

# The synoptic Redaction of Mark 13:14-23

by  
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## Abstract

This research investigates the possible meaning of Mark 13:14-23 for its two synoptic interpreters, Matthew and Luke. There is consensus among Markan scholarship that Mark 13 is the most difficult passage in the entire Gospel of Mark. The focus of the study is not on what Mark intended with his discourse, but instead with how Matthew and Luke understood it. Hence, three related questions guide the research. Firstly, how was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Matthew? Secondly, how was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Luke? Thirdly, did Matthew and Luke interpret and utilise Mark 13:14-23 differently in terms of being anticipatory or descriptive regarding the events it refers to?

This study proceeds from the hypothesis that a redaction-critical study of Matthew and Luke can provide an important insight into the interpretation of Mark 13:14-23. It is contextualised with a brief overview of what Markan scholars have noted as problematic in the text, but the main focus is on how Matthew and Luke understood and dealt with these problems from their own contexts, by adequately clarifying what is vague and unclear in Mark. I believe the study contributes an important insight for the understanding of Mark 13:14-23.

## Opsomming

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die moontlike betekenis van Markus 13:14-23 vir sy twee sinoptiese interpreteerders, Matteus en Lukas. Daar is konsensus in die geleere van kenners van Markus dat Markus 13 die moeilikste gedeelte in die hele Evangelie van Markus is. Die studie gaan egter nie oor wat Markus met sy vertelling beoog het nie, maar oor hoe Matteus en Lukas dit verstaan het. Derhalwe rig drie verwante vrae die navorsing. Eerstens, hoe is Markus 13:14-23 deur Matteus geïnterpreteer en gebruik? Tweedens, hoe is Markus 13:14-23 deur Lukas geïnterpreteer en gebruik? Derdens, het Matteus en Lukas Markus 13:14-23 verskillend verstaan in terme van of dit antisiperend of beskrywend na die betrokke gebeure verwys?

Die studie se vertrekpunt is die hipotese dat 'n redaksioneel-kritiese ondersoek van Matteus en Lukas belangrike insigte kan bied vir die interpretasie van Markus 13:14-23. Dit word gekonteksualiseer met 'n kort oorsig van wat Markus-kenners as problematies in die teks, beskou. Maar die hoof-fokus is op hoe Matteus en Lukas vanuit hul kontekste hierdie probleme verstaan en aangespreek het, deur bv. uit te brei oor of te verander aan dit wat volgens hulle

vaag en onduidelik was. Ek glo die studie bied belangrike insigte vir die verstaan van Markus 13:14-23.

## List of Abbreviations

Dan. Daniel

Jer. Jeremiah

Mk. Mark

Matt. Matthew

Lk. Luke

Jn. John

Thess. Thessalonians

LXX. Septuagint

2SH. Two Source Hypothesis

DT. Double tradition

v. Verse

vv. Verses

B.C.E. Before Common Era

C.E. Common Era

NIV New International Version

ESV English Standard Version

Macc. Maccabees



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# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as introduction to this study by providing the background and motivation (1.2), a brief literature review (1.3), assumption of the study (1.5), methodology of the study (1.6) and contribution of the study (1.7). The chapter will provide a problem statement (1.4), an overview of Mark's context, purpose, theme (1.8) and its relation to the synoptic tradition (1.9).

## 1.2 Background to and motivation for the study

Some exegetical questions in New Testament scholarship remain relevant for contemporary scholarship even though they are old problems. They therefore justify fresh consideration. This study will undertake a synoptic analysis of Mark 13:14-23, one of these exegetically problematic texts, to attempt to understand this difficult text anew.

In his commentary on Mark, Hunter (1948:122) states: "Mark 13 is the biggest problem in the gospel" while Edward (2002:395) asks: "What is the meaning of this most difficult and debated text?" Lane (1974:466) states the problem as: "The language of v. 14a is cryptic and difficult. Yet its interpretation is crucial to the understanding of the discourse as a whole."

Beasley-Murray (1954: ix) notes that the complexity, and the many attempts to solve the problem posed by this text, have led some New Testament theologians to shy away from Mark 13 and other related gospel passages (Matthew 24 and Luke 21). This has left the text a puzzle for ordinary readers. The afore-noted comments by Edwards (2002:383) highlight the problem of the sayings and teachings of Jesus in what is the longest chapter in the gospel. While some of Mark's teachings are present in the other synoptic gospels, the formulation in Mark is the most difficult to understand. What, for instance, is to be understood by the 'abomination of desolation' v. 14, 'the tribulation' v. 24, the stars falling from heaven, and the 'proliferation of false prophets'?

### 1.3 Literature review

In his recent commentary on Mark, France (2002:499) laments that it is impossible to attempt to provide an adequate summary and critique of scholarly views on Mark 13 in the twentieth century due to the sheer volume thereof. Thus, this section will give a brief overview of the study of Mark 13 to identify the main interpretative issues and not attempt to summarize the entire scholarly debate about it up to the present.

Morris (1974:295) notes that there are puzzling exegetical problems in this pericope in all three synoptics. Especially noteworthy are the problems posed by the fact that part of the address seems to apply to the end of all things and part of it to the destruction of Jerusalem. Ellis (1998: 239-41) also notes that the discourse presents us with problems, but he sees two elements which should be considered. He notes that while Jesus did announce a coming end of the world and did bring into consideration a considerable and indefinite interval before the end, the discourse expresses Jesus's certainty of ultimate triumph despite dark days ahead. It concludes with a rousing challenge to his followers to be watchful and not let themselves be weighed down with the difficulties of this world. Early studies of Mark 13 were primarily concerned with how the chapter came to be in the literary form it is and the origin of the materials it contains. In the latter part of the twentieth century, in accordance with the perspective of redaction criticism and subsequent trends in literary criticism, attention shifted to the text specifically as it stands, what it means and why Mark included it in this form at this point in his gospel (France 2002:499-500). In this regard, Colani (1864) earlier advanced what he called the 'little apocalypse theory,' which exercised a strong influence on latter attempts to understand it. As noted by Beasley-Murray (1954:x), Colani was not the sole pioneer of this approach to Mark 13 as an apocalyptic text, as there had been discussions and literature available on the subject prior to Colani. Colani, however, tried to present the literary genre of Mark 13 as a solution to the problem of its interpretation.

In the twentieth century some of the leading Markan scholars did further work on the problem. One such scholar was Benjamin W. Bacon. In his book 'The Gospel of Mark' published in 1925, Bacon compared Markan eschatology to that of other synoptic writers. Bacon also compared Markan eschatology to that of Paul. Bacon (1925:69-319) found some eschatological similarities in the Pauline corpus with that of Mark. He suggested that the reason for these similarities between synoptic and Pauline writings can be explained by their use of the same

oral and written sources. Bacon went on to argue that the synoptic authors and Paul interpreted these sources to suit their respective situations and traditions.

In terms of dating the Gospel of Mark, Bacon concludes that if the foreknowledge of Jesus and the accuracy of the record are rated high enough and no amount of evidence in the record of association with known events will prove a subsequent date. As it leaves no room for amendments by modifications to the occasion. But such rigid conventions are no longer acceptable. Moreover, the normal instructions for prophetic utterance and transmission must be followed as in other documents or it must be honestly acknowledged that dates for the gospel writings are not recognised by critical methods but are presumed without confirmation (Bacon 1925:69).

In response to this submission, Beasley-Murray (1954:89) asserts that when assuming that every prophecy is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, the only duty of those studying the eschatological discourse is to date its various sections, which is exactly what Bacon is concerned with. One must concede that Bacon does devote a few lines to the ethos of Mark 13. In his view its unauthenticity is clearly demonstrated by its deliberate use of signs of the end – exactly what Jesus warned his disciples against in vv. 21-22.

Won (2009:33-34) notes that Weeden (1968:150-151), however, argued that Mark used traditions that were transmitted separately. As a result, each author changed the common traditions as they wanted to. According to Weeden their common source was the Danielic prediction of a future profanation of the temple. Another work to be considered here is that of Beasley-Murray, 'Jesus and the future', published in 1954. Towards the end of this volume Beasley-Murray (1954:226-244) pays close attention to the relation of Mark 13 to other canonical and non-canonical documents. In terms of the canonical documents (the focus of this study), Beasley-Murray notes that the common view upheld among earlier critics was that the Lukan version of the eschatological discourse (Luke 21) is a modification of the Markan version. According to Creed (1930:235), the dependence of Luke on Mark here is 'not doubtful.' Bacon (1925:125) also considered Luke's version to be a later one since 'from beginning to end it reads like one long *vaticinium ex eventu*.' Burkitt (1911:115), however, states that what concerns him is not that Luke changed so much of Mark, but that he invented so little. The wording of speech in Luke is quite different from the wording in Mark, but the general sense is not. The general tenor of Luke 21 and Mark 13:4-37 is the same.

Despite the view that Luke used Mark, there has never been a strong movement amongst scholars to assert the priority of Luke over Mark. In terms of the relation of Mark 13 to Matthew 24, it has also been the consensus of scholarship that Matthew used Mark. Streeter (1911:183) could find only one point in which Matthew appeared to be more original than Mark in that he includes εὐθὺς in Matthew 24:29 in the place of Mark's ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. Streeter, however, thought that Matthew may have employed an independent source of discourse containing textual variations, thus not changing the words of Mark itself.

According to Beasley-Murray (1954:228), Bacon found it necessary to locate Matthew 24:15, which refers to the historical profanation of the synagogue in Caesarea, at the outbreak of the Jewish rebellion. He regarded Matthew 24 as an adaptation of Mark 13 of the book of Daniel. According to Bacon he, by detaching the discourse from the temple prophecy, made the passage refer exclusively to the end of the world. Few commentators have followed Bacon in this interpretation. In contrast, there are several scholars like Weiss, Bousset, Julicher Moffat and Hauck who maintained that Matthew was the more original author in the sense that according to these scholars Matthew was written first of the synoptics. Others believed that Matthew also had access to other sources with which to correct Mark.

What further complicates the matter, is the fact that similar texts appear Matthew 10:17-22 and in Mark 13:9-13. The question thus arises whether Matthew transferred this passage from the discourse found in Mark 13 or whether he found it in another source. If the latter assumption is correct that Mark inserted the pericope into his discourse, where did he get it? Or is it Matthew who omitted it from chapter 24 to avoid repetition? There are no certain answers to these questions. Overall it seems more probable<sup>1</sup> that Matthew found the pericope in a separate source and included it in the mission charge than that he transferred it from Mark 13 to his discourse (Beasley-Murray 1954:227-28).

However, France (2002:498-499) notes that it has been increasingly recognized in recent studies that to describe Mark 13 as 'apocalyptic' is misleading. On the literary level a brief discourse set like this during a historical narrative bears little resemblance to the type of

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<sup>1</sup> This is probable since there is a lot of material in Matthew that we don't find in Mark. Carson (1984:248) finds the closest parallel to Matthew 10:17-25, about the persecution of disciples and their arraignment before trials, in the Olivet Discourse (Mk 13:9-13, Lk 21:12-19, and Matt 24:9-14). Hence, Carson concludes that the most commonly accepted theory is that Matthew depended on two-principal sources (i.e. Mark and Q) to compose his work.

‘apocalypse’ which Jewish writers were producing around the first century C.E. or even the document which became the last book of the New Testament. Nor does it contain many familiar apocalyptic features such as the attribution to an ancient prophetic figure, the heavenly journeys and angelic revelations, the symbolism and future into a coherent scheme. France further argues that what Mark 13 shares with some apocalyptic writings is a focus on what will happen soon, a sense of climactic events and impending judgement, and a call to faithfulness and alertness in a time of disintegration of the status quo. France thus acknowledges the fact that to an extent Mark 13 has apocalyptic *characteristics* in terms of the content, even if it is not fully apocalyptic in terms of literary form<sup>2</sup>. Its use of familiar language from prophetic and apocalyptic parts of the Old Testament does not make it an ‘apocalypse’, and to label it as such, is to risk seriously distorting the focus of a discourse which is more concerned with discouraging premature eschatological excitement than encouraging it. Its focus is more on the pastoral need to prepare disciples for difficult times ahead than to explain the future course of events.

Most studies related to this chapter of Mark 13 concentrate on the background of the chapter (France 2002:497-500). As it stands in Mark the discourse takes its cue from Jesus's prediction of the destruction of the temple, **but opinions are divided over whether it remains focused on the destruction of the temple or if the discourse embraces a longer eschatological perspective extending up to the Parousia**. If it is the latter, several questions arise. At what point in the text is the transition made? Is there a relationship between the destruction of the temple and the Parousia? If there is one, what is the nature of the relationship?

Scholars also differ on the *interpretative perspective* of Mark 13. In this regard, scholars generally fall into two interpretative categories, namely the *anticipatory* and *descriptive* interpretations. The anticipatory perspective generally locates the writing of this chapter prior to the destruction of the temple. The chapter thus looks forward to the future. Wright (1996:340), for example, argued that ‘there is no need to treat this passage as an early Christian apocalypse which Jesus could not and would not have spoken.’ The descriptive interpretation on the other hand places the writing of this chapter during or after the destruction of the temple. Nel (2014:9) a lecture at NWU, for example observed that while the Markan Jesus employs

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<sup>2</sup> A discourse that is constructed primarily around second-person imperatives addressed to disciples furthermore does not look syntactically like what is normally understood as an “apocalypse.”

apocalyptic language, it creates an anti-apocalyptic text which addresses the overheated eschatological expectations the disciples had. He believes the text refers to the time of the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E.

Twentieth century views of Mark 13 generally locate *the whole discourse* in relation to the temple's destruction with a number of scholars placing the discourse in the post-temple fall period. They also tend to dissociate it from the Parousia references (Wright 1996:339-366). For them it is not clear that Mark expected the fall of the temple to usher in the consummation. They thus tried to eliminate the ambiguities of Mark 13 from the perspective that it mainly speaks about the destruction of the temple. The evidence, however, seems to indicate that Mark was deliberately incorporating the very ambiguity which scholars seek to eliminate. According to Geddert (1989:257), the ambiguity of the relation between Mark 13 and the destruction of the temple should be retained because it was Mark's intention to keep it this way. For France (2002:505) the discourse should therefore be treated as a unified whole. A number of scholars accept France's view and seek to investigate vv. 14-23 in the context of chapter 13 and the book as a whole.

Determining the interpretive perspective of the chapter is thus crucial for its interpretation. As one can see from this brief overview, much has been written concerning Mark 13 without a consensus being achieved. This study will attempt to contribute to this debate by studying how Mark 13 was understood by both Matthew and Luke.

## 1.4 Problem statement

In view of the prior studies outlined above, **the focus of this research concerns the meaning of Mark 13:14-23 for its two synoptic interpreters. The focus of the study is thus not on what Mark intended with his discourse, but instead how Matthew and Luke understood it.** The following three related research questions will guide the research:

- i. How was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Matthew?
- ii. How was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Luke?
- iii. Did Matthew and Luke interpret and utilise Mark 13:14-23 differently in terms of it being anticipatory or descriptive regarding the events it refers to?

## 1.5 Assumption of the study

This research will proceed from the assumption that **a redaction-critical study of Matthew and Luke (who were the first extant sources to interpret Mark) can provide important insights into the interpretation of Mark 13:14-23 by Jesus followers in the first century.**

The validity of this hypothesis will be critically considered after the study has been concluded.

## 1.6 Research design and methodology

Over centuries the search for the meaning of biblical texts has been a matter of great interest in biblical scholarship. This is in fact largely what biblical scholarship is about. What does this ancient text mean now and what did it mean in its original context? Answering the related questions of how we read, understand and handle the texts that were written in different eras from different contexts enable a responsible interpretation of texts. Recently there has been a dramatic expansion of approaches used in interpreting biblical texts in response to these questions.

Mickelsen (1963:3) argues that interpretation has to do with the meaning of the text. Therefore, the interpreter must be careful not to distort the meaning of the text. For him the task of interpreters of the Bible is firstly to investigate the author's intended meaning for his first audience. Only then can its meaning be conveyed to the modern reader. On the other hand, Nel (2014:208-09) reminds us that the exegesis of a biblical text has become an intricate enterprise demanding a cautious statement of one's presuppositions as well as one's choice of exegetical practices.<sup>3</sup> Nel notes that the circumstances 'behind' the text and the role of the reader 'in front of the text' are also important in the hermeneutical process, but cannot form the point of departure for the process of interpretation. In studying literary work, the process of reading and understanding always starts with the text and not the circumstances of the author or reader.

For the purposes of this study (i.e. the synoptic reception and redaction of Mark 13:14-23) the methodology that will be used is **redaction criticism**. Redaction criticism will be used to

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<sup>3</sup> Nel cited Mosala (1986:22) with regards to the choice of methodology. Mosala asks this challenging question: 'The question is on whose side, politically and socially, are these critical methods in our society?'



determine how Luke and Matthew interpreted Mark 13:14-23 to ascertain how they understood it in relation to the events it describes or predicts. **Stated differently: Did they see what Mark predicted as having already happened, so they can add details? Or are all the events in Mark still predicted as occurring in the future according to them?** The study will also attempt to determine if the identified perspective is applied to all the events in Mark 13 (i.e. did Matthew and Luke see them as one event or as a series of events?). This analysis will help the researcher to understand if Mark 13 is talking about a single event (the Parousia) or two (the destruction of the temple and the Parousia) **according to his synoptic interpreters.**

In terms of the chosen methodology the following will be considered: Firstly, the origins of redaction criticism, secondly, the development thereof, and thirdly the practice or steps of redaction criticism.

### 1.6.1 Origin of redaction criticism

Smalley (1977:181) reminds us that in the last century New Testament scholarship was preoccupied with the origins of the gospels, specifically the synoptic gospels. Then the focus shifted to the search for the original form of the teachings of Jesus. Following the work of form criticism, the focus shifted to redaction criticism. However, prior to form criticism, literary criticism<sup>4</sup> was already an established method. Thus, these critical methods belong together. Literary criticism gave birth to form criticism and then form criticism<sup>5</sup> and to redaction criticism. They can thus be used to complement each other. Perrin (1969: vii) suggests that for the sake of definition, analysis and clarification, it is wise to treat them separately but that in actual practice the three are normally used together. Smalley (1977:182) briefly discusses how redaction criticism arose. He argues that it arose after the Second World War and is associated with three prominent German New Testament scholars (Gunther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann and Willi Marxsen). These scholars worked on the synoptic gospels independently of each other. The term *Redaktionsgeschichte* (*redaction criticism*) was first

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<sup>4</sup> Perrin (1969: v) Literary criticism traditionally concerned itself with such matters as the authorship of the various New Testament books, the possible composite nature of a given work and the possible identity and extent of sources of a certain document.

<sup>5</sup> Form criticism concerned itself largely with investigating the individual units – stories and sayings – in the synoptic gospels (Perrin 1969: vi).

coined by Willi Marxsen (1956) in his commentary on the Gospel of Mark, even though he was not the developer of this methodology.

It is important to note what was new about this methodology. Firstly, Marxsen and Conzelmann restored the evangelists' role from merely being *Sammler* to being individual theologians. Secondly, while form criticism emphasizes the isolation of the gospel pericopes, redaction criticism was better able to ascertain the editorial work of the evangelists in joining these pericopes together. Credit is due to Marxsen and Conzelmann for their distinct works that paved the way for the significance of this area of study to become clear (Stein 1991:24). Conzelmann defines *Redaktionsgeschichte* as simply the means to discover that which distinguishes the evangelists from their sources. Meanwhile, Marxsen mentions three different "*Sitze im Leben*" that should be distinguished in the investigation of the gospels.

Firstly, he refers to the "*einmaligen situation der Werksanmtheit Jesu*", that is the relationship of the gospels to the particular historical or earthly Jesus and his ministry. The second he refers to, is "*die Situation der Urkirche*", that is the attempt to discover the content of the early church by the investigation of the units handed down by tradition. The third "*Sitz im leben*" Marxsen called "*Redaktionsgeschichte*", which he defines as the attempt to ascertain the unique views of the writers of the new documents. The third was Marxsen's new contribution, as the first two were already covered by form criticism. Whereas form criticism is primarily concerned with the shaping and formation of oral tradition, *Redaktionsgeschichte* is primarily concerned with what the individual writers of the gospels did with the materials (both oral and written) available to them (Stein 1991:25).

Thus, this method of interpretation seeks to understand the reformulation of traditions, both written (source) and oral (form), for new applications. It refers to the method of studying the New Testament by investigating the way in which biblical writers reformulated their sources to create their own view point (Rothschild 2010:22). Tan (2001:599) argues: "Whereas source criticism fragmented the gospels into diverse hypothetical sources and form criticism delves into the oral period behind the text, redaction criticism investigates the theological emphases of the evangelists". Carson, Morris and Moo (1992:21) agrees that redaction criticism focuses on the literary and theological contributions of the authors of the gospels. Stein (1991:32) argues "that *Redaktionsgeschichte* seeks to discover the qualitative and quantitative uniqueness that distinguishes the evangelists from their sources and having ascertained these, it then seeks to ascertain the *Sitz im Leben* out of which each evangelist wrote and the particular purposes

for which he wrote his gospel”, Smalley (1977:181) notes that redaction criticism and composition criticism<sup>6</sup> are to be treated differently even though they are closely related.

### 1.6.2 Developments of redaction criticism

Tan (2001:601-606) surveys the recent developments of redaction criticism under four subheadings.

The first is methodological uncertainty in the redaction criticism of Mark’s gospel. Due to the lack of a scholarly consensus regarding the proper working criteria to be applied in ascertaining Mark’s redaction, it has become a complicated matter. Those who have attempted to identify Markan redaction, ignore the methodological difficulties present in this discipline.<sup>7</sup> Stein (1971:181-98) highlights the difficulties of Markan redaction as follows: (i) Mark does not state his purpose for writing as Luke 1:1-4 did. (ii) No Markan extant sources exist for comparison as Matthew and Luke have Mark as a common source. (iii) The ‘markanising’ by Mark of both oral and written traditions which were available to him, which complicates identifying the Markan creation of material even further since Markan vocabulary and style are not reliable indicators of the Markan origin of material. On the other hand Stein suggests eleven criteria for the investigation of Markan redaction by means of identifying the Markan components: (1) seams, (2) insertions, (3) summaries, (4) modifications of material (detectable when Matthew and Luke appear to follow an older form of the tradition rather than Mark), (5) selection, (6) omission, (7) arrangement of material, (8) introduction, (9) conclusion, (10) vocabulary, and (11) Christological titles. Stein recommends the value of these eleven criteria except that he views the omission of material as speculation since we do not know what Mark

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<sup>6</sup> According to Smalley (1977:181-182), composition criticism examines the arrangement of the material, an arrangement which is motivated by the theological understanding and intention of the evangelist. He further defines redaction criticism as the detection of the evangelist’s creative contribution in all its aspects to the Christian tradition which he/she transmits. He refers to both criticisms in his article under one term, redaction criticism, even though he understands them to be different.

