to serve.

5.3.3 24

24(a). Οὐδείς δύναται δυσὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν·

- (b) ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει
- (c) καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει.
- (d) οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.

Again the focus here is upon all individuals within the two audiences, although the Temple-elite was probably particularly in Jesus' mind for reasons which will become apparent. The direction of the argument so far in this passage has been from prudent behaviour in terms of acquiring and storing material wealth to mean or generous behaviour in the social employment of such wealth, behaviour determined by a particular inner disposition. Now the absolute bedrock is reached in the sense that, depending on whether a person is serving God or mammon, their disposition will be set and their behaviour will automatically follow suite. When a person serves God then their inner disposition ought to be being increasingly transformed by the expectation of God, communicated through the word of His agent, i.e. towards a generous spirit regarding others. This generous spirit will inevitably be reflected in a behaviour of providing materially for others. This in turn will encourage a prudent view on how wealth ought to be earned and used – demonstrating where that person's heart lies. The person who serves mammon, conversely, will be corrupted towards increased inner selfishness, unavoidably expressed as meanness towards others. The pursuit of acquiring further wealth for selfish ends will then plainly indicate where their true affections really lie.

The major point of this teaching, however, is simply that it is just not possible to serve God and mammon simultaneously, for to serve one wholeheartedly and willingly will involve a love for that Person/thing and a hatred of the other i.e. it will involve a hopelessly and impossibly divided affection. Which is quite apparently what the Temple-elite was involved in. For the Roman elites there was no such dichotomous tension – they were serving mammon because they loved mammon, their dispositions were so set and their behaviour’s evidenced it in every way. The Temple-elite, however, were supposed to be the servants of Yahweh on behalf of the Jewish people and their mandate, from Yahweh, was: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5). The evidence of that love was meant to be manifested, amongst other things, as a care and concern for the material and spiritual well- being of those they represented before God. All the evidence from this specific context, however, pointed in exactly the opposite direction. The attention of the Temple-elite was focussed on the magnificence of the Temple and its opulent cultus, on the construction of palatial villas for themselves, on ensuring that their own land-holdings were being converted into estates, on the accumulation of sufficient wine from the tithe to ensure that their thirsts were always slaked. These behaviours spoke unequivocally of a love of mammon. Furthermore that love was being fuelled by the labour, the surpluses, the tithes and offerings, the debts of the peasants, peasants who were being exploited to the point of literal starvation and ruin. The behaviour of the Jerusalem elites spoke not of love for the peasants and their God, but of contempt and hatred for both.

Furthermore, the allegiance of Jerusalem to Rome, as the power that guaranteed Jerusalem’s supply of mammon, led to all manner of religious compromise. There can be no clearer expression of this than the fact that in Yahweh’s Temple sacrifices were being made twice a day to invoke his blessing upon Caesar and Rome. Yahweh was being beseeched to prosper Rome so that Jerusalem could continue to enjoy Rome’s patronage and benefaction. In terms of this arrangement it was Rome and not Yahweh who was really providing for them. Which is precisely what Josephus (*BJ* VI. 341) was saying when he suggested to his countrymen that any rebellion against Rome was “war not only against the Romans but also against God”. Jerusalem was trying to serve God and Mammon/Rome. In reality they were loving and being devoted to mammon/Rome and hating and despising Yahweh. Jesus is here calling for a decision to be made; it has to be mammon *or* Yahweh for “You cannot serve

both God and money”(οὐ δύνασθε θεῶ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ), which is why, ultimately, he ends this entire teaching by saying “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well”(ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν) (33).

5.3.4 25-34

25(a) Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν,

- (b) μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε [ἢ τί πίνητε],
- (c) μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε.
- (d) οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστὶν τῆς τροφῆς
καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος;

26(a) ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,

- (b) ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας,
- (c) καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά·
- (d) οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν;

27. τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ
πῆχυν ἕνα;

28(a) καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε;

- (b) καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς αὐξάνουσιν·
οὐ κοπιῶσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν·

29(a) λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν

- (b) ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομών ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ
περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων.

30(a) εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ

- (b) σήμερον ὄντα καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον
- (c) ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν, οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι;

31(a) μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες,

(b) Τί φάγωμεν; ἢ, Τί πίνωμεν; ἢ, Τί περιβαλώμεθα;

32(a) πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν·

(b) οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρήζετε τούτων ἀπάντων.