<sup>7</sup> It was RH Stein who considered the difficulties involved in the discipline: “The Proper Methodology for ascertaining a Markan *Redaktionsgeschichte* (Redaction History)” (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1968), again, in *NouT* 13 (1971) pp 181-198, and it was reprinted as “Ascertaining a Marcan Redaction History” in *Gospels and Traditions: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991) pp 49-67.

chose to omit. Stein also sees little value in evaluating Mark's conclusion because Stein believes that the original ending of Mark is missing and sees no basis for speculating on the possible creation of pericopes by the evangelist. However, if the remaining recommendations are taken together, they form a coherent set of criteria for carrying out a restricted form of Markan redaction criticism.<sup>8</sup>

In the refinement of Markan redaction criticism there is, however, still a lack of consensus amongst scholars. Tan (2001:602-603) asserts that, "the lack of consensus among theorists is not surprisingly, mirrored at the practitioner's level. If the criterion for success of a theory is uniform adoption in practice, the various proposals for refining Markan redaction have doubtlessly failed." Tan suggest two consequences of the lack of consensus in Markan redaction-critical studies. Firstly, Markan redaction critical studies have produced opposing results. Secondly, they are dominated by the thematic criterion<sup>9</sup>. The latter is what Black criticises as that which tacitly short-circuits the necessity in investigators' research of differentiating tradition from redaction. Black argues that it is assumed by investigators that the material in Mark which conveys characteristic theme(s) is by *definition* redactional. Consequently, scholars end up finding what they set out to find, that is the characteristic themes (that they brought to the task of redaction) influence their use of the redaction critical tools and mould their exegetical outcomes.

Secondly, the abandonment of redaction criticism and its replacement by literary criticism. Strict<sup>10</sup> editorial redaction is declining not only in redactional work on Mark but also in the

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<sup>8</sup> Tan (2001:602) notes that other scholars followed in the same path as Stein and proposed other refinements towards obtaining a proper set of criteria for distinguishing tradition and Markan redaction. In 1972 JC Little responded to Stein's proposal and agreed with Stein on the importance of Mark's arrangement of material. However, because Little believed that Mark exercised great freedom in composing and rewriting tradition in his own style and language, he expressed little confidence in the usefulness of the criteria of seams, insertions, summaries, modifications of material, vocabulary and Christological titles. In 1973 L. Gaston provided a computer analysis of the synoptic vocabulary as a tool for distinguishing tradition and redaction. In 1987 EJ Pryke assumed only Markan seams (which link one pericope with another) as the starting point for determining Markan redaction. DB Peabody's work (also published in 1987) sought to identify recurrent features in Mark. Nevertheless, Peabody essentially abandoned efforts to distinguish between redactional features in the Markan text and those from Mark's tradition.

<sup>9</sup> Black, (2012:171). *The disciples according to Mark: Markan redaction in current debate*.

<sup>10</sup> Which continues to distinguish redaction from tradition and locates the unique theology of the evangelist only in the redactional material.

gospels in general (apart from the study of Q). The disregard of redaction criticism and its replacement by a diversity of literary criticisms stem in part from the supposed methodological problems related with using redaction criticism to study Mark. It is also associated with a tendency to move away from author-centred interpretation and the loss of interest in discovering the history behind the text. Instead, the focus of these new ‘criticisms’ is on the perceived text and the reader. History is considered at best irrelevant if not inherently irrecoverable. Indeed, some literary critics have gone as far as to declare the ‘death’ of redaction criticism (Tan 2001:603).

Thirdly, expansion into composition analysis. In practice this involves adopting other methods in conjunction with redaction criticism. The essential difference between proponents of abandoning redaction criticism and advocates of composition analysis is that they differ over whether redaction criticism retains some value if expanded to accommodate other methods that are now considered more fruitful. One proponent<sup>11</sup> of composition analysis has even claimed that one stream of redaction criticism has always been compositional in its orientation and that this stream was the progenitor of the newer criticism.

Fourthly, debate over redaction criticism among evangelicals. In the 1970s and 80s many evangelical scholars began to adopt mild or moderate forms of redaction criticism. The major controversy that erupted from the publication of R Gundry’s commentary on Matthew, highlighted the issues underlying this method. The spectrum of evangelical responses to redaction criticism can be classified into three general categories: (i) total repudiation, (ii) qualified acceptance and (iii) ready adoption. It appears that Gundry falls in category 3 in even accepting the assumption that Matthew composed material *de novo* apart from historical reality.

The essays of DA Carson and G Osborne on the relation of the evangelical movement to redaction criticism provide a convenient entry point to the discussion. Major issues discussed by Carson and Osborne include (1) whether sceptical views of the truthfulness of scripture are

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<sup>11</sup> Donahue (2002:27-36) “Redaction Criticism” claims that redaction criticism was understood differently in Germany and in the United States. In Germany it was primarily a historical discipline where the focus was on the origin and settings of the traditions in order to understand the conditions and historical situations in which these traditions developed, and which explain the final edited text better. In the US, redaction criticism developed primarily as an exercise in literary criticism, where the emphasis was on the final product as a unitary composition with concern for the overarching themes and motifs and for the structure of the whole and of individual parts.

inextricably tied to the method; (2) whether one should employ criteria to determine the authenticity or inauthenticity of portions of scripture; (3) the relative usefulness of the method for discovering patterns and emphases in the gospel; and (4) implications for inerrancy. Carson and Osborne disagree on the relative usefulness of redaction criticism (Osborne sees more value in it). Moreover, Carson warns against using the criteria of redaction criticism to establish authenticity or inauthenticity, since these criteria presuppose critical scholarship's tenets on how the tradition developed. Osborne, however, advocated a restricted use of criteria to defend the authenticity of certain sayings.

### **1.6.3 The practice and steps of redaction criticism**

According to Carson, Morris and Moo (1992:105-107), redaction criticism considers the different steps that the evangelists undertook in redacting the material they utilised. Firstly, the material included or excluded. Secondly, the arrangement of the material they included. For example, some of the narratives in Mark appear in different contexts in Matthew and Luke. Thirdly, the seams that indicate the material the evangelist used to stitch his traditions together. Fourthly, additions and omissions of the material from other sources like Q. Lastly, the change of wording. Due to the limited nature of the study (the focus is on one chapter) the researcher will not investigate other areas of the redaction process such as patterns in how a source is used in different sections of a gospel or the settings to produce the gospel writings. However, much has been said in defence of redaction criticism.

It is also necessary at this juncture to consider the weaknesses of redaction criticism as proposed by its opponents. There are five major criticisms against this approach. Carson, Morris and Moo (1992:108-109) presents these arguments while also attempting to respond to each criticism.

Firstly, the opponents argue that redaction criticism depends for its validity on our ability to distinguish between tradition and redaction. We need a clear idea of the sources a given evangelist used before we can begin speaking about his modifications of these sources. Secondly, redaction critics too often assume that all the changes an evangelist made to his tradition were theologically motivated. Many no doubt are, but many others and particularly minor changes affecting one or two words are often simply stylistic in nature. In other cases, even major additions may be due not to theological concerns, but to historical interest. Thirdly,

redaction critics have sometimes equated “*redactional* emphases” with the evangelist’s theology. Fourthly, the identification of the setting of a particular gospel based on the author’s theology is often far more specific than the data allows. Finally, redaction criticism is often pursued in such a way that the historical trustworthiness of the gospel material is called into question. It is not so much that redaction criticism seeks to prove the unhistorical nature of the changes introduced by the evangelists. Rather, many redaction critics assume that the evangelists were not much concerned with it. In this regard Carson, Morris and Moo (1992:107) argues that it is unfair to generalise and transfer the way many scholars pursue redaction criticism to the method itself. Redaction criticism is not *anti-historical* per se.

This study will investigate Matthew and Luke’s literary and theological reasons for the way in which they interpreted Mark 13:14-23. At the same time, the study will seek to investigate literary and exegetical problems of Mark 13:14-23. As stated in the problem statement (1.3) **the focus of the study is not on what Mark intended with his discourse but instead *how Matthew and Luke understood it*. But the purpose of the initial close reading of Mark 13:14-23 is to search for exegetical problems. Chapters 3 and 4 will investigate how Matthew and Luke dealt with these problems.** It can, for example, not simply be assumed that Mark and his synoptic interpreters understood the words of Jesus which they used as referring to the same past or future events. They may in other words have had different perspectives thereof (e.g. on if the events are past or future) and different understandings of which events were being referred to (e.g. a prediction of the Parousia in Mark may have been understood by Matthew as a reference to the destruction of the temple).

## **1.7 Contribution of the research**

This study intends to contribute to the understanding of how Mark 13:14-23 was understood by his synoptic interpreters especially whether they understood Mark’s perspective as a descriptive or anticipatory one.

## **1.8 Mark's context, purpose and theme**

No ancient or contemporary writings emerge from a vacuum. Whether social, political or religious, every written work is or was written within a particular time and life setting. This is true of all the writings of the Christian Bible. So, for the responsible reading and interpretation of any written document, one needs to understand the context behind that particular document. Evans (2001: lxxxix) asserts that there can be no answer to the question “what the purpose of Mark is?” apart from the appreciation of the political and social reality of the first century Greek and Roman worlds.

### **1.8.1 Mark's context**

Telford (2002:1-9) argues that the historical context is very important for understanding the meaning of the biblical text. In the case of Mark's gospel there have been many questions about its context. Where was Mark when he wrote his gospel? For whom was he writing?

In the light of various proposals, traditionally Mark's historical context is assumed to be Rome. Martin (1972:69) asserts that, “from the evidence both direct and inferential the most viable conclusion to be drawn is that part at least of the historical setting of this gospel is to be found in the conditions (both internal and outside) of the church at Rome in the middle of the sixth decade of the first century.” Even though we cannot prove it, Rome remains the most popular location for the origin of Mark in Markan scholarship.

### **1.8.2 Mark's purpose**

Carson (1992:100) argues that Mark's purpose is difficult to discern. However, the interest in this question has been high because of its importance in redaction criticism. Redaction criticism typically stresses various theological purposes in the writing of the gospels and this has certainly been the case with Mark. These proposals can be grouped into three groups in terms of their focus. The first focuses on eschatology; the second on Christology and the third on apologetics.

A representative interpretation of the first approach is that of Willi Marxsen (who initiated the modern redactional study of Mark). Marxsen (1969:4-5) thought that Mark wanted to prepare Christians for Jesus's imminent Parousia in Galilee. He argued that Mark focuses on Galilee



as the place where Jesus meets with His disciples as opposed to Jerusalem where Jesus is rejected and killed. Jesus's command to His disciples to meet him in Galilee (14:28, cf. 16:7) was seen by Marxsen as a prediction to Mark's community of Jesus's glorious return to them. However, according to Carson (1992:100), the meeting with Jesus to which these verses refer, is clearly a post-resurrection meeting, not the Parousia. Moreover, the geographic contrast that Marxsen (and some before him) discerned can also be explained as a reflection of the actual course of Jesus's ministry and not necessarily a theologically motivated invention of Mark.

The second interpretative tradition is represented by Weeden (1971:28), who found in Mark a polemic against a 'divine man' (*theios aner*) Christology, a view of Jesus as a wonder-working hero denied or neglected until his suffering and death. In response to this Weeden asserted that Mark wrote the gospel which emphasized the humanity and suffering of Jesus. Carson agreed with Weeden's observation: he saw in Mark a focus on Jesus's sufferings. He, however, went no further in identifying Mark's opponents as people with a divine man Christology. This is significant as the evidence for a polemic stance in Mark is not at all clear and it can be argued that the author probably does not have any opponents in mind at all. The very existence of a Hellenistic divine man concept as a category into which early Christians put Jesus, is open to question.

The third approach is represented by Brandon (1967:18-22), who pointed out a specific kind of apologetic in Mark. He thought that Mark attempted to mask the political implications of Jesus's life and especially his death. According to Brandon, Jesus was a sympathizer of the Jewish revolutionaries such as the Zealots. For this reason, he was crucified by the Romans using a method of execution generally reserved for political criminals. By treating Jesus as a rebel against Rome, his crucifixion made it very difficult for Christians to win a hearing from the Roman public in the aftermath of the Jewish revolt in Palestine, when, according to Brandon, Mark wrote his gospel. So, to overcome this difficulty, Mark transferred as much of the blame for Jesus's death from the Romans to the Jews as he could – a process revealed by the many manifestly unhistorical features in the Sanhedrin and Roman trials.

Carson (1992:101) offers a critical response to this view. He states that it's not necessary to accept Brandon's views of these trials as unhistorical constructions. Generally, there seems to be no sustainable evidence to argue for Brandon's hypothesis, which state that Mark, together with all other authors who wrote after him, eradicated the political element from Jesus's teaching and ministry. In terms of these three approaches Carson concludes that these precise

proposals about Mark's purpose are recent. But they illustrate the problem of being overly specific and based on only a selection of the data. Conversely, any adequate attempt to propose a probable Markan purpose should consider the entire gospel and avoid arguing beyond extant evidence.

In response to this proposal from Carson, what is Mark's purpose in writing this gospel? Winn (2008:22) in his recent work on Mark's gospel, stated that "for the first nineteen hundred years of biblical interpretation the question of Mark's purpose for writing was largely ignored." But this has become one of the major concerns that has occupied the minds of Markan scholars in recent years. In his historical survey of the purpose of Mark's gospel in New Testament scholarship Winn investigates the historical, theological, pastoral, evangelical and socio-political reasons for the writing of Mark proposed by Markan scholars.

For the sake of being specific it is helpful to consider what Carson proposed to be the purpose of Mark's gospel. He first argues that there are certain features in Mark's gospel which are specifically relevant to an investigation of its purpose, such as its focus on the activity of Jesus, especially his working of miracles, its interest in the passion of Jesus, its repeated correlation of Jesus's predicted sufferings, and the cost of discipleship in 8:26-10:52. Carson (1992:101) asserts that "Mark wants his readers to understand that Jesus is the Son of God but especially the suffering Son of God. Moreover, believers are to be followers of Jesus. Mark also shows that Christians must walk the same way as Jesus – the way of humility, of suffering and even should it be necessary of death." In so doing Mark wants his readers to understand who Jesus is and what it really means to follow him. Brooks (1991:30-31) likewise asserts that Mark's gospel is more than a book about Jesus. It also focuses on discipleship – what it means to be a follower of Jesus. For Mark, to be a disciple, was to follow Jesus despite sufferings as portrayed in the life of the first disciples. The same kind of trials, triumphs and failures that characterised the early disciples are set forth as an example of virtues to imitate and vices to avoid. So, Mark's gospel has a practical orientation.

According to Evans (2001: lxxxix) the Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as the true Son of God. The idea that he is superior to Roman rulers as emperor, saviour and lord is deliberate. Every quality ascribed to the emperor cult, various customs attached to the office, even the titles of the emperor, are used to refer to the person and work of Christ throughout the New Testament. In antiquity the first century Christians believed that Jesus was and is 'Lord, Saviour and Son of God'.

Winn (2008:199-201) reached the same conclusions as Evans, who was his teacher, that Jesus is ‘Lord and Saviour and the true Son of God’. However, Winn approached the subject from a different perspective. Winn asserted that ‘while the gospel’s primary purpose is to respond to the community’s Christological crisis, two secondary purposes can be identified as well. The aftermath of the Jewish Revolt and the cataclysmic events in which it culminated i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple caused two lesser crises. The first is the concern among Mark’s community for its own safety. Secondly, the crisis was brought on by the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt which increased eschatological anxiety and confusion.’

However, for Winn the primary purpose of Mark's gospel was to respond to Flavian propaganda which had created a crisis within the church in Rome. This response, Winn asserted, was polemical: pitting Jesus's impressive resume against that of the ruling Roman emperor Vespasian. Mark's gospel offers overwhelming evidence of Jesus' superiority to Vespasian to its audience. It confirms Jesus's identity as the Messiah and the true world ruler. This was Mark’s primary purpose. In addition, Mark urged his readers to remain faithful to Jesus despite the threats of persecution. He also corrected their eschatological misunderstandings. He established for them a definitive sign of the imminent *eschaton*, a sign for which they were to wait and watch (Winn 2008:199-201).

### **1.8.3 Mark’s theme**

In terms of the gospel itself it may appear that there is no precise single theme which is clearly stated in the book. If so, one should rather speak of themes instead of a single theme. In fact, most scholars treat this subject this way. On the other hand, there seems to be some interrelatedness – some overlapping affirmations – between the theme(s) and purpose of the book. The existence of a main theme is an issue explored here. Indeed, the theology or theme of the book is interwoven with the purpose of the book. That is not to say that they are the same thing, but in a way, they are closely related: the purpose of the book is the motivating factor and the theme is the message to be delivered. In other words, the purpose creates the occasion while the theme responds to that occasion.

Right at the beginning of the book the evangelist Mark states this – what he is writing about – is “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God” (Mark1:1). Telford (2001:221) sees this verse as the subject of endless debate. This is because the use of the word ‘gospel’ or

*euangelion* suggests to the first century audience the evangelist's recurrent motifs, themes and interests. These are concerns which are of importance in Mark's theological purpose. Why else would Mark open with such a powerful declaration? In the same way Moule (1965:5) argues that 'Mark's book has come to be called a gospel because it contains the gospel – the announcement of the Christian good news.'

## **1.9 Mark and the Synoptic tradition**

The gospels are the foundation of Christian theology upon which all other theological thought rests. The gospels are central and climatic to redemptive history. Christian practice and belief rest not upon a philosophical idea but on a person, Jesus Christ. Christ is the beginning and the end of Christian practice and theology. So, an understanding of the whole of Jesus's story is critical (McKnight 2001:9).

This study will focus on the synoptic gospels. It thus excludes the Gospel of John because it was written at a later stage and belongs to a different symbolic world than Mark, Matthew and Luke. In fact, the latter three share the same narrative framework. This framework presupposes a complex relationship of literary interdependence (Johnson 1999:155). The synoptic tradition is a complex phenomenon which always asks for a fresh evaluation.

Among many other commentators Johnson (1999:156-157) uses the designation 'synoptic problem' to describe the complex phenomenon of the synoptic gospels. This is an attempt to explain the textual similarities and diversity regarding the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. The synoptic problem is the problem of the literary relationships amongst the first three 'synoptic' gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called 'synoptic gospels' because they can be 'seen together' (*syn-optic*) and displayed in three parallel columns. The three gospels contain many of the same stories and sayings, often related in the same relative sequence.

But there are also important differences in the wording of individual stories and sayings, in the ordering of some material, and in the overall extent of each gospel. In some instances, the degree of verbatim agreement or the sequential agreement in the arrangement of episodes and sayings is so strong that one must posit a literary relationship among the gospels. In contrast, there are often marked differences in wording between any two gospels, and sometimes amongst all three. This raises several questions: (1) Is the relationship amongst the three gospels a matter of direct literary dependence, indirect dependence mediated through oral

performances of written texts, or common dependence on oral information? (2) Can the direction of dependence be established? (3) Can a genealogy of the development of the synoptic gospels be constructed? (Kloppenborg 2014).

### 1.9.1 The synoptic problem

Numerous attempts have been made by scholars to resolve the complicated issue of the synoptic problem. Monaghan (2017:72) notes that studies of the synoptic problem keep on providing a wide range of hypotheses to explain the interrelatedness of Mark, Matthew and Luke. Myers (1987:977-978) writes that as early as from the medieval period this has been a subject of great interest amongst great minds of church history. For example, around 354-430 C.E. Augustine proposed the Matthean Priority<sup>12</sup> (Matthew-Mark-Luke) as a possible solution to the so-called ‘synoptic problem.’ In the sixteenth century Calvin and Chemnitz presented the possibilities of new methods and conventions regarding the Bible. For Calvin, the solution to the synoptic problem was the ‘independence hypothesis’.<sup>13</sup> While Chemnitz’s contribution to the synoptic problem was to realize the relationship between the synoptics. He assumed that a chronological sequence of gospel events could be constructed because each evangelist worked with the knowledge of the gospels that preceded his. In his view Matthew was the first to be written with a ‘very special reckoning of matters’ in which the order of events was sometimes specific.

However, around the eighteenth century the priority of Matthew was challenged. Four general approaches to the synoptic problem were proposed. Firstly, the oral tradition hypothesis. According to this hypothesis no literary dependence should be assumed between the synoptic gospels<sup>14</sup>. Instead, the Jerusalem church formulated the basis for the three gospel works from the sayings and deeds of Jesus. So the similarities found in the synoptics are not mutual dependence, as they were created independently of each other. Secondly, the fragment

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew was the first gospel to be written, then Luke and Mark summarised both.

<sup>13</sup> According to Strickland (2016:84), Calvin argued that the synoptic evangelists worked independently of each other and that the Holy Spirit was the source of their agreements as well as their differences.

<sup>14</sup> Leading proponents of these views respectively were JCL Gieseler (1818); F Schleiermacher (1817); JG Eichhorn (1804); HJ Holtzmann (1863); JJ Griesbach (1789) according to WR Famer (1976).

hypothesis which holds that many of Jesus's depictions of words and actions were in circulation and then later collected and sorted into various categories by the apostles and early Christians. From these collections were born the gospels and their differences can be explained by the variety of ways in which the material was used prior to their compilation. Thirdly, the primitive gospel hypothesis which holds that an original Aramaic gospel existed along with other sources and was available to each evangelist in a different form. Hence each evangelist used it for his own purposes. Fourthly, the mutual usage hypothesis. This view acknowledges the interdependence of the gospels. The most prevailing theory in this regard is that of Markan priority. This view holds that Mark was written earlier than Matthew and Luke. However, Matthew and Luke also share material which does not appear in Mark. The solution for this is a hypothetical document both Matthew and Luke might have used called *Quelle*. Both Matthew and Luke, furthermore, contain material that is not common to each other and which is not found in Mark. These hypothetical sources came to be designated as 'M' and 'L' respectively. This is what is called a 'four-source hypotheses' in favour of Markan priority.

### **1.9.2 Markan priority and Q**

There are some synoptic scholars who support Markan priority but disagree with the *Quelle* hypothesis. Among the first to hold onto Markan priority while dispensing with the Q source hypothesis was Austin Farrer, who published an article entitled "On dispensing with Q" explaining his view. With regards to this article, Goodacre (2002:19) comments: "Farrer does not so much as mention any argument for the theory of Markan priority on which he builds". At the same time even Micheal Goulder speaks in passing of Markan priority as a fact with no further arguments in defence of his view. On the other hand, Goodacre, who is a prominent proponent of the Markan priority hypothesis, in his recent book "The case against Q", unlike Farrer and Goulder, makes a strong case against the Q hypothesis in defence of Markan priority. Goodacre (2002:43-44) concludes that his book is an attempt to dispense with Q while upholding Markan priority. He argues that Markan priority can frequently be defended even though dispensing with Q. Others, however, (Henry Owen, JJ Griesbach, William Farmer and TRW Longstaff) still hold to Matthean priority. This view sees Matthew as a being written first

and used by Luke, after which Mark summarized the two. This is known as the ‘Griesbach hypothesis.’<sup>15</sup>

This study accepts the Markan priority hypothesis for several reasons. First, the shorter length of some material in Matthew and Luke suggests that Mark is not a summary of Matthew or Luke. Mark’s omission of other material has also never been convincingly explained. Second, the grammar Mark used, is less polished compared to the other two synoptic gospels. This indicates that Matthew and Luke corrected the grammar where necessary. Third, Mark used the ‘harder’ reading (at first glance at least) which causes more interpretative problems than the Matthean or Lukan parallels. So, the modification of such difficulties by Matthew and Luke makes more sense than the view that Mark added such difficulties to his Matthean and Lukan source(s). Fourth, it may be argued that within the triple tradition the Matthew-Mark agreements against Luke, the Mark-Luke agreements against Matthew and the paucity of Matthew-Luke agreements against Mark both in wording and in order, are best explained by Markan priority. Although the argument from order by itself does not prove Markan priority (the Lachmann fallacy), Lachmann’s argument from order is still convincing when coupled with his explanations as to why Matthew and Luke changed the Markan order. Fifth, the argument from literary agreements, which observes that certain verbal phenomena are best explained by a Matthean abbreviation or rewording of Mark. Sixth, the argument from redaction – the most reasonable argument used today in favour of the Markan priority involves the comparison of the synoptic gospels to note their respective theological emphases. Seventh, the argument from Mark’s primitive theology – in comparing Mark with Matthew and Luke on their use of the title ‘Lord’, it becomes obvious that Mark was more primitive than Matthew. In addition, Goodacre (2002:40) recently added the *phenomenon of editorial fatigue*<sup>16</sup> in

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<sup>15</sup> This view supports Matthean priority and dispenses with both facets of the two-source theory, not only Q but also Markan priority. Mark therefore comes third and uses both Matthew, written first, and Luke, who read Matthew.

<sup>16</sup> For Goodacre (2002:41-42) the phenomenon of editorial fatigue indicates that with an author copying from the works of another writer, the work is often much more energetic in the earlier stages of the copying of the story. Editors make changes at the beginning of that story, but as they work through the story they gradually fall back onto the wording of the source, creating slight contradictions that indicate that the evangelist copied from the works of someone else. There are, in other words some elements that give the game away, vestiges of Matthew’s and Luke’s literary source, tell-tale signs of their dependence on Mark. For example, Matthew 8:1-4//Mark 1:40-45//Luke 5:12-16, the account of the cleansing of the leper: In Matthew’s location it is after the Sermon on the Mount. The introductory verse in Mark reads: ‘and when he had come down from the mountain, many crowds followed him’, something that is not consistent

advancing the case for the Markan priority. Indeed, Goodacre (2002:45) is right to conclude that:

“As far the tenet of Markan priority is concerned, however, there can be no turning back. Adherents of both the two-source theory and the Farrer theory rightly build on this secure foundation. The vigorous challenge by the late William Farmer and other neo-*Griesbachians* while encouraging us to think about the synoptic problem in fresh ways and helping us to clarify our thoughts, methods and arguments, is not in the end likely to prove persuasive.”

These arguments make the case for the Markan priority theory that is adopted by this study. With regards to the evidence for the Markan priority, it should be noted that the theory is not based on any one single argument but rather on the cumulative weight of all the arguments provided in this study (1.9.2 second paragraph).<sup>17</sup> In the light of these arguments this research assumes that Matthew and Luke were the first to interpret Mark. Hence this study seeks to employ redaction criticism as a methodology to investigate the problem as stated above.<sup>18</sup> At

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with Matthew’s virtual agreement with Mark. Later in the same passage ‘Jesus says to him see that you do not say anything but go, show yourself to the priest’ (Matt 8:4, Mk 1:44). Interestingly, in Mark the location is assumed to be private, whereas in Matthew the presence of a crowd makes the command to silence an absurdity. Moreover, such a command to silence is rarer in Matthew than in Mark. In other words, it seems that Matthew rewrote the introduction to the pericope in accordance with its new setting in the narrative using characteristically Matthean language. But subsequently he produced incoherence because of editorial fatigue, falling into docile reproduction of Mark.

<sup>17</sup> According to Goodacre (2001:56-83) it seems plausible that Mark was the first gospel to be written. There are several factors that led to this conclusion. Firstly, some material that does not appear in Mark makes better sense with the assumption that it was added by Matthew and Luke, than with the assumption that it was omitted by Mark. If Mark only added the material that is unique to him, then his gospel becomes an anomaly in early Christianity, with relatively little contact with oral tradition in comparison with Matthew, Luke, Thomas and others. Secondly, if one assumes Markan posteriority, the relationship between the supposed omissions and additions does not make for a coherent picture of Markan redaction. Thirdly, according to the view of Hader reading of Mark it is more straight-forward to see Mark as the source for Matthew and Luke than it is to see Matthew and Luke as the sources for Mark (Mk 6:1-5//Matt13:54-58//Lk 4:16-30).

<sup>18</sup> According to Stein (1987:29, 45, 86), having recognized that a literary relationship exists between the synoptic gospels, the next question concerning the nature of that relationship is which gospel was written first of the three synoptic gospels? In response to this question many theories developed in the history of interpreting the gospels. The advocates of the two-source theory argue that it seems likely that both Matthew and Luke independently used Mark as one of their primary sources. At the same time the two-source theorists concur that it is unlikely that Matthew and Luke used each other. They further accept the view that both Matthew and



the same time this study accepts Q as the plausible hypothetical source as a solution to the synoptic problem.

### 1.9.3 Q

The two-source theorists in their attempt to provide a solution to the whole puzzle of the synoptic origins and the phenomenon of the so-called ‘synoptic problem’ accepts the Q source as a plausible solution to the synoptic problem. According to Wood (2009:3), the *Quelle* ‘source’ is proposed to be the hypothetical source of sayings of Jesus and extra conversational materials found in Matthew, Luke and the triple tradition. On the other hand, Tuckett (2014:53) comments that the Q hypothesis is a negative theory because it denies the possibility that both Matthew and Luke used each other. Alternatively, one could argue that Matthew and Luke depended on this hypothetical document called Q.

Kloppenborg (2000:11) argues that this hypothesis is older than any proposed hypotheses in the study of the gospels. It has undoubtedly not gone unopposed, but has survived such oppositions, possibly because it seems to be a plausible solution that can explain the interrelatedness of the synoptic gospels and the form and the content of the synoptics. However, Watson (2009:397) argues that Q as a hypothesis presents itself for ongoing critical testing to determine whether it can offer a more reasonable elucidation of the pertinent information than its adversaries. In other words, the credibility of a hypothesis is partly reliant on the improbability of its main alternatives. However, there seems to be little historical data available to validate the plausibility of Q<sup>19</sup> (e.g Papias in Eusebuis, etc). According to Howes (2015:151) “Q was in all likelihood a single Greek document when used by Matthew and Luke”. As a hypothesis Q thus seems to be more plausible than other proposed hypotheses.

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Luke depended on another source called Q. According to Tuckett (2014:51-58), the two-source theory (2ST) seeks to explain the agreements between the three synoptic gospels by assuming both Matthew and Luke were dependent on Mark as one of their sources. The further Matthew-Luke agreements are then explained by common dependence on a lost source or a body of (possibly disparate) source material usually known as Q. The existence of Q as the source for both Matthew and Luke (not vice versa) explains the Matthew-Luke agreements in the double tradition better than the alternative theory of Luke’s dependence on Matthew.

<sup>19</sup> Robinson, et al (2000: xix-Ixvi) History of Q Research.

#### 1.9.4 The relationship between Matthew and Luke

It is also important to consider the relationship between Matthew and Luke. In general, Luke altered the Markan material significantly and shifted the focus more prominently to the fall of Jerusalem than in the other gospels (e.g Lk 19:41-44). However, Luke was apparently not only dependent on Mark, since he regularly included material from his special source. In general, there are two views on the relationship between Matthew and Luke. The majority view upholds Luke's dependence on Mark and Q without the use of Matthew. The minority view dispenses with Q and suggests Luke's use of Matthew. The Lukan additions contain many Hebraisms in terms of its content which suggests that a Hebrew gospel<sup>20</sup> possibly was one of the sources Luke consulted. Edwards (2009: xx) asserts that in the Gospel of Luke, or at least in parts of it, the subtext became much more visible nor did Luke seem to try to tame or camouflage the Hebraisms. They are consciously retained without Hellenization or harmonizing them to Luke's style. They give every appearance of coming from a source that the author valued and attempted to preserve. In the light of this, one can argue for the Farre theory as a possible solution to the synoptic problem. This theory argues for Luke's use of Matthew but has been criticised by many New Testament scholars.

Conversely, Best (2015) argues strongly against Luke's use of Matthew because Matthew made many changes to Mark's gospel while Luke almost never has the same revisions of Mark as Matthew does. If Luke used Matthew, you would have expected Luke to retain some of the same changes as Matthew. If Luke did know Matthew, it is hard to explain why he would have left out so many of the good additions Matthew made to Mark. For example, Luke almost never places the material that Matthew and Mark share (235 verses in common, or Q material) in the same context as Matthew. Most of the material the two gospels share, is the teachings of Jesus. Matthew organized this material into major teaching blocks: The Sermon on the Mount (chapter 5-7); commissioning of the disciples (chapter 10); kingdom parables (chapter 13); teaching about kingdom ethics (chapter 18); woe oracles to the religious leaders (chapter 23); and teaching about the future destruction of Jerusalem (chapter. 24-25). Luke, on the other hand, placed this material in 6:20-8:3 and 9:51-18:14. Most of the material we find in

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<sup>20</sup> According to Edwards (2009:1), there is extensive and diverse testimony in the early centuries of Christianity of an early "Hebrew gospel" which was apparently the first gospel in the Christian tradition and which was attributed to the apostle Matthew by a number of church fathers. There is however no surviving proof of this postulated Hebrew Gospel.

Matthew's Sermon on the Mount ends up in Luke's Sermon on the Plains and scattered in other locations. If Luke knew Matthew, why would Luke break up these sermons of Jesus?

Best (2015) further comments, in consideration of how excellently Luke followed the Markan order as one of his sources, why would Luke temper with Matthew's order? Styler (1993:724-726) comments, if Luke used Matthew there seems to be no rational explanation for tempering with the Matthean order.<sup>21</sup> For example, when Luke used the material from Mark, he rarely changed their order or the context. Matthew, on the other hand, frequently changed the order of Mark's material. If Luke knew Matthew, we would expect to see Matthew-Luke agreements in their arrangement of Mark's material. However, there are almost no examples of Matthew-Luke agreements of order against Mark. Luke shows a strong interest in keeping the original order of Mark's material. If Luke did know Matthew, why would he have changed the order of Matthew's material so much? Given what we know about how Luke used Mark, it seems unlikely that he knew Matthew given that the material they share occurs in Luke in such different contexts. One would have to envision that Luke meticulously maintained the order of the Markan material but scattered the material from Matthew throughout his gospel.

Finally, Best (2015) concludes that these arguments and theories do not deal with certainties, but probabilities. It is certainly possible that Luke used Matthew, but based on the arguments presented above, it seems improbable that Luke knew Matthew. Luke's wording is also almost like that of Mark, though it differs significantly in some parts. In terms of structure within the Lukan discourse (Lk 21:5-9//Mk 13:3-8, Lk 21:10-19//Mk 13:9-13, Lk 21:20-24//Mk 13:14-23, Lk 21:25-28//Mk 13:24-27, Lk 21:29-33//Mk 13:28-31, Lk 21:34-38//Mk 13:32-37) parallelism is identified as a pattern identical to that found in Mark. Even though Luke continues to adapt the Markan sequence, there is less agreement amongst scholars about whether his Markan source is the main basis upon which he based his version of this material, hence scholars have different positions on whether Luke rewrote Mark 13 extensively or used a second source. This second source theory has been a matter of serious debate within New Testament scholarship. Consequently, New Testament scholarship has proposed two dominant views. The first is that Luke used both Mark and Matthew as sources. But most scholars (Christopher Tuckett, John S Kloppenborg, France Neirynck) suggest Luke used Mark and Q

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<sup>21</sup> Gundry (1992: xvi) argues strongly against Luke's use of Matthew. He bases his argument on Matthean order and Luke's dismantling of that order. Hence, he concludes that they were both dependent on Q.

and not Matthew. The latter view is the position that this study accepts as a plausible hypothesis.

## **1.10 Summary**

This chapter has attempted to provide a foundation for the entire study. This chapter dealt with issues such as the background and motivation for the study, the problem statement, hypotheses and methodology. At the same time a brief overview of the synoptic problem was given to assert the Markan priority that the researcher assumes for the rest of the study. Also, the context, theme and purpose of the gospel according to Mark was dealt with.

## **Chapter 2 – The contemporary interpretation of Mark 13:14-23**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter a survey of the interpretation of Mark 13:14-23 by contemporary scholars will be undertaken as a literary review to ascertain why it is often referred to as the most difficult text in the entire Gospel of Mark. This is in line with the focus of this research which focuses on the meaning of Mark 13:14-23 for its synoptic interpreters. While the focus of the study is not on what Mark intended with his discourse, but on how Matthew and Luke understood it, it is important to get a sense of the Markan text and the problems it poses for its interpreters. This chapter will thus examine what other Markan scholars have noted to be problematic in the text. The following chapters will investigate how Matthew and Luke dealt with these problems identified in Mark 13:14-23.

### **2.2 Literary review of exegetical problems in Mark 13:14-23**

In this section the problems posed by Mark 13:14-23 will be identified by undertaking a literary review of contemporary exegetes' treatment thereof.

#### **2.2.1 Background problems**

Stein (2008:593) argues, that amongst other problems in understanding Mark 13, Mark's use of traditions goes back to the historical Jesus.<sup>22</sup> Mark's dependence on and loyalty to his traditions creates difficulties for contemporary interpreters as they strive to interpret them in view of Mark's own time and context. For example, much of what Mark wrote, is based on the oral tradition of his time. He probably wrote around the mid and late sixties about things that Jesus had spoken about in the early thirties. This fact alone intensifies the problem for modern readers. Did Mark write the exact words of Jesus? Or did he do his own editorial work? Or did he do his own modifications and adjustments of the sayings of Christ? If so, why did he do so? Hence, it becomes difficult to even attempt to understand the redaction of Mark. This is,

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<sup>22</sup> Issues such as the background, structure and significance of Mark 13 are considered the most difficult ones. Consequently, these issues have given rise to several source and redaction theories.

however, not the focus of this study and will thus not be explored further. Scholars are also not exactly sure who Mark's audience was. The best we have, are a few hypothetical proposals regarding the Markan community. Again, this is not the focus of this study and will also not be explored further.

### 2.2.2 The dating of events referred to by Jesus

Strauss (2014:564) asserts that in the Markan Olivet discourse, from a narrative standpoint, the major problem arises after the conversation between Jesus and his disciples as they were approaching the Mount of Olives. Jesus prophesied about the destruction of the temple and the disciples' greatest concern was, *when exactly will this happen and what would be the sign thereof?* Jesus in his response spoke of the destruction of the temple and the preceding events related to the eschaton. This raises a number of further questions. Such as when is Jesus talking about for the destruction of the temple and when is he talking about the Parousia? Or are these events one and the same? Or did the Markan Jesus get it wrong by connecting these two events? These questions are important for this study and will be explored further.

In the light of the questions posed by Strauss (2014:564) there has been a wide range of suggested answers. However, central to this study, one of the major concerns is: does Mark 13 conflate two-time periods? In response to this question there are at least two major proposals. The first view is that the whole discourse should be understood as relating to the temple's destruction and not to the Parousia. The other view is that the whole discourse consists of both the temple's destruction and the Parousia. France (2002:498-505) suggests that it seems clear that the Markan discourse is based on Jesus's predictions of the destruction of the temple. However, scholars differ as to whether the Markan discourse remains focused only on that context is or if it also includes the Parousia. But if this discourse includes both events, where is the transition? And how do the two events relate to each other? Some New Testament scholars<sup>23</sup> tried to resolve this matter by looking at the entire discourse as related to the events surrounding *the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.* From this perspective the coming of the

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<sup>23</sup> Wright (1996:339-366); France (2002:497-503) agree that the discourse up to 13:31 concerns 70 C.E, but views Mark 13:32-37 as referring to the Parousia; Edwards (2001:399) says the 'abomination of desolation' is a mysterious 'double referent' that alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem but also looks beyond it to a still-future antichrist. Hence, 13:14-27 points to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the end of the age.

Son of Man would not refer to the Parousia (the second coming of Christ to earth), but instead to the judgement of God through the destruction of the temple. This view is problematic because certain sections within this pericope<sup>24</sup> seem to suggest issues related to the end of the age. For example, vv. 24-27 seem to suggest the coming of the Son of Man after the tribulation. Also, in vv. 32-36 the reader is warned concerning the day and hour of the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus clearly says no one knows when this will be, but the reader must stay awake, “lest He comes suddenly and find you asleep.”

On the other hand, others (e.g. Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer) view this whole section as related to the *eschatological*<sup>25</sup> *consummation* with no reference to the events of 70 C.E. This perspective is problematic because the whole discourse arises after Jesus’s prediction about the destruction of the temple in v. 2 and the disciples’ question about the timing and signs related to this event is in v. 4. Does this mean one should completely ignore the disciples’ questions? Furthermore, certain descriptions in the discourse such as Jesus’s warning to flee to Judea in vv. 14-19 and the reference to ‘this generation’ in v. 30 seem to directly relate the siege and destruction of Jerusalem to each other. Commentators such as France<sup>26</sup> view this discourse as

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<sup>24</sup> Mark 13:24-25 and the gathering of elects by the angels in v. 27.

<sup>25</sup> The term ‘eschatology’ was coined in the seventeenth century within classical Lutheran dogmatics by Friedlieb in 1644 and Calvo in 1655 (du Rand, 2013:25). During the eighteenth century Reimarus was the first with inkling of what eschatology in New Testament usage really consisted of in the opinion of Kennedy (2006:149). The definition of eschatology is utilized here for the focus in some forms of literature on specific events related to and expected at the ‘end of time’ and leading to the hope that the current eschatological crises will pass and be replaced by a new and changed period in history that will be ideal (Aune 2006:4). In the scholarly debate this is where the consensus ends and several of the theological and hermeneutical questions discussed in earlier periods are still unanswered (Frey 2011:3).

<sup>26</sup> According to France (2002:384) the most important hermeneutical key for unlocking the meaning of Mark 13 is its placement after the temple material in Mark 11-12. The chapter is introduced by Jesus leaving the temple (v. 1) and going to the Mount of Olives, where ‘sitting opposite the temple’ (v. 3), Jesus pronounces its destruction. Mark chose to set the entire discourse in the context of the destruction of the temple. The evangelist did this with a clear purpose in mind. As Lane (1974:444) asserts, this passage occupies a special position in the Markan corpus since it provides the bridge between Jesus’s public ministry culminating in the conflict with the temple authorities (11:11-12:12) and the Passion Narrative, in which the conflict with authorities results in Jesus’s condemnation and death (14:58, 15:29, 39). The evangelist also relates the judgement upon Jerusalem with the death of Jesus. This theological understanding is reflected by the literary form of vv. 5-37. Jesus’s words are formulated as a farewell address providing instruction and consolation for his disciples just prior to his death. Hence, chapter 13 unites prophecy concerning the future with an exhortation regulating the conduct of the disciples in the period when Jesus will no longer be with them which is characteristic of a farewell discourse. France (2002:384) asserts that the admonition of v. 14,

concerning, in some sense, *both events*. Their proposed solution is to see the first half (13:5-23) as referring to the return of the Son of Man and not the end of the age. The obvious issue with this view is that certain events in the first part seem to relate to the end of the age. For example, the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (v. 10), the unequalled days of distress (v. 19) and certain events of the second coming of Christ seem to relate to the destruction of Jerusalem ('when you see...' v. 29; 'this generation', v. 30). A possible response to this problem is to propose a back-and-forth (A-B-A-B) pattern between the two events.<sup>27</sup> Wessel (1984:742) for example argues that the problem of the meaning of Mark 13 is related to two events mentioned in the text – the destruction of the temple and the end of the age. He proposes that a simple solution to the problem of the relationship of the destruction of the temple and the end of the age would be assuming that 13:28-31 refers to the same subject as 13:5-23. He admits that there are exegetic difficulties with this proposal, e.g. the mention of the worldwide preaching of the gospel (13:10) and the unequalled days of distress (13:19 in 13:5-23) seem to point to something beyond 70.C.E. as does the abomination of desolation.

Strauss (2014:566) suggests an alternative structure: vv. 5-23 are about the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. while vv. 13:24-27 refer to the return of the Son of Man and the end of the age. This then is followed by two explanatory 'parables', each related to the timing of one of these events. The parable of the fig tree (13:28-31) concerns the destruction of Jerusalem and asserts that it will be preceded by confirmatory signs (13:28-29) and will occur within the generation of the disciples (13:30). The parable of the owner's return (13:32-37) emphasise the unknown time of the Son of Man's return and the need for constant watchfulness.

Strauss (2014:566-67) argues that his proposed structure provides a ready explanation for Jesus's enigmatic saying in 13:30 that 'this generation' will not pass away until these events take place. This makes sense if in 13:26-31 Jesus has moved away from his discussion of Jerusalem's destruction (13:14-23). Even though the destruction of Jerusalem will be preceded

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as well as the concluding admonitions in the chapter to 'watch' (vv. 33-37) indicate that the purpose of the eschatological discourse in Mark 13 is not primarily to provide a timetable or blueprint for the future so much as to exhort readers to remain faithful disciples in the present.

<sup>27</sup> Cranfield (1972:402) states that neither an exclusively historical nor an exclusively eschatological interpretation is satisfactory. Hence, perhaps a double reference can be suggested as a reasonable proposal to unite both historical and eschatological interpretations as a possible solution to this problem.



by clear signs and will occur within one generation, the timing of the return of the Son of Man is unknown to all, even to the angels, and the Son and may be pushed into the distant future. On the other hand, Strauss warns the reader about this structure. He asserts that the biggest problem with this structure is that it retains the close connection apparently made between Jerusalem's destruction and the return of the Son of Man. 'In those days' (13:24) seems to connect 13:24-27<sup>28</sup> directly with 'those days' of 13:17, 20, identifying the return of the Son of Man closely with the events related to Jerusalem. Evans (2001:317) comments that up to now Mark 13:14-23 is Jesus responding to the question of Mark 13:4. The meaning of Mark 13:14-23 can be ascertained by looking at where the main argument begins, which is in the previous section (vv. 1-13) as Jesus and his disciples left the temple on their way to the Mount of Olives. Three of his disciples were amazed by the beauty of the temple, and they said to him 'Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!' 'Do you see all these great buildings?' replied Jesus. 'Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.' As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?' (Mark 13:1-4).

According to Strauss (2014:580), Jesus's primary reference is to an event related to the destruction of Jerusalem, which from a Markan viewpoint is a preview of the second coming of Christ and the end of the age. Right through the discourse, the Jerusalem destruction and the end of the age are linked. The destruction of Jerusalem serves as a foreshadowing of the end of the age. This view seems to be reasonable concerning the meaning of Mark 13:14-23; it seems to make sense as it is related to issues mentioned in this text which seek an immediate response and action but also looks forward to present and future events mentioned in this

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<sup>28</sup> France (2002:500) argues that in vv. 24-27 the apocalyptic language used is borrowed deliberately from the Old Testament in this context. The Old Testament context where these texts are taken from, also apply to the Markan discourse. For example, the meaning of these texts in the Old Testament had nothing to do with the collapse of the entire world but with imminent and far reaching political change. The predictions were in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem, as they were in the Markan account. With regards to this view, 'the coming of the Son of Man' should be understood as in the vision of Daniel from which it is derived. Which means the language of the coming of the Son of Man is not to be viewed eschatologically. It is about the vindication and enthronement of the Son of Man at the right hand of God to receive honour and exercise supreme authority. To put it more bluntly, vv. 24-27 should be understood in the light of the Old Testament passages it derives from. As the change of government so the temple and all that it stood for, its reign, will come to an end and the Son of Man will reign.

passage. Edwards (2001:386) likewise suggests: ‘Mark 13 is thus constructed according to a twofold scheme of tension and paradox, alternating between the immediate future (related to ‘these things’) and the end of time (related to ‘those days’), in which the destruction of the temple and fall of Jerusalem function as a pre-figurement and paradigm of the Parousia.’