33(a) ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ]

καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ,

(b) καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

34(a) μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὐριον,

(b) ἢ γὰρ αὐριον μεριμνήσει ἑαυτῆς·

(c) ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς.

This final pericope, containing as it does the ultimate antidote to the fear that was overwhelming the society, is addressed primarily to those in the crowd who would heed Jesus' message and seek God's kingdom and righteousness. Given the nature of the imagery, which is almost exclusively agricultural, the assumption appears to be that the majority of the respondents would be peasants. This is apparently confirmed by the fact that they were also, largely, the ones who were so full of fear. The passage, however, is also indirectly addressed to Rome in that, as will be described shortly, it constitutes a deliberate refutation of Imperial theology.

In this passage Jesus speaks as the agent of the divine Patron in that, as mentioned above, his first-person declarations "I tell you" (λέγω ὑμῖν) (25(a) & 29(a)) are a claim to speak with his authority. As Divine agent he is addressing both the material situation that is causing the fear, and brokering a dyadic alliance that will have the heavenly Father relating to those who respond to His offer as his fictive-kin, His children. Jesus is uniquely suited to the role of broker since, by way of personal experience, he knows precisely what the people of Palestine are enduring and needing and, by way of his relationship with the heavenly Father whose authority he bears, he can broker the first-order resources which God controls and longs to provide. What the people of Palestine are enduring is material exploitation leading to fear, and what they are desperately requiring is a change in the status quo – both of which the heavenly Father can make provision for.

As has been established previously, the peasants of Palestine were assailed by fear from a number of different sources. There was widespread banditry, there was the fear of the fact that perhaps they had lost the mechanism through which to relate to God, there was the fear of losing status and family, there was the fear of Roman terror, but above all there was the fear of hunger, thirst and nakedness, as is evidenced by the content of this particular teaching. In specifically and repeatedly mentioning their fear of hunger, thirst and nakedness, Jesus is not necessarily of the opinion that these physical needs constituted the major problem facing the peasantry, but he is certainly acknowledging that the situation has been reached whereby hunger, thirst and nakedness were now life-threatening to the point of fear. For Jesus the problem facing the peasantry was the entire socio-political and economic order which, controlled by the elites, had propelled the peasantry into a situation of material want to the point of fear, as he has just made clear. He has categorically condemned the entire economic order that the elites have established in order to gather and store up at the expense of the rest of the population. He has isolated that inner disposition (greed) which has fuelled the establishment and perpetration of such an economic system. He has laid bare that idolatrous bedrock upon which the whole edifice has been constructed, the love of people for money. In so doing he has clearly pointed out that this material abomination has spiritual and ethical origins, which is why he insists on a spiritual and moral solution if the situation is to be reversed. Human beings are not to love money, they are to love God and seek His kingdom and righteousness above all else. Loving God and seeking His kingdom and righteousness suggests an acceptance, by the children of the Kingdom, that God's rule will be a transforming rule in which inner motivations, and their accompanying outer behaviours, will be right in God's eyes. As it relates to material wealth, what is right in God's eyes is that it is to be gained and grown with the well being of others always taken into account.

That God insists that it has to be this way is based on the worth that human beings have in His eyes. They are "much more valuable" (μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν) (26(d)) than the birds of the air; He will "much more" (πολλῶ μᾶλλον) clothe them than the grass of the field (30(c)). Whilst it is true that these references are specifically addressed to those who respond to the message, the very fact that Jesus is seeking his entire audience's positive response is proof enough in itself of the

universal worth of all people in God's sight. Just because everybody is of such worth, Jesus is calling for dramatic societal change. Certainly the worth of all people will require that, in compliance to God's will, the children of the coming Kingdom will need to adopt a financial/material ethic of this nature.

In spite of the fact that Jesus sees hunger, thirst and nakedness as a tragic outcome of an idolatrous financial system and ethic established and perpetuated by the elites, and not as their final cause, he directs his attention to these specific sources of fear

because the "heavenly Father knows that you need them" (οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρήζετε τούτων ἀπάντων) (32(b)). God knows what

human beings need in order to survive physically so as to be able to live in community with one another and with Himself. He knows that when hunger, thirst and nakedness threaten, however caused, they generate a fear that renders people incapable of living in dignity, in community and in a manner pleasing to Him.