France (2002:500) argues that the view that says the whole of Mark 13 only focuses on the destruction of the temple without pointing to Parousia, is not satisfying. For him the Markan account presents two separate yet related events. He argues that in v. 32 there is a change of subject. It is not merely that *περὶ δέ* frequently has this function elsewhere in the New Testament. But whereas in this pericope up to that point Jesus spoke of ‘days which are coming’ and of events summarised as *πάντα* ‘all these things’, v. 32 speaks of *ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη*. Up to this point in the Markan account no such day is mentioned. However, there is a sharp contrast with the certainty about the temporary prediction concerning the date at which *ταῦτα πάντα* will occur in v. 30. Also, even the Son does not know the ‘day and hour’. So, in consideration of Mark 13 alone, it seems viable to argue that this is merely a distinction between the certainty of the general period and the ambiguity of the specific time within that period.

One can suggest that Mark 13 should be understood as a shift back and forth between an immediate and a remote future. It is also likely that some of the events had a dual fulfilment. One is the destruction of the temple and the city and the other is the end of time. This shift from close to remote prediction may be due in part to Mark’s arrangement of Jesus’s sayings spoken on different occasions. Witherington III writes that in accordance with the Markan context, Mark 13 belongs to the material that started in chapter 11 and continues right up to the end of the book. One of the major concerns of this section is the fate of the temple and institutional Judaism as known during that period. However, it could be argued that some of the events mentioned in vv. 1-23 and vv. 28-31 had already happened. Part of this material may be descriptive in terms of the phrases “these things and those days”.

### 2.2.3 The abomination of desolation

Another difficulty in Mark 13 is the reference to ‘the abomination of desolation will be standing where it ought not to be.’<sup>29</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter (1.3), Mark 13 has some apocalyptic features even though it is not an apocalypse.<sup>30</sup> So as one of the signs of the end-times the theme of ‘abomination of desolation’ is significant. Again, we note that the discourse turns its focus from the period of the birth pains (13:8) to the signs of the end (13:14-23) (Beavis 2011:196). The question is which end?<sup>31</sup> Is it the end of Jerusalem or the end of the world? Jesus does not specify which end he has in mind when he launches into the signs of the end. However, at the centre of these signs is what Jesus referred to as the ‘abomination that causes

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<sup>29</sup> Notice the parenthetical editorial comment ‘let the reader understand’ which alerts the person reading the text aloud to the assembled believers that the significance of the allusion may need to be explained (Beavis 2011:196-97).

<sup>30</sup> This concept Apocalyptic is defined as: predicting or describing the end of the current, unjust age and the arrival of a new age through God’s direct intervention in history. Apocalypse: a text commonly attested in the Hellenistic and later periods that describes a heavenly revelation to a human recipient, often a human recipient from Israel’s distant past (e.g. Enoch, Levi etc.). Such apocalypses appear in two main types, the heavenly apocalypse and the historical apocalypse, and frequently show priestly connections and feature a focus on esoteric knowledge. Apocalypticism: a world view or social movement associated with the world view which emphasizes God’s anticipated intervention in history, thus bringing the current corrupt world order to an end. In this view the unjust are punished, those who have suffered, are rewarded and a new just world order is initiated (Carr and Conway (2010).

<sup>31</sup> Stein (2008:594) comments, ‘the meaning of ‘the end’ is debated. Some interpret it as a reference to the events of 70 C.E. (France 2002:508-509), but the majority interpret it as a reference to the Parousia of 13:24-27 and 32-37 (Hooker 1991:308, Evans 2001:307, Danahue and Harrington 2002:369). The latter interpretation has several difficulties associated with it. One is that the setting for 13:5ff involves the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem (13:2 and 4), not the Parousia. Another is that 13:14-20 is best understood as referring to the events of 66-70 C.E. and not the Parousia. The major argument in favour of interpreting ‘the end’ as referring to the Parousia is that in the setting of Mark and his readers it is difficult to understand how in the late sixties, when Mark was written, the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem could be said to be ‘not yet’. These events were ‘already now’ taking place. Thus, numerous scholars believe that what was ‘not yet’ and was not to be confused with the events of 13:5-13 was the Parousia of the Son of Man, which would bring history to its end. Rather than indicating that the Parousia was imminent, Mark urged his readers not to misunderstand what was happening and be led astray. The end or the Parousia of the Son of Man was still future. It was not yet. For Mark’s readers, some of the events Jesus spoke of had already occurred, but others were taking place in Judea in their day, and the destruction of Jerusalem was approaching, but the Parousia lay in the more distant future (13:24-27).’

desolation<sup>32</sup>, standing where he ought not to be' (v. 14a). Typical of Mark he offers no further explanation of this remark. France (2002:523) argues that the historical reference is unmistakable so the Markan redactory comment 'where it ought not to be' seems fitting in placing the heathen altar on top of the altar of burnt offering in the temple. It seems what the disciples should be on the lookout for, is a repetition in some way of the abomination of 167 B.C.E.<sup>33</sup> If so, this remark should be understood in a *prophetic* manner – it was necessary for the reader to understand the coming events.

Hartman (1966:145), argued that basically what we have in this chapter are meditations on a series of several passages from Daniel and some other relevant Old Testament prophetic texts which are applied in a new way. Particularly Daniel 7:8-27, 8:9-26, 9:24-27, and 11:21-12:13, seem relevant. Edwards (2002:396-97) argued that these events also appear in non-Christian sources, e.g. 1 Macc 1:54 also contains the same phrase 'abomination that causes desolation' about Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). He was a Syrian general who outraged the Jews in 168 B.C.E. by erecting an altar to Zeus on the altar of burnt offering in the temple which became the dramatic provocation for the Maccabean revolt. This revolt earned Jews their only century of political self-rule between the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. and comparable to the formation of state of Israel in 1948. Another historical event mentioned in Mark 13 that we find outside of the biblical canon, is the egomaniacal attempt of Caligula, Roman emperor from 37-41 C.E. to erect statues of himself in the temple of Jerusalem and have them worshiped as a god (Josephus, War 2 184-203). There is thus more than one possible historical event that may underlie the reference to the abomination of desolation.

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<sup>32</sup> Some understand the 'abomination of desolation' as a technical term for someone like Paul's 'man of lawlessness' (2 Thess 2:3-4), who appears before the coming of the Son of Man. Kloppenborg (2005:423) comments, 'the sentence construction is problematic with 'abomination' a neuter word and the verb 'standing' a masculine perfect participle, which definitely suggests a person rather than an object.'

<sup>33</sup> Most scholars suggest that this has to do with the telling of the desecration of the temple by the persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C.E. Wessel (1992:748), however, states that it is plausible to suggest that Daniel's prophetic ministry might have been prior to the event of 167 B.C.E. On the other hand, most critical scholars question this view since they view this incident as Daniel retelling the story from the time after it had happened in the form of a prophecy. Hence, it is possible that Daniel's prophecy came after Antiochus Epiphanes's desecration of the temple.

### 2.2.4 Let the reader understand

Mark's expression 'let the reader understand' has also led to a scholarly debate over its meaning. It is, for example, unclear if this expression is from Jesus or if it is a Markan editorial addition.<sup>34</sup> As Edwards (2002:395) asserts, 'the verse is doubly difficult to interpret because of Mark's explicit admonition to understand something that is so enigmatic that it has until now defied certain explanation in line with the meaning of the abomination referred to in Mark 13:14.'

It appears that the evangelist interprets the abomination not with reference to events of Maccabean times but to events of his own time. According to Stein (2008:602), this Markan comment is addressed either to the actual reader of the gospel, perhaps to note or explain the masculine participle 'He', or, more likely, to the audience hearing Mark read to them. Hooker (1991:314) suggests that it is directed to the readers of the gospel, but why Mark was not more explicit, is unclear. The idea that Mark is calling his readers to interpret the abomination of desolation by considering Daniel's prophecy is speculative. Decker (2014:154-155) comments *ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω* 'is a parenthetical, editorial comment by Mark to underline the significance of Jesus's statement. Jesus would not have referred to his 'readers', but rather to his 'hearers.' Gundry (1993:742-43) asserts, that 'the reader' would not mean a private reader but a public reader to whom an audience is listening. The command to understand may thus imply that the public reader should understand. So, this statement simply encourages the reader to accept what has been said as true and real.

Collins (2007:598) argues that the expression 'let the reader understand' must in terms of its original social setting be understood as both an oral and a scribal remark. It is oral in the sense that the gospel was read aloud publicly and probably interpreted and applied publicly as well. It is scribal in the sense that the gospel was a written text that the public reader had probably read and studied privately, but this private reading and study was most likely rooted in an oral context of teaching and handing down the tradition. However, it is clear from this brief survey that there is no consensus about this remark.

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<sup>34</sup> Lane (1974:467) suggests that 'it is better to attribute this parenthetical call to understanding to Mark rather than to Jesus since it is consistent with the evangelist's practice elsewhere in the gospel to address his reader (e.g. chapters 2:10, 28, 3:30, 7:3-4, 11b, 19b, 9:50b, 16:4b, 8b).'

### 2.2.5 To flee to the mountains

In v. 14b Jesus says, ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.’ It is uncertain what this means other than that the appearance of the ‘abomination that causes desolation’ is the reason for the evangelist’s audience to flee to Judea. For Strauss (2014:580) this advice is surprising because under normal circumstances of war people would flee into a walled city for protection (Jer 4:6). Jesus’s point is that Jerusalem is doomed and will not offer a safe refuge (cf. similar counsel in Jer 6:1, Rev 18:4). Some scholars agree with Eusebius that prior to the destruction of Jerusalem there was an oracle that instructed Jewish Christians to flee to the city of Pella for safety. Hence, other scholars have understood Mark 13:16 as a reference to that event (Lane 1974:468, Sower 1970:316-20, Pesch 1980b:292, 95), but others argue against this view (Beasley-Murray 1993:412-13, Evans 2001:320, France 2002:526).

V. 19 portrays a clear logical progression of this argument. Decker (2014:156) states that the wording of this verse is like Daniel 12:1b in the LXX. Lane (1974:471) describes this verse as virtually a citation. France (2002:527) notes that not only the γάρ but especially the phrase οί ἡμέραί ἐκεῖνοι links this statement firmly to the setting of the previous verse, the war in Judea. But there is no more talk of flight to the hills and the reference seems to include more specifically the siege of Jerusalem. The scene shifts to the siege itself (v. 14a-b) and the terrors faced by those inside the city. As Edwards (2002:401) puts it, in all human history the situation that is mentioned here, has no equal. Humanly speaking no one can survive it unless God in his divine grace intervenes. Indeed, God will protect and keep the elects safe if not from suffering at least from annihilation. The cataclysm described here exceeds in horror any known human event although the fall of Jerusalem is a prototype thereof. The question is, when this will happen?<sup>35</sup>

Strauss (2014:578-80) lists three main possibilities that have been proposed for the date of the events the readers are warned about. First, it relates to events early in the first century such as: (1) Pontius Pilate’s order to his soldiers to enter Jerusalem with Roman standards bearing idolatrous images (26 C.E., Josephus, J.W. 2.9.2-3 §§ 55-59); or (2) Caligula’s order to erect a statue of himself in the temple (39-40 C.E, Josephus, Ant. 18.8.2-3 §§261-272, Philo, Legat,

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<sup>35</sup> Hengel (1985:14-28) suggests that the material in this discourse favours a pre-70 C.E. date for this gospel.

and Tacitus His 5.9). Strauss, however, argues against these possibilities since, though these events caused disturbances among the Jews, neither is plausible here. The first occurred before Jesus spoke these words and was resolved without violence. History records that when Pilate sent troops to surround and kill the Jewish protestors, they fell to the ground and bared their necks, ready to die for their beliefs. Pilate, impressed by this level of commitment, backed down and withdrew the standards. The second was never carried out as the order was first delayed by the Syrian legate Petronius and then cancelled when Caligula was assassinated.

The second possibility is that the phrase relates in some way to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. For Strauss this is unlikely. Strauss considers as a third possibility that the phrase relates to the eschatological future, beyond the events of the first century. As mentioned earlier (2.2.2), Strauss notes that the problem with this view is that the following verses about fleeing Jerusalem seem to represent Jesus's answer to the disciples' question about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Furthermore, Mark's narrative adds 'let the reader understand', and this seems to suggest the immediate relevance of this event for his readers. For Mark this was not just a matter of narrating history for history's sake. Mark the evangelist was trying to address issues of concern in his context. Even though the events that Mark mentions were spoken of by Jesus many years before Mark wrote these accounts, they were of great concern to God's people when he compiled his gospel.

The second sign that is presented in Mark 13:14-23 appears in vv. 21-22 which is reflected in vv. 5-6. However, there seems to be a slight change in purpose compared to the initial warnings about the messianic pretenders during the destruction of Jerusalem, a change which signifies the fact that the end was not yet upon them. Whereas here the appearance of false Christs and prophets is a sign that the end is at hand (cf. 2 Thess 2:2-4, Gospel of Thomas 113), according to Strauss (2014:583), the context is different to that in v. 6 in that it seems to be the years leading up to Jerusalem's destruction. Meanwhile, in vv. 21-22 the primary context appears to be the war itself. These false messiahs and prophets will deceive through 'signs and wonders. This phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα is common in biblical literature referring in the Old Testament especially to God's works of power against Egypt (Ex 7:3, Deut 4:34, 6:22, 26:8, Neh 9:10, Ps

135:9 etc.) and in the New Testament to the miracles of the apostles in Acts (Ac 2:22, 43, 5:12 etc.).<sup>36</sup>

It is obvious that much has been said about these problems, but the difficulty has not been resolved satisfactorily. The theme of the prediction of the destruction of the temple gives a context for the abomination that causes desolation, standing where it does not belong. For Jesus this was going to be one of the signs that the disciples asked for. Some scholars believe the sign to be a person while others see it as an event. Both views are historically plausible. There is also no compelling reason why both views cannot be accepted as a possible meaning of the text. The event(s) or person(s) of abomination that causes desolation could thus be interpreted in the light of the destruction of the temple and the end of the age.

As Nel (2014:308) argues, what is important to note, is Mark's supposition that the destruction of the temple is not due to foreign powers but to divine intervention and decision. It not only confirms that God has judged Israel, but also that God has chosen Jesus and his followers to fulfil God's designs and plans. When this abomination occurs, it will be the sign for believers to flee to the mountains (Van Iersel 1998:205). However, as Nel (2014:309) points out, the time of the destruction of the temple would be very difficult for believers and chances of survival would be even less for the immobile and the most vulnerable such as those who are pregnant or with new-borns. Disciples were also to pray that this time did not coincide with the winter months, the wet months when the streams would be swollen and hard to cross, especially when fleeing an enemy. So, believers are asked to flee to the mountains for refuge.

A flight of Jewish Christians took place during the winter of 67 C.E., including people from inside and outside the walls of Jerusalem (Balabanski 1997:122-132; Dyer 1998:221-223; Moloney 2002:262). Eusebius tells that the Christians fled Jerusalem and went to Pella, part of the Decapolis in a gentile country, and adds that this was due to a prophecy that warned the Jewish Christians to flee. Whether he refers to Jesus's prediction and warning or a new prophecy of a Christian prophet in the sixties or the first century C.E. is not clear from the text. This event would be very distressful, so much so that the sufferings and distress would be so great that it would be impossible to describe it except with superlatives (Kleiber 2010:2053). The motif of fleeing, as so much of the language in Mark 13, is also apocalyptic in nature.

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<sup>36</sup> Josephus speaks of various attempts by insurrectionists during the siege to proclaim themselves king. False prophets also arose in the city deceiving the doomed inhabitants with promises of God's deliverance (JW 6.5.2-3 §§285-300, cf. 2.13.4-5 §§ 258-263).



According to Davies and Allison (1997:347), ‘eschatological flight’ from a condemned city under judgement is a common biblical motif. For example, Jeremiah exhorted Benjamin to flee Jerusalem before it was attacked and destroyed (Jer. 6:1-12). The good news for believers is that God shortened the days of tribulations for the sake of the elects (vv. 19-20).

In addition to the event(s) and person(s) of abomination that causes desolation, is the motif of false messiahs or false Christs. Gundry (1993:781) asserts that the emerging movement of false messiahs and prophets may possibly echo the uprising of nations and kingdoms against each other in v. 8. The giving of signs and wonders may echo Deuteronomy 13:2-3 (1-2); to deceive echoes Mark 13:6, to elect echoes v. 20 and anticipates v. 27.<sup>37</sup> Believers are warned about these false Christs that who will appear with their performance of signs and wonders in vv. 5-6 and again in vv. 21-23.

According to Brooks (1991:213), some have argued that these verses are merely a doublet of vv. 5-6, i.e. different accounts of the same sayings of Jesus. The differences in wording are, however, significant, as are also the points made. In vv. 5-6 the warning is against being deceived into thinking that the Christ had returned. In vv. 21-22 the warning is against delaying one’s escape because someone claims to be the Messiah who can protect against the impending danger. At the end of v. 21 one could also translate, ‘do not believe him.’ In early Christian literature, these false Christs and prophets are usually related to the final eschatological adversary, the antichrists (2 Thess 2:9-10, Rev 13:13-15).

When exactly would this take place? Jesus said, ‘*at that time* if anyone says to you’ (v. 21). Lambrecht (1967:168-169) believes it should be taken as a downward movement from the climax in the preceding section, that as a repetition of the theme, it is also a rounding-off of an *inclusion*. On the other hand, Nel (2014:312-13) argues to the contrary that vv. 5b-13 should rather be interpreted as a description of the first stage of the end-time, with the beginning of the birth pangs, while the second stage, the tribulation (v. 19), is described in vv. 14-20. This raises several questions. Is the appearance of the false messiahs and prophets in vv. 21-23 a flashback to the first stage, or does it belong to the second stage, or does it constitute the beginning of a third stage? Does *τότε* mean ‘at that time’ or ‘then, thereupon’? Since v. 24

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<sup>37</sup> But Jesus may have formulated the saying thus. For one and the same speaker may have echoed and interpreted his own words and drawn from other materials as well. And Jesus, speaking in Aramaic, was more likely than Mark, writing in Greek, to have borrowed from *targumic* tradition.

introduces the appearance of the Son of Man as taking place ‘after that tribulation’ the meaning of τότε in v. 21 is most likely according to Collins (2007:613) ‘at that time.’ The false messiahs and prophets would thus arrive during the tribulation while those who come ‘in my name’ (v. 6) would make their appearance during the first stage, the beginning of the birth pangs.

The two predictions do not concern the same persons, events or historical situation, but the experiences upon which the first is based, provides a model for the second (Marxsen, 1969:126). Finally, Jesus exhorted his followers to be on their guard against all that has and will happen, because he has told them everything. In v. 23 the word ‘πάντα’ translated ‘everything’ is plural in Greek, the same as is used twice in v. 4. To a very limited extent vv. 14-23 answers the question of when in v. 4. No definite time is given. The destruction of Jerusalem is no indicator that the end of the world is near. The final tribulation that exceeds anything previously known, is the true indicator (Brooks 1994:214). Lenski (1964:576) comments that Jesus’s hearts melted at the thought of the hardships that such a flight from the doomed city and country would bring upon pregnant and suckling women, the former burdened with unborn babes, the latter with babes in their arms. Jesus also considered other things such as the cold and the wet of the Palestinian winter and the possibility that the flight would come during that season. The accusative ἡμέραις (direct object of ἐκολόβωεν) expresses time within, while the present imperative means to keep on praying, and ἵνα introduces the object clause which states the contents of the prayer. However, the knowledge that everything is in God’s hands, was a comfort for the elects of God since he can hasten or delay the day of judgement for the Jewish nation.

The durative imperative ‘keep praying’ expresses a veiled promise that God will answer such prayers. Jesus promised that even during the darkest days of doom and gloom the disciples should not assume that God had forgotten about their quandary. To the contrary, Jesus said God had shortened those days so that God’s people will survive. This reminds us that Jesus did not promise that his followers would be exempt from tribulations. Rather the time would be shortened, and the disciples would be strengthened so that they could endure (Witherington 2001:357). In what way would these days be shortened? This is not clear.

France (2002:528) suggests that the siege of Jerusalem, though it was terrible, only took five months which is a relatively short time for an event of this kind. On the other hand, Lenski (1964:579) argues, this act of God of shortening the days of Jerusalem’s destruction for the sake of the elect, is misunderstood when it is taken to refer only to the elect who lived at that

time. It is then conceived as enabling them to go through those days, which had been shortened sufficiently, without losing their faith. But the elect never passed through the horrors that occurred prior to the siege and during the siege. The believers escaped before this occurred. Moreover, many of the elect were at the time scattered about elsewhere in the Roman empire far from the horrors that were occurring in Judea. There is also no restriction in ‘elect whom he elected for himself’, as if only those living at the time were being referred to. The very first clause states that the effect of the shortening was to enable some of the Jews to survive.

Jesus told the elects beforehand of what was going to happen so that they could be ready and not be taken by surprise by these events. As mentioned, Jesus’s warnings would also serve as comfort in the times to come because the faithful will know that nothing will harm them because their God is sovereign above everything, God is the governor of all things. From the larger context of national calamities, Jesus returned to temptations within. Before the end there will be pretenders claiming that the coming of Christ is at hand. According to Strauss (2014:583), Jesus warned His followers ahead of time and so equipped them to face any persecution or deception. The two warnings against false teachers (Mark 13:5-6, 21-23) and the exhortations to ‘watch out’ (Mark 13:5, 23) form an inclusion around this first major section of the discourse (Mark 13:5-23). While several suggestions were put forward in this section on when the time to flee to the mountains would occur, it remains to be seen if Matthew and Luke understood Mark in a similar manner. This will be investigated in the following chapters.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter has been to identify the problems of Mark 13:14-23. Generally, scholars acknowledge the fact that this text is very problematic. Hence, there is a vast amount of material available on this text. The following seems to be clear about what the Markan Jesus was saying in vv. 14-23. His words were an attempt to respond to the question posed in vv. 1-4 where the disciples were asking when these things would occur and what the signs would be. For the disciples, this answer may have been disappointing or discouraging.

An attempt was made to look at what was happening at the time when the narrator collected his data for his audience. The author was not just writing history for the sake of writing history. There was a reason behind him writing. Persecution, the presence and appearances of false Christs and prophets were, for example, common events (2.2.5). Vv. 14 and 19 seem to describe

the terrible suffering in the first Jewish wars, when Roman armies invaded Palestine (Cole 1994:970). In addition, as mentioned (2.2.3), the book of Maccabees describes some of these events. Hence, for Mark, the events of chapter 13 were both descriptive and anticipatory. In other words, it seems probable that while Mark was writing, some of the events taught by Jesus were happening already, while others were still a future reality.

It is further apparent that several problematic issues can be observed in this pericope. Firstly, the problem of Mark's dependency and faithfulness to his tradition, which creates a huge problem for the modern reader of Mark, because we don't have access to his tradition any more. However, this is not the interest of this study. In the text itself we noted the unexplained or vague Markan phrases and expressions such as 'abomination of desolation' (2.2.3) where it ought not to be, the exhortation to the reader to understand (2.2.4) and fleeing to the mountains (2.2.5). As deliberated above there have been several interpretations of these issues. This leaves us with the question of how the other synoptic writers treated the problems in Mark 13. In line with the problem statement of this study, its focus is not on what Mark intended with his discourse, but instead how Matthew and Luke understood it. Hence, as stated in 1.4, the following three related research questions will guide the research. Firstly, how was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Matthew? Secondly, how was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Luke? Thirdly, did Matthew and Luke interpret and utilise Mark 13:14-23 differently in terms of it being anticipatory or descriptive in terms of the events it refers to? These questions will be addressed in the following chapters.

## Chapter 3 – The redaction of Mark 13:14-23 in Matthew 24:15-28

### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to ascertain Matthew's redaction of Mark 13:14-23. Before this can be done, it is necessary to first establish the provenance of the Gospel of Matthew to better understand its relationship with the Gospel of Mark. Hence, attention will be given to the authorship, date and context of the writing of Matthew. After that a synopsis of Mark 13:14-23//Matthew 24:15-28 will be provided to enable the researcher to identify the parallels, differences and developments of these pericopes as they are presented by the synoptic writers. This will in turn help the reader to observe the special features of each gospel's version. The synopsis will play a vital role in practically demonstrating the interrelatedness and differences of the passages. Thereafter a detailed redaction critical analysis of Matthew 24:15-28 will be undertaken: Firstly, the material included or excluded in the text will be investigated; secondly, the arrangement of the material included in the text; thirdly, the seams which the editor used to stitch his material together; fourthly, the additions to and omissions of material from other sources; and finally, the changes of wording in the text.

### 3.2 The authorship of the Gospel of Matthew

The questions of who wrote the Gospel of Matthew and when it was written, are fundamental to understanding it. Traditionally it has been ascribed to Matthew, the tax collector (Matt 9:9). This is, however, not accepted by most contemporary New Testament scholars who consider all three canonical gospels to be anonymous<sup>38</sup> as opposed to other Greek and Roman writings in which the authors identify themselves at the beginning of the book (Nolland 2005:2). The challenge with the synoptic gospels is that there are no direct internal claims of the authors in the documents themselves. In general, there are four major objections towards the traditional view of the apostle Matthew being the author of the first gospel (McKnight 1992:528-523).

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<sup>38</sup> Blomberg (1992:293) argues that, strictly speaking, the four gospels are anonymous documents. The titles were probably added early in the second century when the texts were first gathered together as four versions of the one gospel. Gundry (1982:609) asserts that nowhere in the gospel of Matthew does it identify its author by name. It was only during the second quarter of the second century that it begun circulating under the title KATA MAΘΘAION, 'According to Matthew' with the preposition KATA understood as pointing to the author.

The first argument states that if Markan priority is accepted and Matthew used Mark as one of the sources, it is unlikely that the apostle would have borrowed from a non-apostolic source. Some scholars have responded by arguing that if Mark relied on Peter the apostle as the tradition suggests, then his gospel has some level of apostolic authority, which would mean that Matthew's use of Mark would not be an affront to his apostolic dignity. This, however, does not adequately address the question of why Matthew would have used the Gospel of Mark's version of his own calling as a disciple (cf. Matt 9:9 and Mk 2:14) and only change the name Levi to Matthew.

Secondly, the book was written in Greek and not in Aramaic or Hebrew, which would be expected if the apostle Matthew wrote it. The present gospel is also not a translation of an originally Aramaic or Hebrew gospel. It often betrays its Greek origin in Greek word play (e.g. 6:16, 21:41, 24:30) and its dependence on the Septuagint (1:23, 11:10, 12:21, 13: 14-15, 21:16). However, evidence indicating a Greek origin is not proof of a gentile (or non-apostolic) author. Matthew, having been a tax collector, would very likely have been competent in several languages. The argument over the language the gospel was written in, thus proves very little. Thirdly, other scholars (e.g. Abel, Strecker) have pointed to features that suggest a gentile author to them. These features include: (1) The universalism of the first gospel (2:1-12, 4:14-16, 12:21, 28:19) when coupled with the condemnation of the Jewish nation (20:1-16, 21:28-32, 43, 27:25 ); (2) the torture in 18:34, which was not a Jewish practice (Jeremias 1972, 210-14); (3) the so-called misunderstood Hebrew parallelism of 21:5-7; and (4) various other non-Jewish features (5:13, 12:11-12, 27:5). For some scholars these features point away from a Jewish (apostolic) author toward a gentile author. In response to this view it can be argued that there is no ideology in Matthew that is not also found in either the Old Testament prophets or in the letters of Paul, which are all clearly Jewish.

The fourth argument lodged against apostolic authorship pertains to the date of the first gospel. This argument will be considered later when it is discussed in greater detail. Powell (2009:106-107) strongly argues that Matthew is anonymous. The inscription attached to Matthew is for him a mistaken or misunderstood comment from an early Christian leader. It was added around the middle of the second century, when Papias said that Matthew was the tax collector who was part of Jesus's group of twelve disciples. Powell further argues that Matthew does not look like the book Papias refers to. In the first instance it is not just a collection of sayings, secondly

it was written in Greek and not in Hebrew or Aramaic<sup>39</sup> with no evidence of it being a translation. Hengel (1985:64-85) also vigorously challenges this view that the gospels were originally anonymous.<sup>40</sup> Morris (1992:12) further argues in favour of Matthew as the author of this book. For him the external evidence makes a strong case that Matthew of the twelve is the author of this gospel. He refers to Irenaeus who says, ‘Matthew also supplied a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the church’ (Adv. Haer. 3.1.1). Eusebius, Origen and Papias support Matthean authorship. Nolland (2005:4) also argues that no one in the early centuries ever pointed to canonical Matthew as anybody other than the apostle. In this he agrees with Stonehouse (1963:46-47), who asserts, ‘it is my careful estimation that the apostolic authorship of Matthew is as strongly proven as any fact of antique church history’. France (1989:80) agrees with Stonehouse that ‘the apostolic authorship of Matthew should not be regarded as an article of faith, in that sense it does not really matter, very much who wrote it. But it fits the historical and literary data sufficiently comfortably to present strong reason to accept that early Christians who saw it as his work were not mistaken.’

Whether the author is known or not, does not affect the meaning of the text much. In the end, scholarship is divided on whether the apostle Matthew is the author of the first gospel. While some claim that Matthean authorship is likely (e.g. France, Gundry), many argue against this attribution, claiming there is no clear historical evidence for it (e.g. Luz, Carter). Hagner, taking a mediation position, draws on Papias’s testimony to suggest that ‘Matthew the apostle is.... probably the source of an early form of significant portions of the gospel, the sayings of Jesus but perhaps even some of the narrative material’ (Hagner 1995: Ixxvii). According to Osborne (2016:35), we can never know for certain who wrote Matthew, but there is little reason to doubt the witness of the early church tradition. Yet in the final analysis the determination of authorship is not essential to the interpretation of the first gospel, since biography as a genre points away from its author toward its subject (Brown 2013:574-575).

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<sup>39</sup> ‘...collected the sayings in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) language and each one interpreted (or translated) them as he was able’ (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.39).

<sup>40</sup> Hengel, (1985:17-25), examines the practice of book distribution in the ancient world where titles were necessary to identify a work to which second-century authors referred. He argues that as soon as two or more gospels occurred (he thinks no later than 100 B.C.E.) it would be necessary to distinguish between them by a device such as a title. Hengel concludes that the four gospels were never even formally anonymous.

### 3.3 The date of the Gospel of Matthew

The date when Matthew was written, has perplexed many scholars, resulting in a variety of proposed dates. The dating of Matthew involves assessing a number of factors. The first is the issue of the literary relationship between the synoptic gospels. The second is the reference or not to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The third is the possible dependence on Matthew in Christian writings of the early second century.

If Matthew drew on Mark as a source, as is quite likely that Matthew post-dated Mark (see discussion in 1.1.9 on Mark and the synoptic problem). If Mark wrote just prior to the destruction of the temple, it would provide a range for Matthew's composition of approximately 70-80 C.E, although there are scholars who suggest dates both before and after this range (e.g. [85-95 C.E Sim1988:40], [58-69 C.E. Blomberg 1992:42], Luz (2005:9) argues for a date not much later than 80 C.E, given the familiarity with Matthew seen in early church writings such as the Didache and the letters of Ignatius (Brown 2013:576)).

However, in the light of Markan priority, a hypothesis accepted in this research (1.9.2), it becomes obvious that Matthew was written later than Mark. The question is whether this happened before or after the destruction of the temple. France (1989:83-84) argues that in dating Matthew, one of the facts that needs to take into consideration is that Jesus's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem which, while significant in all of the synoptic gospels, is emphasised in Matthew, can indicate that Matthew wrote his account after the events of 70 C.E. While Mark's relatively vague statements reflect what was bound to come, Matthew's account is thus taken to display circumstantial knowledge which marks it as *vaticinia ex eventu*.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.4 The context of the Gospel of Matthew

Among the many difficulties in Matthean scholarship is the search for its context; according to Tuckett (2014:475-78), the matter of searching for the social, religious and ethnic identity of

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<sup>41</sup> Robbins (1976:2021), however, has argued to the contrary from an extra-biblical source that since 2 Baruch distinguishes between the throwing down of the wall and the burning of the temple specifically, a reference to the burning of the city as such is inaccurate, and therefore could only have been written by someone who did not know what happened.



Matthew, irrespective of whether one is referring to Matthew's gospel or Matthew the author or the possible Matthean community from which Matthew came from. The question of for whom Matthew may have written his gospel has been a matter of great concern in Matthean scholarship in recent studies. Seemingly every aspect of the subject has been dealt with at great length, and combinations of possible solutions to vast problems on the issue have been proposed at some time or other during the course of research.<sup>42</sup> The only reliable data for this is the text itself. It is therefore important to examine the document for clues to its social and historical setting (Barr 1987:198). This is not an easy task as Montefiori (1927: lxxiii) once exclaimed, 'the gospel seems to contain so many contradictions, and to wear a double face. It is at once Jewish and anti-Jewish, legal and anti-legal, narrow and anti-gentile, also catholic and universalist.' Indeed, there is a broadly accepted scholarly consensus that Matthew's gospel was written within a strong Jewish background. In this setting, the church was living 'across the street' from the synagogue, perhaps in the same city or region. Even though Matthew is not addressed to a specific church, it provides some clues about the situation from which it arose (Holladay 2017:200).

The gospels are 'cultural products', so understanding the nature of their cultural milieu is important for their interpretation. From the time of Christ right up to the apostolic age there were two major cultural influences: the Greco-Roman worlds and Judaism (Brown 2013:576). This is what Johnson (1999:21) refers to as the symbolic world of the New Testament. In the case of the New Testament it may be better to speak of the symbolic worlds, as its setting was complex and pluralistic. The Gospel of Matthew itself is not free of the influence of these settings. However, Sim (1998:299) concludes that the Matthean community was first and foremost a Jewish group of believers in Jesus. As faithful followers of Jesus as Christ, they can properly be called Christ-followers, since it is mistaken to label their religion as 'Christianity'. The religion of Christianity, better described as gentile Christianity in the first century, is associated with the joining of gentile Hellenists with the initial group of Christ-followers. At first the followers of Jesus were a homogenous group of people from Judaism. However, after the spread of the gospel into the gentile world and its acceptance by the gentiles, it changed into a new social movement that can be called Christianity. So, as its theology changed, its focus became more on the salvation of all people and less on the salvation of the Jews. To refer to the movement of those following Jesus during the life of Jesus as Christians is to read the

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<sup>42</sup> For further discussion of this see Tuckett (2014:475-504).

composition and theology of a later gentile-Jewish group into an earlier period.

The evangelist and his readers were followers of the Christ who did not accept that the coming of the Christ had rendered null and void the definitive precepts of Judaism. Some scholars contend that Matthew and his church were thus still within the fold of Judaism, while others argue that a parting of the ways had already occurred (e.g. Stanton). The overall tone of the rhetoric and the shape of Matthew's response, however, makes it probable that the Matthean church had separated from the synagogue and that it consisted of both Jews and gentiles and was thus creating a new identity within a changed situation.

In terms of the provenance of the first gospel, Syria is the most likely locale. Not only did a strong Jewish community exist in Antioch Syria, since Christianity took hold there quite early, there but is there also evidence from other sources that Antioch was a centre of Christian mission (Ac 11,13 Gal 2). A Syrian origin is also suggested by the fact that Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, made extensive use of Matthew (Holladay 2017:201).

### **3.5 The purpose of Matthew's writing**

Unlike John (20:31), the author of Matthew does not include his purpose statement in his volume. Scholars thus must look at the themes and topics that are most common in the book to determine its purpose. It has been suggested that Matthew wrote to convert non-Christian Jews or to defend the gospel against Jewish hostility and misunderstanding. Or perhaps he wrote to help his readers support their arguments against Pharisaic Judaism and to understand the nature of the relationship between the Old Testament and its fulfilment in Jesus and the church (France 1989:120-121). According to this view, Matthew wrote to demonstrate that the major events in the life of Jesus took place in fulfilment of what the Old Testament had promised. In this Matthew is, however, not unique since it is a common theme in the New Testament (e.g. in most Pauline writings and general epistles like Hebrews). Even though it is a dominant theme in this book, this feature alone would seem to indicate and suggest that the author was a Jew writing for Jews. But even so, this gospel also has a universal focus that is clearly stated in its conclusion with a commission 'to go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19-20).

It is also probable that this gospel has an apologetic purpose. It would have answered many questions about Jesus which may well have been raised against him by the early opponents of the gospel. For example, the infancy story would answer any charge of illegitimacy against

Jesus. The descent into Egypt and the subsequent return to Nazareth would again account for the residence of Jesus in Nazareth rather than Bethlehem. The same might be said of the character of some of the details in the resurrection narrative which are peculiar to Matthew (e.g. the story of the bribing of the guard, which would refute any allegation that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus). It is worth noting in discussing Matthew's purpose how it has been affected by the rise of redaction criticism. According to redaction criticism greater importance should be attached to the editorial policies of the evangelist than to the nature of his sources. Its focus is also on the theological intention of Matthew rather than the teachings and doings of the historical Jesus.<sup>43</sup>

It is fair to infer that Matthew wished to demonstrate among other things that Jesus is the promised Messiah – the Son of David, the Son of God, the Son of Man, Immanuel, the one to whom the Old Testament points. Many Jews, especially Jewish leaders, failed to recognize Jesus during his ministry and Matthew may have wanted to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah (Carson, Moo and Morris 1992:81). Blomberg (1992:35) argues 'the gospel then reinforces Christian faith and encourages Matthew's audience to stand fast in their allegiances to Christ despite the hostilities they incur as a result. But it also gives them more 'apologetic ammunition' as they seek to win others to their convictions and loyalties'. However, the reader must realize how little we know of the life and concerns of the first-century Christian community to which Matthew belonged as has been demonstrated by the vastly different suggestions on this issue.

### 3.6 Overview of Matthew's narrative

The Gospel of Matthew is unique in style compared to the other gospels. The most obvious feature of Matthew is the five greats 'discourses' or collections of Jesus's teachings, which are all concluded with the formula 'when Jesus had finished these sayings' or the like (ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, ἐξεπλήσσαντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ Matt 7:28). These discourses comprise chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18 and 24-25. Each appears to be based on a much shorter 'address' in one of the other synoptic gospels and each has a clear unified

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<sup>43</sup> Although many scholars think the latter is less important, it does not necessarily follow that those who approach the gospels from the point of view of redaction criticism dispense with the historical questions (Guthrie 1990:32-37).

theme. Many of the sayings occur elsewhere in the gospel, so Matthew seems to have made five careful ‘anthologies’ of the teaching of Jesus on certain subjects (France 1994:904). Matthew begins by introducing Jesus through the genealogy from Abraham (1:1-17), followed by his birth (1:18-25). Then follows the uniquely Matthean account of the visit of the wise men from the east who came to worship Jesus (2:1-23). Then the narrative shifts to recount the beginning of Jesus’s ministry as an adult: he was baptized by John (3:1-17) and tempted by Satan in the wilderness (4:1-11), then he began to call disciples and traverse Galilee preaching, teaching and healing (4:12-25). He preached the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7, 28), which focuses primarily on the disciples (i.e. the life expected of those who are faithful to God).

Matthew continues the story of Jesus’s ministry by relating a series of healing stories (a leper, a centurion’s servant, Peter’s mother-in-law, two demoniacs and a paralytic). These are interspersed with anecdotes in which Jesus responded to questions that clarify or challenge the nature of his ministry (8:1-9:38). Jesus then appointed twelve of his followers to be apostles and sent them out on a mission. Jesus furthermore instructed them about persecution and the need for radical faithfulness (10:1-11:1). Opposition to Jesus began to mount as he encountered doubt, apathy and outright hostility from diverse parties: John the Baptist, the crowds, the Pharisees and even his own family (11:2-12:50). After he told seven parables about the kingdom of heaven (13:1-53), he met rejection in his own hometown (13:54-58). His ministry also attracted the attention of Herod, who had John the Baptist put to death (14:1-12).

The story continues with an account of Jesus’s miraculous deeds such as the multiplication of food, walking on water and the exorcism of a Canaanite’s daughter. This time these are interspersed with accounts that reveal the Pharisees to be blind guides who stand under God’s judgement and accounts that show Jesus’s own disciples to be people of little faith (14:13-1:12). But then Peter received Jesus’s instruction to his disciples (16:21-20:34). Jesus repeatedly told them that he was going to suffer and die, a revelation that they found distressing. Then he taught them about humility and self-denial. He took three of his disciples up a mountain where he showed them a hint of God’s glory and was transfigured in their presence. Further instructions on issues concerning the new community, especially those who are prepared for the kingdom of heaven, were given thereafter (Matt 18:1-20:16).

Towards the end of Matthew’s gospel, the focus is on the last week of Jesus’ life on earth (21:1-23:39). It begins with Jesus heading towards Jerusalem, the city of David. Jesus entered

Jerusalem (presumably on a Sunday) with the crowds shouting ‘*Hosana*.’ The first place Jesus visited was the temple where he discovered something was wrong, after which he cleansed the temple. He then challenged the Jewish leaders’ authority and taught parables that criticised these Jewish leaders. In response the Jewish religious leaders began to question him trying to test him. Jesus responded to all their questions. And then he exposed them by calling them hypocrites before he pronounced woes on them. Then, Jesus began his private ministry to the disciples. He took them to the Mount of Olives and offered them teachings on the last days by declaring clearly that he was going to leave and return to judge the world, but that no one knows the hour and day thereof (24:1-25:46).

Chapters 26-28 is an account of the passion narrative (Jesus’s sufferings to die for the sins of the world). Jesus first shared the last meal with his disciples before he declared that one of them would betray him. Indeed, he was betrayed, deserted and denied by his disciples. He was arrested by the enemies to be tried before Jewish religious leaders and gentile leaders. Finally, he was crucified and buried but on the third day he rose again from the dead. He then appeared to the group of women. Then he commissioned his disciples to go into the whole world making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them everything they need to know about God’s kingdom and to obey it. He also promised his disciples that he would be with them until the end of the age.

### 3.7 Synopsis of Mark 13:14-23, Matthew 24:15-28 and Q

The goal of this section is to try to demonstrate the relationship between Mark 13:14-23, Matthew 24:15-28 and Q 17:21, 23-24, 31-32 and 37. As stated in 3.1 the aim of this is to demonstrate the interrelatedness and interdependent of these texts.

*The straight thick line refers to material in Mark and Matthew while the bold dotted line refers to material only in Matthew. The un-underlined material its only Markan material.*

Mark 13:14-23	Matthew 24:15-28	Q 17:21, 23-24, 31-32 and 37
14 <u>Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρηώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ</u>	15 <u>Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως</u>	21 <u>Ἴδού ὧδε ἡ</u>

ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω.  
τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ  
φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη.

15 ὁ [δὲ] ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος  
ἢ καταβάτω ἠδὲ  
εἰσελθάτω ἄραι τι ἐκ τῆς  
οἰκίας αὐτοῦ.

16 καὶ ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν ἢ  
ἐπιστρεψάτω εἰς τὰ  
ὀπίσω ἄραι τὸ ἰάτιον  
αὐτοῦ.

17 οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ  
ἐγούσαις καὶ ταῖς  
θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις  
ταῖς ἡμέραις.

18 προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα ἢ  
γένηται χειῶνος·

19 ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι  
ἐκεῖναι θλίψις οἷα οὐ  
γένονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ  
ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἢν  
ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τοῦ  
νῦν καὶ οὐ ἢ γένηται.

τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ  
προφήτου ἐστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἀγίῳ, ὁ  
ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω.

**16** τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ  
φευγέτωσαν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη.

**17** ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ  
καταβάτω ἄραι τὰ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας  
αὐτοῦ,

**18** καὶ ὁ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ μὴ  
ἐπιστρεψάτω ὀπίσω ἄραι τὸ  
ἰμάτιον αὐτοῦ.

**19** οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ  
ἐγούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν  
ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις.

**20** προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται  
ἢ φυγὴ ὑμῶν χειμῶνος μηδὲ  
σαββάτω.

**21** ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις μεγάλη  
οἷα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κόσμου  
ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ' οὐ μὴ γένηται.

**22** καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολοβώθησαν αἱ  
ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη  
πᾶσα σὰρξ· διὰ δὲ τοὺς  
ἐκλεκτοὺς κολοβωθήσονται αἱ  
ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι.

**23** ἐὰν οὖν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν Ἰδοὺ ἐν τῇ  
ἐρήμῳ ἐστίν.

**24** ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπή ἐξέρχεται  
ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ φαίνεται ἕως  
δυσμῶν, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία  
τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου·

**31** ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ καταβάτω

ἄραι καὶ ὁ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ μὴ

ἐπιστρεψάτω ὀπίσω

20 καὶ εἰ ἡ ἐκολόβωσεν  
κύριος τὰς ἡέρας, οὐκ ἂν  
ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ. ἀλλὰ  
διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οὗς  
ἐξελέξατο ἐκολόβωσεν  
τὰς ἡέρας.

21 καὶ τότε ἐάν τις ὕν  
εἴπη, Ἴδε ὧδε ὁ Χριστός,  
Ἴδε ἐκεῖ, ἢ πιστεύετε·

22 ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ  
ψευδόχριστοι καὶ  
ψευδοπροφήται καὶ  
δώσουσιν σηεῖα καὶ  
τέρατα πρὸς τὸ  
ἀποπλανᾶν, εἰ δυνατόν,  
τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς.

23 υἱεῖς δὲ βλέπετε·  
προεῖρηκα ὕν πάντα.

**Mark**

23 τότε ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπη· Ἴδου  
ὧδε ὁ χριστός, ἢ· Ἴδε, μὴ  
πιστεύσητε·

24 ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ  
ψευδόχριστοι καὶ  
ψευδοπροφήται, καὶ δώσουσιν  
σημεῖα μεγάλα καὶ τέρατα ὥστε  
πλανῆσαι εἰ δυνατόν καὶ τοὺς  
ἐκλεκτοὺς·

25 ἰδοὺ προεῖρηκα ὑμῖν.

26 ἐάν οὖν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν· Ἴδου ἐν  
τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐστίν, μὴ  
ἐξέλθητε· Ἴδου ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις,  
μὴ πιστεύσητε·

27 ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπή  
ἐξέρχεται ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ  
φαίνεται ἕως δυσμῶν, οὕτως  
ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ  
ἀνθρώπου·

28 ὅπου ἐάν ᾗ τὸ πτώμα, ἐκεῖ  
συναχθήσονται οἱ ἀετοί.

**Matt**

37 ὅπου ἐάν ᾗ τὸ πτώμα, ἐκεῖ  
συναχθήσονται οἱ ἀετοί.

**Q**

## 3.8 Matthew's redaction of Mark 13:14-23:

### 3.8.1 Material included or excluded

Here an attempt will be made to analyse the material included and excluded by Matthew as a redactor of Mark. This will help the reader to understand Matthew's emphasis and theological concerns as they relate to Mark. It appears from the NA<sup>28</sup> text that Matthew included a lot of Markan material with few additions and editorial adaptations in his gospel. There is not much material excluded from Mark in Matthew (cf. table 3.7 in of the synopsis of Mark, Matthew and Q).