Which is why Jesus offers six reasons to those who become the Father's children that they need have no fear of these things under his Patronage. First and foremost, human life, and the physical body which hosts that life, are much more than simply biological expressions of existence, and hence are much more important than such expressions (25(a)). The Roman and Jerusalem elites quite apparently didn't see things this way given the attention they were paying to all things physical and material. Then, the worth of human beings is far greater than the worth of the birds of the air that the Father feeds as a matter of course (26), something again that the elites did not evidently regard as applying to the peasantry. More, worrying is counterproductive in that it does not generate or guarantee continued life (27), even though it is entirely understandable under such circumstances. Concerning clothing, Solomon, for all his accumulated wealth, his royal estates and unprecedented honour, was not garbed as gloriously as the grass of the field is with its lilies, so why could not and would not God clothe His precious children of such little faith? (29 - 30), even given the existence of a regime similar to the one Solomon seems to have established. Also, again revolving around the need of the children to exercise faith, is the fact that pagans who do not know and who therefore do not have such a Father, quite patently spend their time trying to guarantee their own supply of material resources when the Father undertakes to simply give such commodities to His children (31 - 32). Then comes that specific undertaking; provided the children seek His kingdom and

righteousness, every material need of theirs will be met by Him, even if the societal patrons don't meet their obligations to their clients. Finally, worry is prohibited on the grounds that the future towards which it is usually directed is not under the control of the worrier, or indeed under the control of the apparently all-pervasive elites, but under the direct control of a loving Patron. That which is today's circumstance is all that God intends people to focus their attentions on (34).

Nowhere in this entire teaching does Jesus give a specific indication of exactly how God will make these material necessities available, however the undertaking given in 33 apparently provides a clue. The undertaking is that, provided His children seek His kingdom and righteousness, the necessities will assuredly be made available.

This very much echoes the covenant undertaking which God made to the people of Israel just prior to their entering the Land under Moses (Deut 28), and which was now apparently in tatters. In terms of that covenant God undertook to provide the physical conditions necessary to generate the essentials of life i.e. land, rain, fertility, etc.

However, the obligation for ensuring the continued availability of such ideal conditions rested with the faithfulness of the people towards God. More than that, the increase generated by the human utilization and manipulation of the natural conditions had to be employed and deployed equitably i.e. the poor, widows, orphans and aliens had to be looked after by way of particular harvesting techniques and land lying fallow and so producing re-growth, debts had to be forgiven, bonded lands had to be returned at Jubilee (Deut 15). Those who prospered from the material bounty of the land, in other words, needed to ensure that the bounty found its way equitably into the whole community. Which is very much what appears to be expected here of the children of the Kingdom. Seeking God's rule and righteousness would involve both recognition of the worth of people, together with the implementation of the financial/material ethic being articulated here, a situation that would guarantee the needs of others being met.

This immediately raises the issue of a counter-cultural community living within the broader community. In adopting (even re-adopting) the role of divine Patron and thus guaranteeing to meet those physical needs that many children were or would be unable to meet themselves, Jesus seems to be suggesting that God was hereby rendering those patron-client relationships, which formed the very basis of the political-economy, redundant for His children. With a Patron who would assuredly provide, albeit through others of His children, the fictive-family of God would

presumably have no need of other patrons. Perhaps this is the very situation described in Acts 4:32 where “No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had ... There were no needy persons among them”. Whether or not the early Church understood Jesus’ teaching in this way cannot, of course, be categorically claimed, however it is certain that Jesus had in mind an extended fictive-family which took very particular care of all its members and then looked outwardly to a wider need. A functioning patronage of this nature would certainly render the societal dyadic alliances less necessary and hence less destructive to those who had hitherto been exploited by them.

Which focuses attention on Rome and its ultimate patron, the Emperor. Cognisance has already been taken of the emergence of an Emperor cult under Augustus, a cult that found its *raison d’etre* in an already existent Imperial theology. In terms of this theology Rome ruled the world because the gods so willed it. The Emperor, in turn, became “the agent of the gods who transmit [ted] their favour and benefits to the people through his rule” (Carter 2001:24). Augustus, as the propaganda portrayed him, was Rome’s saviour and the Empire’s prince of peace. As such, and as patron of the Empire, he brought “well-being into a submissive world” (Carter 2001:70). Jesus is quite categorically challenging this claim here. There is indeed a universal and beneficent Patron, but the mediator, Jesus, alone represents Him on the earth. Furthermore this divine Patron, through His mediator, holds Rome’s elite and their economic system under condemnation in that, foundationally, it rests upon a love of Mammon. That Mammon is acquired and hoarded only for the benefit of the elite and not for all who fall within the Empire’s boundaries. Furthermore that Mammon is collected systematically, brutally and ruinously on behalf of this greedy elite from a powerless peasantry. This peasantry is regarded by such a greedy elite to be contemptible, useful only for wealth generation. The results of this contempt are everywhere evident, from the two roomed peasant dwellings to the swelling numbers of labourers seeking jobs for a day, from the number of debt scripts piling up in the archives to the number of title deeds in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals, from the sight of men eating the flesh of dead circus animals to the sight of men being crucified for daring to protest the injustice of it all. Such “well-being” an Empire could indeed do without, which is precisely what Jesus is teaching towards here.

5.4 A SUMMARY OF THE MATERIAL ETHIC OF JESUS

Each of the four periscopes of Matt 6:19-34 appears to contain a particular but interrelated ethical teaching or emphasis. In 19-20 the overarching ethic of the entire discourse is provided when Jesus insists that not under any circumstances and not by any social grouping is wealth to be earned and accumulated at the expense of others. Rather, and especially amongst the children of the coming Kingdom of God, true treasure is to be earned and stored up for use in the eschaton. This ethic thus stands as a rebuke of the Roman and religious elite's material practices since it was precisely because they were so selfishly storing up earthly wealth that the peasant classes in Palestine were suffering so terribly and fearing so greatly. Then in 22-23 Jesus insists that it is the responsibility of every individual to ensure that they maintain an inner disposition of material generosity towards others since the alternative is a slide into utter selfishness. The dire and tangible consequences of such selfishness, by the elites and as experienced by the non-elites, provides the specific context in which the ethic was formulated. Underlying this selfishness, and providing the moral and spiritual explanation for its rampant prevalence in society, 24 records Jesus teaching that it is precisely because the elites are trying to serve both God and Mammon simultaneously that the peasantry are undergoing such material and social trauma and experiencing such fear. This constitutes a severe rebuke of the material attitudes and actions of the Jerusalem and religious elites in particular since, as Jews, they knew full well that Yahweh alone was to be worshipped and served ahead of all other gods. Finally in 25-34 Jesus calls for faith in and faithfulness towards God as heavenly Patron and Father by the children of the Kingdom. Precisely because He is a faithful Father, and the controller of all first order resources, the children can be without fear of their material needs being met since they are of infinite worth to Him. Their chief responsibility, in terms of the patronage being brokered by Jesus, is to seek His Kingdom and righteousness – the very things that the Jerusalem elites had apparently long since abandoned.

This new promise of patronage is thus cast in precisely the same terms as the covenant mediated between God and Israel by Moses, some 1500 odd years earlier. In terms of the covenant Yahweh would be the assured provider of all of Israel's material needs, just as long as Israel faithfully served Him alone, specifically by looking to the material needs of the entire community. In terms of the new patronage, however,

Matthew portrays Jesus as someone of greater standing than the Baptist and even Moses in that through his brokerage Jesus was offering a dyadic relationship with the heavenly Father to literally anyone who would enter the Kingdom, irrespective of their ethnic, social or sexual status. This new community would then have the responsibility of seeking the Father's Kingdom and righteousness above all else and would demonstrate their faithfulness to Him by accumulating treasure in heaven, principally by way of material generosity towards and material and social care of others in the wider community, thereby greatly reducing the fear of many in society. As such this new community being called into existence by Jesus was to be the exact opposite of the community that the propaganda and practices of Rome claimed to have established on earth. The Roman view and version of the kingdom was one of a fabulously wealthy and exalted elite, living entirely selfishly at the expense of the rest of a suffering and fearful society in the present time. The Kingdom of God, as envisioned and enunciated by Jesus in Matt 6:19-34, must therefore be considered to be Jesus' total rejection of all that Rome propagated and preserved by way of a society, run for them in Palestine largely by their elite lackeys in Jerusalem.



CONCLUDING APPLICATION

The applicability of Jesus' teaching for our time is not hard to isolate. In a world of corporate takeovers where "surplus" staff are made redundant, where because labour supply exceeds demand, people are paid a wage they cannot survive on, where the industrialised North strips the emerging South of its raw material and its trained labour, where third-world debt incurred by corrupt dictators is still demanded of its impoverished peoples, where children are sold into sexual slavery because parents cannot afford to keep them, the foundational material ethic of Jesus, that money cannot be earned or employed at the expense of other human beings, needs to be re-broadcast.