### 3.8.2 Matthean arrangement of material included

Each evangelist used his creativity in arranging the materials he used. As one considers the arrangement of material in the entire passage of Matthew 24, with a special focus in Matthew 24:15-22, the Matthean arrangement of material is similar to that of Mark. Bruner (1990:859) suggests, as most commentators do, that Matthew 24:15-28 can be divided into two main divisions:

- 1) The great tribulation, vv. 15-22
- 2) The great deception, vv. 23-28.

The great tribulation focuses particularly on the difficult events that will follow while the great deception warns specifically of the coming of false prophets. Both parts (vv. 15-22 and vv. 23-28) are introduced by a 'then' (τότε in v. 16 and v. 23 respectively, Gnilka 2:320). The locale of the events in the first part is thoroughly Judean. The second part is more universal. But even the first part speaks of the apparent global 'elect' (ἐκλεκτοῦς, v. 22) by which the author means not the Judean 'deserts.' When the disciples read this 'middle' passage with a double optic (of then and now), the passage was not as irrelevant as it may appear when all the Judean references are considered. This pericope (Matt 24:15-28) focuses on the bigger picture of the rest of the passage while the focus of this study is only on the 'The great tribulation' (vv. 15-22).

According to Hagner (1995:698), the arrangement of material in Matthew is organized as follows:

- 1) Vv. 15-16 the exhortation to flee
- 2) Vv. 17-18 the urgency of fleeing



- 3) Vv. 19-20 the difficulty of the flight
- 4) Vv. 21 the horror of the tribulation
- 5) Vv. 22 the divine shortening of the tribulation

There is an obvious structural parallelism between v. 17 and v. 18 where the definite article  $\acute{\omicron}$  functions as the pronoun subject in each sentence. Both have negative imperative verbs, and in each instance, the complementary infinitive clause begins with  $\tilde{\alpha}$ ραι (to take). The added subject φυγή (flight) repeats the root of the first main verb  $\phi$ ευγέτωσαν (let them flee, v. 16). The twofold  $\acute{\alpha}$ ι ήμέραι έκεῖναι (those days) in v. 22 picks up the same phrase from v. 19. Parallelism can also be seen in v. 22 between the opening  $\epsilon$ ι μή (unless) clause and the final clause with the same subject and same verb.

### 3.8.3 Matthean seams used to stitch his tradition together

Another means often used to ascertain Matthean redaction history is to investigate the seams in his narrative. According to Carson, Moo and Morris (1992:40), ‘to fashion a continuous narrative from diverse sources, an evangelist must supply transitions. These transitions or seams often reveal important concerns of the author.’ The evangelists used seams to join the material that was available to them. Stein (1991:53) likewise asserts ‘since we now recognize that the evangelists were not scissors and paste men but theologians, it is obvious that the investigation of the way the evangelists cemented together the various isolated materials available to them must reveal something of their unique theological interests.’

Carson (1984:500) writes,  $\omicron$ υ̅ν (so) can serve as either an inferential or merely a transitional conjunction, which can sometimes be left untranslated as it does not introduce anything new temporally. If it retains any inferential force in this passage, it is very slight: ‘Accordingly when you see .... Then flee’. However, Nolland (2005:968) argues that in Matthew’s narrative  $\omicron$ υ̅ν is added, of which the force is not immediately clear and, in some cases, is inferential (so/then/therefore). If then the term  $\omicron$ υ̅ν is understood to carry an inferential sense as in ‘so/then/therefore’, there is no doubt that v. 14 carries a direct mission perspective. In that case the reference to the flight (vv. 15-25) presupposes the persecution which necessitates the movement from one town to another. This mission is then the context in which v. 10 and v. 29 can be understood. On the other hand, as is not uncommon in New Testament usage, if the term  $\omicron$ υ̅ν is read in the sense of ‘to be sure’, the reference to the mission command has less emphasis. It links v. 9 to v. 15. There is also a link between v. 2 and v. 3, which speak of the destruction

and the temple. The understanding of οὖν in this case is one of contrast (the temple standing versus none of its stones shall be left one on top of another). But there will be other events before the destruction of the temple occurs. There is thus a development of thought, which is initiated by the question which the disciples raised (v. 3) – the threat to the temple is a key sign of the coming of the end and the coming of the Son of Man.

Interestingly, in interacting with various Greek editions, one can observe that in some texts before οὖν there is ὅταν, which can be translated as ‘when’. Other Greek texts contain ὅταν (whenever) as a temporal particle, with a conditional sense which usually indicates that the events are expected to occur in an indefinite future (Morris 1992:603). On the other hand, Quarles (2017:284) argues, οὖν is inferential and introduces the appropriate response to the preceding warnings but also looks beyond 24:14 to 24:9-13. Others see the οὖν as adversative. Few scholars focus on this, perhaps because the omission of ὅταν is not considered significant. The same can be said of the question why instead of both ὅταν and οὖν there is only ὅταν? One can argue that ὅταν (so whenever) may be a variant in the Greek text. Therefore, this connecting phrase ‘so whenever’ directs attention to what to look for in the following clause. It also plays a vital role as a stitching phrase between the previous account and what follows. This phrase is important because it draws the attention of the reader as Jesus is about to begin to answer the disciples’ question.

One English translation (American Standard Version) has ‘therefore’ as a connecting phrase. Morris (1992:603) argues, Jesus spoke of the troubles his followers would have to endure as they proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. Then he turned his attention to the happenings at the destruction of Jerusalem. Morris goes on to say the phrase ‘therefore’ connects with the preceding statement and leads into what follows. It is because the end will certainly come, that the disciples are to be on their guard. ‘When’ thus has the force of ‘whenever?’ Jesus gave no indication of the exact time when what he spoke of, would take place. It will surely happen, but it is the occurrence, not the precise timing, that occupied his interest.

#### **3.8.4 Matthean additions and omissions of material from other sources**

According to Hagner (1995:697-698), Matthew continued to be dependent upon Mark as a source. Matthew also followed the order of the Markan account (Mark 13:14-20). Matthew, however, adapted the Markan wording with few significant changes. For example, in v. 15,

after the technical expression τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως (the abomination of desolation) (Mark 13:14), Matthew added the following phrase ‘that spoken of through the prophet Daniel.’ Thus, he directs the reader to the Old Testament background of the expression using his favourite formula. In the same verse Matthew replaced Mark’s masculine participle, ἐστηκότα with the neuter noun βδέλυγμα (abomination). Matthew also replaced ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, (where it ought not to) with the specific identification ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ (in the holy place) that is in the temple (Dan 11:31). Matthew abbreviated Mark by omitting the redundant μηδὲ εἰσελθάτω (nor let him go in, Mk 13:15), and changed Mark’s τι (anything) to τὰ (things). According to Davies and Allison (2006:424), this v. 15 is the text that comes closest to answering the question of v. 3.

Matthew 24:20 added the missing subject ἡ Φυγὴ ὑμῶν (your flight) to the verbal phrase οὐ γένηται (many not be, Mk 13:18) and μηδὲ σαββάτω (nor on a Sabbath) as a matter of special concern for his Jewish readers. For Mark 13:20 ‘pray that it may not happen in winter’ Matthew added ‘nor on the sabbath’ which provides a clear proof of the Jewish predilections of the evangelist (Allen 1977:256). Matthew’s syntax in v. 21 improves the awkwardness of Mark’s Greek (Mk 13:19) by making θλίψις (tribulation) the subject of the opening verb substituting his favourite τότε (then) for αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι (those days) (adding the expression twice in v. 22). Matthew omitted Mark’s unnecessary τοιαύτη (such a kind) and added μεγάλη, (great) to modify θλίψις (tribulation).

Matthew again omitted Mark’s redundant ‘which God created’ (Mk 13:19), maybe because for Jews it was not a problem, unlike for the gentiles, who needed a constant reminder that God is a creator. Lastly Matthew omitted Mark’s redundant phrase ‘whom he elected’ following the noun ‘elect.’ Morris (1991:604) comments with regards to v. 22 that most of the time this verse is treated as a continuation of the preceding argument. However, it seems more probable that it recommences the line of reasoning from v. 14, while at the same time applying primarily to the eschaton, even though it also points to the fall of Jerusalem. The reference to the elect seems to take us beyond Judaism and again ‘all flesh’ surely means more than Judaism.

### 3.8.5 Matthean changes of wording

Gundry (1982:481) notes that the replacement of Mark's δέ with οὖν (Mk 13:11, 35) makes the eschatological characteristics which, because of their generality, have no value in determining the nearness of the end, a base on which to erect a very specific sign that the end has drawn near. That sign is the abomination of desolation, which is an idol or pagan altar that causes worshippers of the true God to stay away from the place of sacrifice. To the seeing of the abomination of desolation Matthew added 'the thing spoken through Daniel the prophet'. Matthew's special interest in the prophets is well known. The addition 'reader' makes the command 'let the reader understand' imply that it refers to the reader of Daniel.

Before the command that the reader must understand, however, Matthew made two revisions to change of Mark's masculine participle ἐστηχότα to the neuter participle ἐστός and to replace of Mark's 'standing where it should not' with 'in the holy place.' The first revision aligns 'standing' with its noun 'abomination' (Mark's ungrammatical masculine participle reflects the masculine participle in Daniel's Hebrew text) and interprets the neuter noun βδέλυγμα as the image of a person (again cf 2 Thess 2:3-4, Rev 13:14-15). The second revision turns the vague reference in Mark into a specific indication of a place of worship. Matthew is fond of τόπος and ἅγιος; his attention to Daniel's 'the holy place' almost certainly means the temple where the abomination of desolation takes the place of mosaic sacrifice (Dan 9:27, 8:13, 1 Macc 2:7 and Ac 6:13, 21:28).

In v. 17 Matthew changed Mark's 'anything' to 'things.' At the same time in v. 21 Matthew changed Mark's 'creation' to 'world.' It appears that the motif of creation is stronger in Mark than in Matthew (cf. the wording of the great commission in Mark 16:15 'go in all the world and preach the good news to all **creation**' to Matthew 28:19 'go make disciples of all **nations**').

### 3.9 Summary of how Matthew interpreted Mark 13:14-23

Matthew included a lot of Markan material with few additions and editorial adaptations in his work. There is thus some change in the Matthean redaction of Mark. Matthew did not exclude much material from Mark. Matthew followed Mark in the ordering of his material. Like that of Mark in Matthew, a parallel can also be identified (Matt 24:15-28//Mk 13:14-23) that suggests Matthew's dependency on Mark. Having looked at how Matthew stitched together his own

material, the different use of οὖν in the New Testament is significant. In one sense οὖν is understood as inferential or merely a transitional conjunction, while in other instances οὖν is used as a contrast ‘to be sure’ which is very uncommon in the New Testament.

As has been pointed out, the seams that Matthew employed in this pericope are the conjunctions οὖν and ὅταν to merge this section with the previous and following section. Consequently, it serves to help the reader to see that it is the continuation of Matthew’s argument which makes a clear case for Matthew’s theological view point and further development of his own concerns. **Matthew saw this passage as one entity that depends on the rest of the passage.** So, as in Mark, Matthew also saw this portion as a response to the disciple’s question posed earlier. As France (2007:910) argues, the ‘So’ (οὖν) which begins this passage ties it closely to the preceding statement, ‘then the end will come’. After the various preliminary events and experiences mentioned in Matthew 24:4-14, which are ‘not yet the end’, the end will come. This suggests that the sequences of events predicted in fact point to the ultimate end of the world. The end itself is not announced until Matthew 24:29-31. But since vv. 29-31 describes what will happen ‘immediately after’ the events of Matthew 24:15-28, the latter may appropriately be described as the beginning of the end.

However, some scholars have chosen to translate οὖν as a connecting phrase, ‘therefore’, which emphasises that surely the temple will be destroyed, and if this is true about the temple, surely the end will come. Yet Jesus did not outline the exact timeline about the end or give specific dates. He deliberately kept these vague. However, according to Hare (1993:278-79), the main point of this account was that Christians need not be disturbed by rumours that Jesus had already returned and was hiding somewhere in Palestine. The fact is that there will be signs that will precede Jesus’s coming. The promise is that Jesus, while fully human during his earthly life, will return in supernatural glory that is beyond concealment. The statement about the carcasses in v. 28 makes the same point that the glorified Jesus will be as obvious to the world as carrion to sharp-eyed vultures.

Hendriksen (1976:524) summarises Matthew’s (24:15-28) use of Mark 13:14-23. He argues that Matthew 24:15-25 and Mark 13:14-23 are almost the same. What can be noted are some significant variations: while both Matthew and Mark mention ‘the abomination of desolation’ and contain the phrase ‘let him who reads understands,’ Matthew added ‘which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet.’ At the same time Mark’s rather obscure phrase ‘standing where it ought not’ is clarified by Matthew’s ‘standing in the holy place’. Instead of Mark’s ‘and pray

that it may not occur in winter' Matthew reads, 'pray that your flight may not occur in winter or on the sabbath'. Where Mark reads 'so as to mislead, if possible, *even* the elect' there is no doubt that the 'even' is also implied in Matthew. In these cases, it seems that Matthew expresses Christ's words somewhat more fully than Mark. But we must take note of Matthew's account of what Jesus said, 'see I have told you ahead of time.' Mark on the other hand expresses the same idea in a more expanded manner, 'but as to yourselves be on your guard. I have told you everything ahead of time.' Lastly, Matthew continues for a few more verses (24:26-28) after Mark is finished with this episode.

What Mark 13:5-13 indicates as the situation immediately before the Parousia, has become a permanent situation in Matthew, long before the Parousia discourse. Matthew distinguished between the era of mission with its persecutions, described in Matthew 10 as his own present time, and the era of the Parousia in Matthew 24 as in his future. The fact that the descriptions of the permanent situation belong to Matthew's own conception, is evident in Matthew 28:20 as well as in Matthew 25, where the theme of watchfulness from Mark 13:33-37 is transformed into the theme of watching for the second advent so that when Christ comes again, believers will be ready and prepared to accompany him into glory (Matt 25:13, 14-30). In this way, by rearranging the traditional material and dividing it into groupings, Matthew 24 gives us a focused Parousia discourse which takes us step by step to Matthew 24:26-31 containing the description of the Parousia of the Son of Man, with indications of the signs which are to precede this Parousia (Marxsen 1956:139).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

As we conclude, it has been noted that just like in Mark the sign of the 'abomination of desolation' (2.2.2) was also identified as problematic by Matthew. Note, however, the change of wording in Matthew who instead of the vague 'standing where it ought not to stand' wrote 'standing in the holy place. The Matthean Jesus thus understood the prophet Daniel not only historically as referring to an abomination of desolation in Daniel's (or a future near to Daniel's) time, but he also read it theologically as referring to a future time (thus applying Daniel to the end of time). Something like the abomination of desolation in Daniel's time did in fact recur in Jesus's time (the Roman destruction of the temple). And something like the abomination of desolation in Jesus's time may happen at the end of time. This seems to suggest that when Matthew wrote his gospel, the temple was already destroyed but that the end time

had not occurred.

As Boring (2015:328-329) argues, ‘in Matthew’s time there was no temple to be defiled, but ‘holy place’ could be understood more generally (2 Macc 2:18 uses the term to describe the Holy Land).’ On the other hand, one can argue that the reason why Mark is more general, is because his audience was not familiar with or had no idea of the significance of the temple. Also, Matthew carries over from Mark the puzzling statement ‘let the reader understand’ (2.2.3). The statement is puzzling because it is not clear who the reader is who is being referred to? Does the reader refer to Daniel’s readers? Is the reader the person reading the gospel aloud to the congregation, who should insert some Targum-like explanation at this point (Blomberg 1992:358)? It can refer to anyone who reads these words and he/she must take them very seriously because they are true. According to Morris (1992:603), this little parenthesis inserted at the same place in Mark’s account (Mk 13:14), refers to the reader of Daniel, not to the reader of the gospel in which the words occur.

The warning is followed by advice to flee (2.2.4) when this sign comes to fulfilment. Consequently, it was expected that Jesus’s followers would flee as soon as possible should the sign be fulfilled. According to Bruner (1990:861), the command to ‘flee’ can also be understood figuratively because Matthew wanted this text to be applied even beyond Judea to the later worldwide church. According to Hays (2016:106), Matthew repeats the saying as Mark did (13:14), but he wanted to make sure that the reader will understand. So, Matthew glossed the text with additional information specifying Daniel’s prophecy. Ever the scribe, Matthew specified the textual source for the reader who may need to look it up.

Matthew also clearly specified where this abomination will be. It will be in the ‘holy place’ as opposed to a vague ‘where it ought not to be’. He did not leave anything to chance. Matthew organized his material in a didactic, user-friendly fashion – a kind of ‘training manual for prophets.’ This may be one of the reasons why in the Christian canon Matthew is placed first and why it was the gospel most cited by the early Christian community. Matthew’s project was to organize the Jesus tradition in a form that made it clear, harmonious and accessible. Most importantly, Matthew’s emphasis on prediction and fulfilment evidently has an apologetic thrust. This rhetorical tactic seeks to validate his affirmations about the identity of Jesus by grounding them in Israel’s authoritative texts. Also, they are advised to pray that when this happens, there will be nothing to hinder them from fleeing, like being pregnant (24:19). Finally,

Matthew linked Jesus's teaching with the prophetic events of the Old Testament. In so doing Matthew tries to challenge his readers to think hard about what Jesus thought them. So, as they anticipate and experience these events, they need not live in ignorance and at the same time they need to be faithful and prepared. This will ensure that they will not be taken by surprise but will always be on their guard. Towards the end of this pericope Jesus warned the disciples and said, 'no one knows about that day or hour not even the angels in heaven nor the Son of Man but only the Father.... **Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. So, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him** (Matt 24:36, 42, 44). So, if the Son of Man has not appeared, they need to live in a manner that is pleasing to him. So, they can be partakers with him in the heavenly inheritance.



## **Chapter 4 – The redaction of Mark 13:14-23 in Luke 21:20-24**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The focus of this chapter will be to understand the meaning of Luke 21:20-24. The idea is to first understand Luke's view as an independent source before comparing it with the other synoptic gospel writers in chapter 5. In this chapter the background issues will be considered first as a means to follow the flow of Luke's argument. These, issues concern authorship (4.2), date (4.3), context, purpose (4.4) and Luke's narrative overview (4.5) to trace Luke's argument up to Luke 21:20-24. Then a synopsis of Mark 13:14-23 and Luke 21:20-24 will be given (4.6). Following that, a redactional analysis of Luke 21:20-21 will be undertaken following the same steps as in the previous chapter (4.7). Then, the summary of how Luke interpreted Mark 13:14-23 will be given (4.8) and finally the conclusion of this chapter (4.9).

### **4.2 Authorship**

The third gospel does not mention its author anywhere, but early tradition ascribed it to Luke. It appears that both Luke and Acts are works from the same author. The reason is that both works are dedicated to one individual with the name Theophilus (Lk 1:1, Ac 1:1). At the same time in Acts 1:1 the author refers to what he called his 'former book' so Acts appears to be the second volume of a two-volume work. A strong argument in support of this view is that the style and vocabulary of both works are similar (Carson, Moo and Morris 1992:113).

The question is, who was this Luke? According to Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-5, the author of these two volumes does not claim to be an eyewitness of the life and death of Jesus Christ. But the author claims that he had access to first-hand material and sources for writing his account. He also claims to have a close personal relationship with some of the eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus. He also knows of efforts that were made to arrange the facts concerning Jesus in narrative form (Lk 1:1-4). The author furthermore claims that he has carefully investigated the events of the story of the life and death of Jesus. He has, however, written his own orderly account so that readers may know the truth about these events (Isaak 2006:1203). According, to Carson, Moo and Morris (1992:14), the use of the first person singular in the openings of both Luke and Acts shows that the author took a personal interest in what he was writing.

In Acts one notes the author's several uses of 'we' when referring to some of Paul's events (16:10, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, 27:1-28:16). So, the reading of Acts suggests that Luke was not in the original circle of apostles but was connected to the apostolic tradition through Paul (Holladay 2005:158). A Luke is mentioned in some New Testament writings as a physician and companion in Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24 and 2 Timothy 4:11, which raises the question whether it is the same person as the author of Luke-Acts. The last 'we' passage locates the writer in Rome at the time of Paul's imprisonment there. So, the author could be one of those mentioned as being with Paul at the time and is probably not mentioned in Acts. Of all those who are mentioned in these passages, Luke seems to be the best possible legitimate guess. However, within New Testament scholarship there is no tradition that is left unchallenged and it is to be expected that the Lukan authorship of Luke-Acts has its critics.

Marshall (2010:979) asserts that some scholars argue against the tradition (Lukan authorship) by pointing out that the picture of Paul in Acts is so distorted that it can hardly have been written by a companion and contemporary of Paul. The gospel also has the atmosphere of the time after the apostles. It seems to fit the church of a period that had given up hope of the imminent return of Jesus and had settled down into conventional, institutional life, sometimes known as 'early Catholicism'. In response to this criticism Marshall (2010:979) argues that neither of these arguments is strong enough to overcome Lukan authorship for these two volumes. Some argue that the early Christians expected the immediate return of Jesus at any moment but to their surprise found it would be delayed, which led them to think that they must have been mistaken and the return was postponed to the indefinite future, but there is no conclusive evidence that all early Christians expected the return of Jesus almost directly after the resurrection. It is also not true that the return of Christ lost all significance in Luke (see 12:35-40, 17:20-37, 18:8, 21:5-36). The evaluation of external evidence for Lukan authorship is therefore also necessary.

As early as the later part of the second century C.E. there were witnesses attesting to Lukan authorship. For example, the Muratorian Canon, the anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian all specifically state that Luke was the author of Luke-Acts, not only of the gospel, but also of the Acts of the apostles. At no time was any doubt raised against this view point and certainly no alternatives were proposed. Scholars, however, often attach little importance to this. For instance, HJ Cadbury maintains that the earliest testimony (that of the Muratorian Canon) contains nothing that could not be inferred

from the text of the New Testament itself. He therefore deduces that Lucan authorship was probably a guess based on the ‘we-passages’ of Acts. He argues his case by an appeal to the uncritical approach towards authorship generally of the Muratorian fragment as for instance, in the case of the Gospel of John. There is important evidence in the Muratorian Canon, contemporary with the time of Irenaeus, which describes the origin of the gospel as proceeding from John after a vision given to Andrew that John should write it and his associates revise it. He is consequently not willing to place much weight upon the tradition.

Although this statement must be received with caution in view of what is generally thought to be the improbability of Andrew surviving until the late date allocated to the gospel, there is no reason to dispute that the general connection of John with the production of the Gospel of John was commonly accepted at the time in Rome. Naturally it cannot be denied that an initial conjecture may be repeated by successive witnesses until it becomes mistaken for fact as the history of modern criticism abundantly illustrates. However, Cadbury’s argument seems to be invalid since he suggests the identification of Luke as the author of Luke-Acts was due to a process of elimination but does not explain how such a process led inevitably to Luke. The obvious question is why it was linked with an insignificant person like Luke and not any of the apostles? Hence, it seems plausible to retain the tradition of Lucan authorship for both the gospel and Acts instead of rejecting it outright (Guthrie 2017:13-124, 271), even though it is impossible to prove it.

### **4.3 Date of composition**

The dating of Luke is also problematic with several proposals made in New Testament scholarship. In general, there are two camps. There are those who argue strongly for an early dating before 70 C.E. and others who support a dating after 70 C.E. According to Liefeld (1984:807-809), the Lukan dating largely depends on four factors. Firstly, the Markan dating and Luke’s relationship to it. Secondly, the date of Acts. Thirdly, the possible destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21. Fourthly, the theological and ecclesiastical tone of Luke-Acts. In view of it being accepted that Luke used Mark, one can trace the Lukan dating in line with it. Hence, other critics often assume a later dating for Luke as being written after the destruction of Jerusalem around the seventies. For example, Streeter (1924:540) argues for a date after 70 C.E. because Luke changed the eschatological picture of Mark with its exposition of the coming of the abomination of desolation and attendant miseries into a description of the fall of

Jerusalem by substituting something known to have happened (the destruction of the temple) for something that had failed materialize.

In response to this view Carson, Morris and Moo (1992:117), argues that since Luke used Mark, the dating of Luke changes if Mark was written earlier than these critics allow for. Luke may thus have been written earlier as they say it can be argued that both Mark and Luke were close associates of the apostle Paul. So, it is possible that Luke obtained a copy of Mark's gospel quite early. At the same time, it is argued that Luke must be dated somewhere close to the time when Matthew was written. As Matthew is mostly dated in the eighties, Luke should also be dated there. But it is not clear why Luke should be dated near Matthew's time of writing (which is also disputed). Indeed, many people wrote versions of the life of Jesus before Luke 1:1 was written, and this would have taken time.

However, a good number could have written their versions in thirty years, which brings us to the early sixties. As there is consensus that Paul was writing as early as the forties and up to the early sixties, it seems that the arguments for the late Lukan dating are mostly subjective. There is no convincing reason for a date in the eighties. The evidence for an early date seems more convincing than for a later time, even it cannot be proven. But how about the date of Acts in this regard? The main considerations in the dating of Acts relate to the time of Paul's imprisonment and the date of the Neronian persecution. Acts 28:30 takes leave of Paul with a reference to his two-year imprisonment in Rome. This provides a *terminus a quo* for the date of Acts. The fact that there is no record in Acts of the subsequent persecution under Nero in 65 C.E. and of Paul's death at about that time, suggests that Luke wrote Acts before these events.

Luke's Olivet discourse in 21:8-36 complicates the Lukan dating in that most scholars see this discourse as a *vaticinium ex eventu* (a prophecy given after the event). In this case Luke would have added details known to him to the discourse in Mark 13 to show his readers what he thought Jesus must have intended with certain sayings. In response to this, it can be argued that one cannot assume that Jesus did not include Jerusalem in his predictions. Also, if Luke had adapted the prediction to events that occurred at a later date, it is strange that he did not also modify the prediction of the accompanying apocalyptic events, including the coming of the Son of Man. These did not happen in 70 C.E. in the literal sense in which Luke probably would have intended them. But the conventional apocalyptic terminology is retained in Luke 21 even though the passage has very little additional detail about the destruction of Jerusalem as would be expected if it was written after the event (Liefeld 1984:808). Finally, if one is to date Luke,

then one should first consider the dating of Mark and Acts. In other words, Luke should be dated in the light of Mark and Acts. In the light of this a date in the early sixties or a date in the later decades of the first century seems probable. Hence, a date around 70 C.E. appears to satisfy all requirements (Marshall 1973:34).

#### **4.4 Luke's context and purpose**

In the prologue of Luke 1:1-4 the author clearly states the reason why he is writing his gospel. In this passage Luke specified that he is addressing his book to 'Theophilus' so that he may be sure of the things wherein he was instructed (1:4). However, many scholars (Geldenhuis, Marshall, Bock) agree that Luke also undoubtedly had a broader audience in mind to address with the message of the gospel. Danker (1988:8-9) asserts that the author's narration of Jesus's miracles likewise contained the theme of universal outreach that is found in numerous Greco-Roman honorary documents. But it is clear from Acts 10:38 that Luke intended this feature to be understood as part of a coherent account of God's beneficent intentions for outsiders as well as insiders relative to the divine promises made to Israel.

Furthermore, as suggested by Johnson (1991:4-5) with regards to Luke's purpose, one should treat Luke's gospel together with Acts because they are two volumes that claim the same authorship, recipient and purposes (Lk 1:1-4, Ac 1:1-4). According to Barker and Kohlenberger III (1994:206-207), Luke may have had several purposes in mind even though Luke 1:1-4 makes it clear that central to the two volumes are the theme and theology of salvation and the frequent proclamation of the gospel. Luke supports the message about Jesus with eyewitness accounts (e.g. Lk1:1, Ac 10:39) and proofs from prophecy (Ac 10:43), hoping to confirm the faith of Theophilus. Guthrie (1997:93) asserts that where an author explicitly states his own purpose, that should continuously be given more attention than any scholarly suggestions. Remarkably, Luke explicitly stated his purpose for us in his preface; his purpose was to write an orderly account, even though he may not necessarily have meant a strict detailed chronological order to be taken seriously. He also made it clear that his purpose was carried out after great care in establishing the facts. According to Green (1997:21), Luke's writing suggests the evangelist's concern with the legitimation of the gospel and providing an apologetic for it. The narrative unity of Luke-Acts highlights the centrality of God's purpose to bring salvation to all. The first century world was comprised of several mixed cultures which exerted a large influence on Jewish religious activities. It is therefore important to understand

and see how God's purpose and its embodiment in Christendom would have been the source of controversy and uncertainty. In view of this Green suggests that the purpose of Luke-Acts would have been to strengthen the Christian movement in the face of opposition by ensuring them of their interpretation and experience of the redemptive purpose and faithfulness of God and by calling them to continued faithfulness and witness in God's salvific project. The purpose of Luke-Acts would thus be primarily ecclesiological and thus concerned with the practices that define the church and the criteria for legitimating the community of God's people which rested on the invitation to participate in God's project.

According to Conzelmann (1960:95-97), whose view held sway for many years, Luke wrote to explain why Jesus had not returned. He argues that the first Christians expected the imminent end of the world and the return of Christ. Luke wrote in a time when this hope was fading. Luke recognized that the church had come to stay and should settle down in the world. Why else write a history? Luke emerged as a theologian of church history and addressed the problem of disillusionment by reinterpreting eschatology. He divided salvation history into distinct successive epochs. Firstly, the period of Israel recorded in the Old Testament. Secondly, the period of Jesus's ministry in the centre of time. Thirdly, the era of the church. Garland (2016:36) argues that there are two significant points that can be drawn from Conzelmann's hypothesis. Luke translated the phrase 'kingdom of God' dynamically as 'God's reign' referring to God's kingship. But there are passages which clearly refer to a 'kingdom' (13:28-29). While Luke did not abandon a belief in the nearness of the end, he depicted God's reign as both present in the person of Jesus and to be consummated in the future. Luke's presentation of the kingdom of God and eschatology is thus highly complex.

On the other hand, Scobie (2005:340) argues that Luke does not divide God's dealings with his people into three distinct epochs, but one unfolding divine plan. He thus emphasizes the continuity of salvation history. For Garland (2016:37), if Luke thought in terms of epochs, there are only two: the time of prophecy (1:70, 10:24, 16:13, 31, 18:31, 24:25, 27, 44, etc.) and the time when the prophecies have been fulfilled (1:1, 4:21, 22:37, 24:44 etc.). Luke does not regard the new as discontinuous with the past. Smith (2000:10, 19) also concurs with this view that Luke's narrative shows how Jesus represents the continuation of the biblical story. His intention to write scripture should not be excluded from a consideration of the purpose as well as the result of the composition of the gospels.

Luke presents the scriptural story and its themes as culminating in Jesus. Luke wrote with the

assurance that the gentile Christians will listen (Ac 28:28). Salvation came to the gentiles as a direct intervention of God. It was validated by scripture. So, Jesus's ministry, according to Luke, prefigured the inclusion of gentiles and the certification of Jesus's followers by the empowering work of the Holy Spirit as demonstrated in Acts by their experiences, which reveal that God's favour is upon them (Garland 2016:38).

#### **4.5 Overview of Luke's narrative**

Luke began his work with a brief prologue as an introduction that states his purpose (Lk 1:1-4) as in the second volume (Ac 1:1-8). Luke in this volume then presents the birth narratives (1:5-2:52). The focus of these birth narratives is to present the miracle of the birth of Jesus as a unique divine person whom God sent to earth to redeem his people. In Luke the focus is on Mary, the mother of Jesus, unlike in Matthew where the focus is on Joseph as the earthly father of Jesus. In between these birth narratives are the hymns that are uniquely Lukan. In Lukan style one is used to introduce the birth of John the Baptist (Lk 3:1-22) who's going to prepare the way for the Messiah. This is followed by the genealogy of Jesus (3:23-28) and the temptation of Jesus by Satan (4:1-13).

After Luke introduced his readers to these humble beginnings of Jesus, he moves further to present Jesus's public earthly ministry. At this juncture we see Jesus begin his Galilean ministry (4:14-9:51). Jesus started to preach at Nazareth, his home town (4:14-30). In response to this kind of preaching, Jesus was immediately rejected in Nazareth. After this incident, Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee. Luke then reports many miracle stories interspersed with accounts of Jesus calling disciples. Jesus further engaged the religious elite about various controversial issues (4:31-6:16). He preached the Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49), healed the centurion's servant (7:1-10), and raised a widow's son from the dead (7:11-17). He engaged John the Baptist's question and responded to it (7:18-50). Luke then mentions that Jesus had many women followers (8:1-3), followed by a few parables and some words about his family (8:4-21). Another account about the miracles performed by Jesus and the sending out of the disciples (8:22-9:1-17) is given before Jesus, for the first time, directly asked his disciples: 'Who do the crowds say I am?' In response Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ.

Afterwards Jesus told his followers about his death and sufferings and then again related a call to discipleship. At the same time, he revealed his glory at the transfiguration (9:18-50). From

there on Luke geographically turned his focus to Jerusalem from 9:51, which served as turning point of the ministry of Jesus (Powell 2009:148-149). Now Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem (9:52-19:27). Along the way Jesus was rejected in a Samaritan village (9:51-56), the disciples were sent on a mission (10:1-12, 17-20) and Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha (10:38-42). In between this Jesus performed several miracles. There is a focus on discipleship in Jesus's teaching of his disciples as well as several parables about God's kingdom and the implication thereof (11-19:27).

Finally, Jesus entered Jerusalem and wept over it as he predicted its destruction (19:28-44). He then challenged the religious leaders by cleansing the temple and told the parable of the wicked tenants (19:45-20:19), where after he responded to a series of questions directed to him by the religious elite of his era. After noting a widow's offering (20-21:4), Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and warned of the end of the world (21:5-28). The rest of the book focuses on the passion and resurrection narratives. Luke makes it clear that Jesus suffered and died for the sins of the world and he rose again on the third day. For Luke there was clear evidence that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. Finally, he sent his disciples to preach the gospel to everyone and he blessed his disciples before he ascended into heaven (24:50-53).

#### **4.6 Synopsis of Mark 13:14-23 and Luke 21:20-24**

Again, just as in the previous chapter (3.7) the aim here is to demonstrate the relationship between these key texts.

*The straight thick line refers to material included in both Mark and Luke, while the bold dotted line refers to Lucan additional material. The un-underlined material comes from Mark only. Luke 21:20-24 has no parallel in Q but other portions of Luke 21 and 17 appear in Q.*



**Mark 13:14-23**

14 Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγα τῆς ἐρηώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω, τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη,

15 ὁ [δὲ] ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος ἢ καταβάτω ἠδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἄραι τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ.

16 καὶ ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν ἢ ἐπιστρεψάτω εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἄραι τὸ ἰάτιον αὐτοῦ.

17 οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις.

18 προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα ἢ γένηται χειμῶνος·

19 ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι θλίμεις οἷα οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἢν ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τοῦ νῦν καὶ οὐ ἢ γένηται.

20 καὶ εἰ ἢ ἐκολόβωσεν κύριος τὰς ἡμέρας, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ. ἀλλὰ διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οὓς

**Luke 21:20-24**

20 Ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλή, τότε γινώτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήωσις αὐτῆς.

21 τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν.

εἰς τὰ ὄρη

καὶ οἱ ἐν ἔσω αὐτῆς ἐκχωρείτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς χώραις ἢ εἰσερχέσθωσαν εἰς αὐτήν.

22 ὅτι ἡέραὶ ἐκδικήσεως αὐταὶ εἰσιν τοῦ πλησθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμένα.

23 οὐαὶ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις·

ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη ἐγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὀργὴ τῶ λαῶ τούτῳ.

24 καὶ πεσοῦνται στόατι ἀχαίρης καὶ αἰχλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἰερουσαλή ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.

**Q 17**

**Q 17:21, 23, 24, 37 // Lk 17:21, 23, 24, 37**

ἐξελέξατο ἐκολόβωσεν τὰς  
ἡέρας.

21 καὶ τότε εἰάν τις ὑῖν  
εἴπη, Ἴδε ὧδε ὁ Χριστός,  
Ἴδε ἐκεῖ, ἢ πιστεύετε·

22 ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ  
ψευδόχριστοι καὶ  
ψευδοπροφήται καὶ  
δώσουσιν σηεῖα καὶ  
τέρατα πρὸς τὸ  
ἀποπλανᾶν, εἰ δυνατόν,  
τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς.

23 ὑεῖς δὲ βλέπετε·  
προεῖρηκα ὑῖν πάντα.

Mark

Luke

Q

## 4.7 Luke's redaction of Mark 13:14-23:

### 4.7.1 Material included and excluded

The focus of this section is to ascertain the material included and excluded by Luke as a redactor of Mark. This will help the reader to understand Luke's emphasis and theological concerns in relation to Mark. According to Liefeld (1984:1023), the problem of the tradition history of this passage (Luke 21:5-38) and the issues surrounding Luke's possible editing of Mark 13, is a complex one. However, Marshall (1978:754) asserts that it is quite evident that Luke knew Mark 13 and used it as a source. The wording is almost identical to that in Mark. In vv. 5-11a, 16f, 21a, 23a, 27, 29-33, and elsewhere there is parallelism in structure and thought, even though the wording differs significantly.

Furthermore, Edwards (2015:591) notes that the material in Luke 21:5-36 constitutes the last public address of Jesus in the third gospel. Its closest counterpart in the synoptics is Mark 13, which Luke apparently utilized. Luke altered the Markan material significantly and shifted the focus more prominently to the fall of Jerusalem than in the Gospel of Matthew. Into his Markan material Luke also regularly weaved material from his special source. There is no Lukan parallel with Q in this pericope.

### 4.7.2 The Lukan arrangement of the material included

Nolland (1993:999-1000) notes that Luke 21:5-38 is a single continuous speech. The division of units in this passage is at times a little random but wherever possible it does seek to mark the major transitions in the text. Luke 21:5-36 continues to follow the Markan sequence, but there is less agreement about whether his Markan source is the main basis upon which he based his version of these materials. The judgement of God upon Jerusalem is part of an escalation that leads ultimately to worldwide judgement upon the nations and to the coming of the kingdom of God and the Son of Man. Again, we have the Markan sequence, but now little close agreement with the Markan wording (in v. 20 the opening three words and the use of ἐρήμωσις 'devastation' in v. 21, and the opening clause of v. 23). Scholarly opinion is divided about whether Luke rewrote Mark extensively (after the destruction of Jerusalem) or if he was using a second source. A second source theory involves vv. 20, 21bc, 22, 23b and possibly also v. 24 as part of a larger document including vv. 11b, 18, 26a, 28 and possibly vv. 25a, 25b. Luke is

likely to have intervened in the wording of v. 22b. Meanwhile v. 24 is something of a pastiche of Old Testament allusions. None of the descriptions in vv. 20-24 warrant the suspicion that it was formulated in the light of the actual experience of 66-70 C.E.

Edwards (2015:603) asserts that these verses recapitulate an earlier allusion in 17:31, and an explicit reference in 19:43-44, to the fall of Jerusalem. In the same vein Green (1997:738-39) asserts that what is only suggested by the narrative sequence, is enthusiastically promoted in Jesus's subsequent predictions. Firstly, the scene Jesus paints is redolent of his earlier words in 19:43-44, where it is self-evident that divine judgement would come upon the city because of its failure to recognize and accept the salvific visitation of God. Secondly, Jesus draws the details for his description mainly from the LXX, with consequences that show a virtual collection of scriptural texts. These scriptural texts present the predicted destruction of Jerusalem. For Luke the destruction of the city is 'a fulfilment of all that is written' (v. 22). Thirdly, Luke described the season of Jerusalem's fall as 'days of vengeance' (v. 22), using a scriptural phrase denoting divine judgement. Fourthly, the scene Jesus imagines with Jerusalem 'trampled of judgement against Israel'. Evidently, the anticipated fall of Jerusalem is depicted as a divine judgement for its unfaithfulness before Yahweh.

#### **4.7.3 Lukan seams used to stitch his sources together**

Nolland (1993:1000) observes that the opening phrase 'But when you see' and the use of ἐρήμωσις (devastation/desolation) are all that Luke and Mark have in common here. Its purpose is to alert the listeners about what is going to happen as they need to be ready and prepare for that event. Lenski (1961:1018) asserts that Jesus was answering the question in v. 7 in a full and clear manner. Firstly, Jesus mentioned the general signs of the end times. The reference to Jerusalem in v. 20 need not be construed as a *vaticinium ex eventu* (a prophecy after the event). It is often pointed out that were this so, Luke could have included more precise details. Furthermore, the vocabulary was already at hand and well known (Liefeld 1984:1021). Rogers's (1998:164) analysis of this phrase is as follows: Ὅταν δέ ἴδητε – (ἴδητε-Aorist, Subj, active. S.v. 1. Subj. w. Ὅταν in an indef. Temp. cl.). Interestingly various English translations differ in translating this phrase. Some translate this conjunction in two different ways (i.e. 'but' meanwhile others put 'and'). On the other hand, others omit both 'but' and 'and'. The conjunction 'but' seems to be a possible translation. However, in the Greek Ὅταν means 'when

or whenever’. So, ‘when’ is likely to be a plausible translation because the argument still continues, and it is only now that Jesus starts to respond directly to question of the disciples.’

#### **4.7.4 Lukan additions and omissions of material from other sources**

According to Fitzmyer (1985:1342), Luke 21 is a radical reworked form of Mark 13:14-23. As far as a form-critical assessment is concerned, these verses contain prophetic sayings of Jesus. Whether he ever uttered them in the Lukan form, is highly questionable since there is a heavy overlay of Lukan redaction and composition here. Marshall (1978:770) asserts that this Lukan passage is parallel to Mark 13:14-23, but the amount of verbal parallelism is slight (for example, in Luke four words in v. 20, v. 21a and v. 23a.). Mark refers to the puzzling ‘abomination that causes desolation’ and exhorts the people to flee to Judea. Mark goes on to emphasize the awful plight of the people under tribulation. By contrast Luke specifically names Jerusalem and refers clearly to a siege, unlike in Mark where the focus is on the desolation of the Temple (Mark 13:14). It is noteworthy that in Mark the abomination that causes desolation is going to stand where it ought not to be, i.e. in the temple, but in Luke the focus is the entire city of David that is going to be desolated and the sign for this desolation is the encircling of the city by enemy armies.

Stein (1992:520) makes the comment that the present participle (being surrounded) may refer to the time when escape was still possible because the wall the Romans built around the city had not been completed (cf. Josephus, wars 7.8.5 [7.340]). Edwards (2015:603) argues that the reference to Jerusalem ‘surrounded by [Roman] armies’ (v. 20) refers to its total subjugation either by sword or imprisonment (v. 24) and its ‘trampling by the gentiles’ (v. 24) repeats and expands earlier references to the encirclement of Jerusalem with palisades, the slaughter of children (23:28-31) and the pulling down of the walls of the temple of Luke 19:43-44. Meanwhile, Marshall (1978:770-771) argues that the Markan warning about the delay (cf. Luke 17:31) is replaced by a warning to keep away from Jerusalem (Lk 21:21b ‘let those who are inside the city depart and let not those who are out in the country enter it’) with the idea of God’s vengeance and wrath added. In Luke 21 there is no suggestion that Jerusalem is being judged because it killed Jesus. In Luke the Markan (13:20) enigmatic reference to the shortening of the period of tribulation for the sake of the elect, is omitted.

Luke also omitted the parenthetical editorial comment by Mark ‘let the reader understand.’

Furthermore, Luke, just like Mark, included the warning in v. 23 that so great will be the distress in the Jewish land in those days of retribution that instead of motherhood being a joy and a blessing, it will be a curse and a source of afflictions. This formulation is similar to Josephus's description<sup>44</sup> of the overwhelming of the Jewish land and the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Luke also chose to add the death and captivity of the Jews and the subjugating of Jerusalem by the gentiles. Morris (1976:299) notes that here Jesus speaks of the times of the gentiles. This is not an easy expression to understand and a variety of explanations have been suggested. It may refer to the time of the gentiles to execute God's judgements or to rule over Israel or to enjoy the privileges hitherto belonging to Israel to have the gospel preached to them. It is also possible that Luke had in mind the period of the conversion of the gentiles. The reference to these times as being fulfilled, points to a divine purpose for them. According to Green (1997:739), 'times of the gentiles' has a dual reference in this context.

As noted there are several Lukan additions and omissions in this passage. These Lukan additions and omissions have led to a long-standing debate amongst New Testament scholars that Luke was not only dependent on Mark. Some scholars argue strongly that Luke might have had another source while writing this pericope. According to Marshall (1978:770-771) the Lukan changes can, however, be explained in terms of Luke rewriting Mark. For example, Luke clarified the allusion to the events of 66-70 C.E. in the light of history. Luke omitted language which might make the fall of Jerusalem seem to be closely associated with the end and replaced it with prophetic language, thereby emphasising the element of divine judgement upon the Jews. Thus, he pronounced the final verdict upon Jerusalem. Other scholars argue that Luke's use of Mark seems to suggest a gentile audience (Geldenhuis, Beasley-Murray, Ellis). Another view is that Luke was independent of Mark. In this regard C.H. Dodd argues that Luke

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<sup>44</sup> Josephus tells us that 97,000 were taken prisoner throughout the war and 1,100,000 were killed in the siege (Bellum vi.420). Even if we allow for exaggeration, it is plain that the loss of life was staggering. It seems that Jerusalem could not have held the numbers of which Josephus speaks. J. Jeremias works on the information that at Passover there were three groups of worshippers who came to sacrifice their animals, the first two crowding the court. Allowing two men (each with his animals) per square meter, the court could take 6,400 when jammed full. Since the third group was not so large this would total about 18,000. With ten worshippers per sacrificial victim, this yields a total of about 180,000 at Passover time (Jerusalem in the times of Jesus pp 77ff). Without the pilgrims he estimates the normal population was about 25,000-30,000.

was dependent on the LXX for his descriptions of the siege of Jerusalem and not on Mark or the actual event.

The evidence for Luke's use of another source alongside Mark can be seen in the grammatical irregularity regarding the antecedent of αὐτῆς in v. 21b. No satisfactory explanation for this has been offered based on Luke's dependence purely on Mark. The passage has links with 19:41-44 and 23:28-31 and it is unlikely that all these passages came from Luke's own pen but rather reflect a stream of tradition of pre-Lucan origin which can also be seen in the Q sayings 11:49-51 (parallel Matt 23:43-36). The wording of the passage is based solidly on the Old Testament, which suggests that the fate of Jerusalem is being compared with the earlier judgement upon the city at the hands of the Babylonians. Marshall (1978:771) concludes that it seems probable that Luke made use of traditional material from the LXX in rewriting this passage from Mark. The close parallelism in structure with Mark suggests either that Luke simply rewrote Mark or maybe that Luke used an alternative form of the tradition found in Mark. The latter view implies the tradition had already undergone development before it reached Luke.