Realistically, though, the message is as unlikely to be heard in Washington or Moscow just as it was unheard in Rome and Jerusalem. Which tends to suggest that when the powerless can be exploited no more, they will eventually follow the example of the peasantry of Palestine and wreak terrible vengeance on their oppressors. This message, however, ought to be being heard by the Christian church, particularly as it is found in the materially affluent West. This expression of the church bears many evidences of having imbibed the materialistic ethic of the day. From those elements of the electronic church which seem to be advocating that it is the re-birth right of Christians to be fabulously wealthy without social obligation, to the indifference of many local churches to the indigent who sleep on their premises at night, from the employment of staggering sums of money to accommodate a one hour a week audience, to the colossal land-holdings of the various Christian denominations, the evidence of a warped ethic is everywhere. The solution, of course, is as obvious and as simple as Jesus could make it: "But (you- all of you who are the Fathers children -) seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well".

The implementation of such a solution, however, will require a fresh and radical re-reading of this ethic. This is now possible, I believe, in light of the fact that New Testament scholarship has at its disposal the tools of, for example, socio-rhetorical and social-scientific analysis, by which to recover a far more dynamic and relevant context in which to understand the words of Jesus then and to apply them to ourselves today. At the most basic level, then, the responsibility of theological faculties and, particularly, of divinity seminaries must be to expose students to these relatively new

disciplines and methodologies so that constructive re-readings of the New Testament can take place in the wider sphere of local Christian churches. Local churches need, through their suitably equipped leaderships, to be re-reading the texts of the New Testament in the light of the interpretive methodologies that are now available.

In a middle-class and white South African Christian context, and the one in which I find myself located, perhaps the immediate emphasis of such a re-reading needs to be given to the recognition that we are, by and large, historically and in the present, a part of the elite of this nation. Our inherited status has been as a consequence of our ethnicity, and our attitudes and behaviours towards the ethnic non-elites have, in many ways, mirrored the examples of the Roman and Palestine elites in terms, specifically, of our accumulation and employment of material wealth. Most obviously there has been our dispossession of the indigenous peoples of this country of their land, and our exclusion of them from the economy, until recently, in all but the roles we have chosen for them i.e. as the instruments of our material enrichment. By first identifying with the injustices being perpetuated on the peasantry of Palestine by the elites there, it might be possible for us to identify with the plight of South Africa's peasantry in as much as we have had a part in their economic and social plight.

Then there is a need for recognition of the fact that, as white middle-class Christians, we have identified more readily with the community of the power elites than with the community of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have different skin-colours to our own. We have, in essence, denied the reality of what Jesus was proclaiming in the Sermon, i.e. that the children of the Father are the new community to which all believers belong, regardless of their status in the broader social sphere. Our identification in the future, and leading out of our repentance at how we have sinned in the past, needs to be with the community of Christ as it occurs throughout a wider society. This will not involve us in an exclusive relationship only with other Christians, but will be an attempt to identify with the entire "crowd", as the means by which to share the news of God's patronage brokered through Jesus.

Undoubtedly, too, there needs to be a recovery of the notion of the children of God as constituting a counter-cultural community. As those who profess a belief in the reality of an eschatological dimension to human existence, and as those who claim that our attitudes and behaviours in the present have consequences for that future, we

need to question whether our handling of money represents a serving of God or a serving of Mammon. Certainly there is evidence enough, as I have specified immediately above, to suggest that many Christians are attempting what Jesus tells us categorically is quite impossible i.e. we are attempting to serve both God and money. That this is taking place, as I believe it is, should immediately cause us to examine again the importance we assign to money as being that which ultimately provides our material security and social status. Many of us as white, middle-class Christians give evidence of the fact that God cannot be relied upon to keep His word, i.e. to provide for our material needs, as we understand them to be, and we are therefore making alternative arrangements for ourselves. We are storing up for ourselves treasures on earth. The manner in which we are making and storing up this treasure, and the selfishness that will inevitably and increasingly underpin this tendency, can only lead to behaviors that will progressively discount the importance of the human beings at who's expense these activities are carried out. We really do need to be reminded of the fact that it is only those treasures that are being stored up, in the present, for the age to come, that will be ours to really enjoy without regret. Such a storing up for ourselves treasures in heaven will automatically involve, as we have seen, an attitude towards and employment of treasures on earth in a way that other people are the beneficiaries of our shared material prosperity. When this happens then not only will we be affording recognition of the humanity of and to those who benefit from our sharing, but we will also be those who's attitudes and actions become the very grounds upon which Jesus is able to reassure such people: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry".

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