#### **4.7.5 Lukan change of wording**

Bock (1996:1651) asserts that there are several issues that seem to suggest that behind this account there is a source or number of sources that are different from those normally drawn on by the gospel authors. While each account has essentially the same sequence of themes, the vocabulary differs. In fact, Marshall (1978:754-55) suggests that the Lukan discourse can be described as Markan in structure but non-Markan in wording. Luke 21:20-24 is parallel to Mark 13:14-20, but the amount of verbal parallelism is slight. Only four words of Mark occur in Luke 21:20, 21a and 23a. Mark refers cryptically to the 'desolating sacrilege' and the need for the people of Judea to flee to the mountains. Conversely, Luke explicitly names Jerusalem and clearly points to a siege. Mark's warning about the delay is replaced by a warning to keep away from Jerusalem. The idea of God's wrath is included although there is no suggestion that Jerusalem is being judged because it killed Jesus.

Mark's enigmatic reference to the shortening of the period of tribulation for the sake of 'the elect' is dropped. Luke speaks rather of the death and captivity of the Jews and the subjugation of Jerusalem by gentiles. It is possible that he has in mind the period of the conversion of the

gentiles. These changes can be explained in terms of Luke's rewriting of Mark. Luke removed the apocalyptic language which might make the fall of Jerusalem seem to be closely associated with the end. Again, Luke substituted it with prophetic language, thus emphasising the element of divine judgement of the Jews. Hence, he pronounced the final verdict upon Jerusalem (Marshall 1978:770-71).

#### **4.8 Summary of how Luke interpreted Mark 13:14-23**

Luke changed the language which might make the fall of Jerusalem seem to be closely associated with the end and replaced it with prophetic language to take away the element of judgement upon the Jews. The thought may be based on Zechariah 8:12-14 where the siege of Jerusalem by the nations is followed by the return of the Jews and the conversion of the gentiles. This motif was well accepted in the early apostolic tradition (Rom 11:25-27) and it might well be expressed in Luke although it is not that clearly. Elsewhere Luke indicates that the gentile mission did not have to wait until after the fall of Jerusalem (Marshall 1978:774).

After the destruction of Jerusalem comes a time of universal upheaval that will bring upon the nations their own experience of divine judgement. This will usher in the coming of the Son of Man and the final deliverance, which he will bring. The picture is of terrorised people anticipating the unleashing of the destructive forces of chaos. This sense of a dreaded future is developed further in Luke 21:26. According to Green (1997:741), although the nations will respond with perplexity, people will faint (or even die) of fear and the heavenly powers will be shaken at the onset of these portents, Jesus advises a different course of action for his followers. Their response should be one of confidence, standing with raised heads, assured that the Day of the Lord is for them a day of redemption. The parallel statements, 'your redemption is drawing near' (v. 28) and 'the kingdom of God is near' (v. 31) help to qualify the nature of the object of Jesus's prophecy. Lieu (1997:167) argues that Jesus dismissed any concentration on the fate of the temple or an expectation of an imminent 'finale'. Instead, in what follows, he spoke more of the slow but certain pattern through which they must first live. Jesus's concern was not with providing a clear timetable but with encouraging the disciples in their faithfulness during all that is to come.

The end is indirectly alluded to by the language of Luke 21:23-24. Luke saw in Jerusalem's collapse a less intense preview of what the end will be like. So, the instructions he offered here



are like those that appear in the description of the end in 17:23, 31. He wanted to make clear that when Jerusalem falls the first time, it is not yet the end. Nonetheless, the two falls are related and the presence of one picture what the ultimate siege will be like. Both are eschatological events in God's plan, with the fall of Jerusalem the down payment and guarantee of the end-time. Luke has no parallel to Mark 13:15-16. Luke used a version of this in 17:31 (taken from the Markan source). In any case, though they make quite different points, there is too much structural similarity between this material and what Luke wrote in v. 21bc (but with the house in the former taking the place of the city in the latter) for a good literary sequence. In the same way Hendrickx (2001:156) argues that Luke entirely omitted Mark 13:15-16, 'which makes the situation too eschatological for credulity' (Goulder 1989:2, 712). Instead, Luke contains a sentence in v. 22 which is connected to Luke 21:21 by means of 'for', which presents Luke's own interpretation of the destruction of the temple.

So, v. 22 in Luke has no Markan parallel. Luke used Markan material and wording for 21:23a, οὐαί, 'woe', whereas in the Markan context the difficulty applies more to pregnant and nursing women and focuses on their inability to move with the haste necessitated by the situation. There is less emphasis on haste in the Lukan context, where we should think more generally of women in such situations being less well equipped to handle extreme hardship (Nolland 1993:1002). Again, v. 23 begins the second part of the section of Luke 21:20-24. V. 23a follows Mark 13:17 verbatim but is made to refer to the siege of Jerusalem in 69/70 C.E. rather than the unparalleled terrors of the flight described in Mark 13:15-16, 18-20, which Luke omitted (Scheizer 1984:317). In Luke, 'those days' is a 'biblicism' derived from the Septuagint which qualifies the future as the end-time (Pesch 1968:149). Then v. 23b no longer speaks of eschatological distress but only of the distress that shall be upon 'this people'. So, that the Greek word γη should probably be translated 'land' rather than 'earth'. 'On the earth' then should be understood as referring to Judea (Marshall 1978:773, Zmijewski 1972: 187, Keck 1976:158, Bock 1996:1679). Therefore, what follows is the description of a historical event in the various details in which prophecy is fulfilled (Schweizer 1984:317).

Hendrickx (2001:159) further asserts that by means of numerous images, which echo Old Testament texts, v. 24 then describes the situation of distress and the wrath more concretely. The expression 'they fall by the sword' literally 'by the mouth of the sword' is found in 1 Samuel 15:8 and Sir 28:18 LXX and a similar image is found in Hebrews 11:34. They will 'be taken away as captives among all nations' is an allusion to Deuteronomy 28:64 LXX, 'The

Lord will scatter you among all peoples'. The end of v. 24 mentions the times of the gentiles. According to Nolland (1993:1002-03), the final clause normally referred to the time in which the gentile nations have dominance or occasionally to the period of the gentile mission. But there is much to be said for taking καιροί ἐθνῶν (times of [the] nations) as referring to the period as a judgement upon the gentile nations that corresponds with the judgement upon Jerusalem. After the καιροίς (time) of Jerusalem, comes the καιροί (times) of nations. By the end of v. 24 the perspective has moved beyond that of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Despite the starting point in Luke 21:5-7, the narrative has developed a momentum of its own and would lack closure if it stopped at the point where the question of 21:7 has-been answered. It has become clear that the answer to that question, opens a perspective on larger issues.

On the other hand, Luke utilised Mark 13:14-23 in a different manner. Fitzmyer (1985:1342) sees Luke 21:20-24 as a radically reworked form of Mark 13:14-20. According to Craddock (1990:243), Luke seems to have had Mark 13 in front of him as he wrote his report about this event. But again, Luke was a writer and not a copier, so modifications are to be expected. Similarly, Hendricksen (1978:937) comments that Luke can be called a commentary of the other two synoptic gospels. Conversely, Ellis (1966:244) argues that this pericope is structurally too independent to be regarded as a Lukan paraphrase of Mark. The priority of Mark's wording appears more probable than the theory that Mark and Luke are independent adaptations of an original oracle. However, Luke seems to be clear that this portion of scripture is to be understood in terms of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, not the Parousia. He did retain some of the material that appears in Mark 13:14-23. While he also left out some of these things, Luke included some new ones and some changes in wording. In terms of Mark's 'abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be' Luke 21:20 adds 'when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.' Luke also omitted the exhortation of the 'reader to understand.' Luke adopted a version of the Markan Jesus's 'abomination' oracle (Mark 13:14ff) that had been restated for a generation that its fulfilment was attached to the destruction of the entire city. This type of *peshet*-ing probably has its origin in the activity of early Christian prophets. It is uncommon to regard this passage as a historicizing of Mark (Ellis 1966:244).

Also, Luke maintained the exhortation to flee to the mountains, yet left out the expression of those on the roof top of the house and those in fields not going back to pick up their cloaks.

Instead Luke 21:21 states ‘let those in the city get out and let those in the country not enter the city’. This is a warning concerning the dreadfulness of the day mentioned in Mark 13:17, which will be a terrible experience especially for the vulnerable like pregnant women and nursing mothers. Luke 21:22 interprets those days as punishment and fulfilment of all that has been written. Moreover, Luke 21:23-24 added ‘there will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. And they will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled.’

Nolland (1993:1000-1001) argues that the opening ‘when you see’ and the use of ἐρήμωσις, (devastation/desolation) are all that Luke and Mark have in common here as was the case in 19:41-44. The vocabulary used regarding the fall of Jerusalem can be recognised from LXX descriptions of earlier threats to Jerusalem (for the terms used in v. 20, see Isa 29:3, Jer 41:1 [MT 34:1], 51:6, 22 [MT 44:6, 22]). The temple focus of Luke 21:5-6 gives way to a Jerusalem focus here. The Markan correspondent in 13:14 maintains the temple focus but with its Danielic allusion (‘desolating sacrilege’, see Dan 12:11, cf 9:27, 11:31), concerned with the desecration rather than the destruction of the temple, since for Mark the temple desecration implied disaster for the whole of Judea. The significance of the difference of focus should, however, not be exaggerated.

Luke reshaped the pattern of events to come. Luke’s version shows how a church which was facing a longer period of continuing existence than was first expected, found meaning in the version of the final working out of God’s plan (Lieu 1997:166-167). Gerland (2016:838) further comments that the temple is no longer a status symbol of God’s abiding favour and will be destroyed along with Jerusalem. The structure of Luke’s discourse describing this disaster interrupts the chronological flow of events. The signs preceding the assault on Jerusalem (21:8-11) and the details describing its downfall (21:20-24) are interrupted by a description of the persecution of the disciples. The treatment of Jesus and his followers provides an explanation why the temple and Jerusalem will be destroyed. These events do not have an immediate tie to the end of time. So, they do not help in mapping out the sequence of the end-time drama. But they can be charted (Bridge 2003:127):

Jesus's death (c. 30 C.E.)	End of Acts (c. 60 C.E.)	Destruction of the temple (70 C.E.)	Eschaton
Persecution of the disciples (21:12-19)	Sign (21:8-11)	Fall of Jerusalem (21:20-24a)	Eschaton (21:25-28)
		Times of the gentiles	

Jesus made no mention of the temple's restoration because it would have become irrelevant. Forgiveness of sins will come in Jesus's name (24:47) and the focus of redemption is the coming of the Son of Man in power and glory (21:27), not the rebuilding of a desolate city. According to Tiede (1988:366) it is important to recognize that Luke's narrative does not yet know how God will finally fulfil the promises to Israel. Luke does emphasize that the resurrected Jesus commissions his disciples to proclaim, 'repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem' (24:47, see Ac 1:8) and they begin at Pentecost with that very message (Ac 2).

According to Turner (2008:577), the expression 'let the reader understand' may mean that Jesus encouraged his own readers to read Daniel<sup>45</sup> or that the Matthew editorial encouraged his own readers to ponder his matter.<sup>46</sup> Either way, these words stress the desecration of the holy place as a key sign of the horrors to come. According to Carson (1984:500) this expression 'let the reader understand' was Daniel's true meaning of what the passage is about. This

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel is described as a prophet even though his book is contained in the Writings or Ketubim, of the Hebrew Bible. The LXX and the Christian Bibles put Daniel with the Prophets. Cf similarly 4QFlor 4.3-4, citing Daniel 12:10, Josephus, Ant.10.249.

<sup>46</sup> Gundry (1982:481-82) seems to hold the view that the reader who is exhorted to understand, is the reader of Daniel: "the very command that the reader understands derives from Dan 12:9-10, just before Danielfor [these] words are concealed up till the end time...and none of the wicked will understand but those who have insight will understand. Because of his attention to Daniel 'the holy place' almost certainly means the temple, where the abomination of desolation takes the place of mosaic sacrifices (Dan 9:27 8:13, 1 Macc 2:7, Ac 6:13, 21:28)." France (1985:340) is also an advocate of the view 'the phrase 'let the reader understand' calls on those who read Daniel's words to apply them to their own situation. Hendriksen (1973:857) asserts "let the man who reads Daniel's prophecy understand this! Just as in the past the holy places of the Lord had been desecrated so it will happen again."

parenthetical aside is not a Matthean addition, but he took it from Mark. Furthermore, the fact that the Markan abomination of desolation will be standing where it ought not to be. Matthew explained the vague Markan expression as to refer to the ‘Holy place’, possibly in the temple courts. Luke resolved the matter: ‘when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near’ (Luke 21:20). Possibly the Markan Jesus may have said this ambiguous statement. So, Luke, who probably wrote for a gentile audience, was less concerned with Daniel, and just emphasized the aspect of warning. Luke omitted ‘abomination of desolation’ standing either where it ought not to be or in the holy place. Instead Luke interpreted that abomination as the destruction of the entire city of Jerusalem.

Hendriksen (1973:858) comments that when the Roman armies arrive and desecrate the holy place, that is the soil which together with its ‘holy city’ and ‘holy temple’ was desecrated. So, when this occurs, those in Judea should ‘flee to the hills’. Tasker (1961:224) notes, that ‘the appearance of the abomination of desolation would be an indication to the inhabitants of Judea not to seek refuge in Jerusalem but escape over the hills immediately and so speedily that there would be no time to salvage their belongings. And because wintry conditions and a strict observance of the sabbath would greatly impede such a flight, the disciples were to pray that climatic conditions would be favourable and that it would not have to be made on a sabbath’.

## 4.9 Conclusion

Luke’s point of view in this portion of scripture is clearly different to that of other synoptics. Luke seemingly does not address all the problematic issues identified in 2.2.1-2.2.4. However, Luke does address some of the problems. For example, in the case of the ‘abomination that causes desolation’ (2.2.1) Luke associates that event with the destruction of the entire city of Jerusalem (4.7.1). However, in Luke 21:20-24 the focus is the destruction of Jerusalem and not the eschaton. This pericope also has some distinctly Lukan material while Luke dropped some of the material included in the other synoptics which may have been irrelevant for the Lukan audience (Morris 1983:298). According to Bock (1996:1696), for Luke, Jerusalem’s destruction was like the second advent of the Son of Man and both ages would be difficult times of judgement for the earth. In the case of the return, it will come unexpectedly and evidently with a series of cosmic signs. The effects of Jesus’s coming will cover the entire earth and involve all humans. When the end comes, it will come quickly, within a generation from beginning to end. The return will signal the Son of Man’s exercise of authority as Jesus reveals

the full extent of his rule. Another problematic issue identified in 2.2.4 is the call to ‘flee to the mountains. Luke instead encouraged his audience to escape from the city. Also, those who are outside the city, but who are still in the country, should not enter the city (Lk 21:21).

## Chapter 5 – Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

Primarily this study seeks to investigate the meaning of Mark 13:14-23 as understood by Matthew and Luke by undertaking a redaction critical study of Matthew and Luke. Hence, the focus of the study is not on what Mark intended with his discourse but instead how Matthew and Luke understood it. The following three related research questions have guided the research:

- i. How was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Matthew?
- ii. How was Mark 13:14-23 interpreted and utilised by Luke?
- iii. Did Matthew and Luke interpret and utilise Mark 13:14-23 differently in terms of it being understood in either anticipatory or descriptive in terms of the events it refers to?

These questions take Markan priority as the point of departure for this research in that they are concerned with Matthean and Lukan redactional perspectives. This concluding chapter will undertake a critical appraisal of the assumption of this study that **a redaction critical study of Matthew 24:15-28 and Luke 21:20-24 (who were the first to interpret Mark) can provide an important insight into the interpretation of Mark 13:14-23 by Jesus followers in the first century**. It is not easy to undertake a synoptic redaction study of Mark 13 since it contains several difficult texts (i.e. Mark 13:14-23). In reflecting on the results obtained by this study, the following will be considered:

5.2 The understanding of Matthew and Luke of Mark 13

5.3 Differences between the use of Mark 13 by Luke and Matthew

5.4 Contribution of the research

5.5 Conclusion

## 5.2 The understanding of Matthew and Luke's use of Mark 13

In the light of the hypothesis (1.5) proposed at the beginning of this study, the obvious question is: What significant insights did the study provide for understanding the possible meaning of Mark 13:14-23? The following exegetical issues were identified in Mark 13 in chapter 2.

### 5.2.1 Abomination of desolation

The most significant insight is that both Matthew and Luke are interrelated to and interdependent on Mark 13 even though they wrote for different audiences in different settings with slightly different purposes. However, it became apparent that there is not much difference between their versions in terms of the flow of argumentation and content of the respective references to Mark 13. Beare (1981:467) comments that Matthew reverted to his Markan source at this point and followed it closely through the section. Matthew made additions and changes to give greater definition to the picture.

In both Matthew and Luke there are *changes of wording* that further explain Mark's unclear statements, phrases or words. In Mark 13:14, Mark vaguely mentions the 'abomination that causes desolation, standing where it ought not to be' without any further explanation. However, Matthew in his account tried to clarify Mark's ambiguous statement 'where it not to be' (ἔστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ) by adding this phrase ἐν τόπῳ ἁγῶ (in the holy place). The saying thus becomes clearer especially when one considers that in the immediate context of Matthew 24:1-4 one can conclude that it is a reference to the temple. Matthew alludes to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 8:13, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11). And the words 'let the reader understand' may mean that Jesus encouraged his immediate audience to read Daniel and ponder on this matter. Either way these words stress the desecration of the holy place as a key sign of the horrors to come (Turner 2008:577). Beare (1981:467) concurs with this observation, as he asserts that Mark does not mention Daniel as the source while Matthew does associate this event with Daniel's prophecy.

It is unclear in Mark whether the abomination is a person or a thing. However, the reader is expected to understand. Juel (1990:179) asserts that in Mark the image refers to something the reader is expected to know. The readers are furthermore addressed directly by the narrator. Matthew went further and corrected the grammar of Mark by replacing the masculine ἔστηκότα of Mark (perhaps chosen deliberately to indicate that he took the 'abomination' to be a statue, representing a god) by the neuter participle ἐστός, in agreement with its antecedent noun. He also changed Mark's vague 'where he ought not to be' to the more precise ἐν τόπῳ ἁγῶ (in the



*holy place*). For the rest Matthew copied Mark word for word.

Luke is more specific than Mark by situating or providing the geographical setting of this temple in Jerusalem and focusing on the destruction of the entire city. Luke points out that ‘when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near’ (Lk 21:20). Edwards (2015:603) argues that the ‘desolation’ (Lk 21:20, Gk. ἐρήμωσις) of Jerusalem recalls Jeremiah’s repeated and identical reference to the fall of the city under Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century B.C.E. The disciples expected an imminent messianic enthronement of Jesus in Jerusalem (Mark 10:35-40), but it is the desolation of Jerusalem that is imminent (*similarly* Amos 5:18-20).

According to Bock (1994:1659) in v. 20 Jesus describes Jerusalem’s destruction in detail. The sign of its destruction will come when armies surround it. Jesus had already predicted this in Luke 19:41–44. Because of his focus on the nearness of Jerusalem’s fall, Luke’s version does not include certain details from the other synoptics. It does not include Jesus’s words about it being a time of unprecedented tribulation. It does not mention the Lord’s decision to cut short these days so that humanity will survive. He omitted any comment about events not coming in winter. Most importantly, it does not discuss ‘the abomination that causes desolation’; it mentions only its desolation. The focus throughout is the city’s destruction, a destruction that encompasses, but is not limited to, the temple. This will be a time of tension, but it is not yet the end. A phrase unique to Luke shows the distinction. ‘Jerusalem will be trampled on’ until the ‘times of the gentiles are fulfilled’. The judgment on Jerusalem remains until that time is completed.

### **5.2.2 Flee to the mountains**

However, the exact meaning of Luke 21:21 is difficult to determine because of the phrase ‘let those in the country not enter it’. The NIV translates ‘it’ as to mean ‘the city’ (i.e. Jerusalem). Historical circumstances support this interpretation. For instance, Josephus (J.W 6.366) noted that when Titus erected the siege perimeter (circumvallation) around Jerusalem, flight into or out of the city became impossible. Those who had fled into the city earlier were not thereby assured of safety but rather almost certainly of death either by the Romans or the rebel bandits who were equally murderous. At the same, ‘it’ could also refer to Judea, for it is the subject of Luke 21:21 and this ‘it’ (αὐτήν) agrees with Judea in terms of gender and number.

If Judea is the possible reference, Luke 21:21 warns the faithful from seeking refuge in Judea itself. Historically, prior to the siege of Titus, several Christians fled from Jerusalem to Judea to Pella in Transjordan. Eusebuis (Hist.eccl.3.5.3) reported that ‘the church in Jerusalem was commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Pella’. Thus, both grammatical and historical circumstances support a broader understanding of Luke 21:21 as warning believers to flee to Judea itself.

### 5.2.3 Let the reader understand

Another unclear Markan utterance is ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω- (let the reader understand). Matthew retained this phrase, but Luke omitted it altogether. Obviously, the question remains, who is this reader that both Mark and Matthew refer to? Carson (1984:500) suggests that the ‘parenthetical’ utterance ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω (let the reader understand) may refer to both the reader of Daniel and that of the gospel since Jesus here in Matthew associated the events of the Olivet discourse with Daniel’s prophecies. This parenthetical aside is not a Matthean addition (unless one holds to Matthew’s priority), for it is already in Mark.

Matthew clearly understood it not as an aside by Mark to draw the attention of his readers to the importance of this gospel text but, as an aside by Jesus to draw the attention of his hearers who had read Daniel to the importance of Daniel’s words, hence Jesus’s mention of the ‘prophet Daniel’. Whether the identification Jesus made is a prediction fulfilment or typological fulfilment depends largely on how one understands the various ‘abomination of desolation’ passages in Daniel. However, the reader cannot only be limited to a reader of Daniel. It also includes the gospel reader with the assumption that he/she knows or is familiar with Daniel’s prophecy. In the same vein, Carr and Conway (2010:273) suggests that the direct address to the reader suggests that the audience of the gospel should recognize the allusion in relation to current events of their time.

Similarly, Matthew in his discourse made an equally marked change of subject in Matthew 24:36. Also to be noted is his use of the actual term παρουσία twice in Matthew 24:37-39, which seems to denote the event spoken of in v. 36. Matthew then was probably aiming at relating it to the initial question of Matthew 24:3, to purposefully differentiate the event from the events associated with the fall of Jerusalem. Hence, it is doubtless from v. 36 that Matthew understood Jesus to be speaking of the Parousia only up to the point of the destruction of the

temple and the entire city. However, considering the proceeding passages, one can observe that Matthew seems to continue with his argument even further. In fact, after Matthew 24:36 the focus seems to develop further to the end of time as preceded by Jerusalem's destruction. So, the language of Mark 13:24-27 and Matthew 24:39-31 should be understood as events related to 70 C.E. At the same time the discourse goes even further to include the eschatological outlook.

### **5.3 Differences between Luke and Matthew's use of Mark**

According to Marxsen (1956:135-36), if one compares Luke 21 with Matthew 24, they show not only similar features, but also features that differ. Matthew 24:3 introduces a discourse dealing exclusively with the Parousia which is still being awaited. The time thereof is completely uncertain and is no longer linked with any contemporary pronouncements. Only Matthew used the expression Parousia here, the only place in his gospel in which he employed it at all, to indicate the theme of his discourse. Thus, there is a seam which separates present and future, though Matthew marked out epochs not of time but of importance. For Matthew what mattered was an assured belief about the destruction of the temple as a valid sign that would lead to the final epoch that is the end of time. The synoptic authors did not focus on the exact, detailed and specific timetable thereof.

Stein (1992:519-20) argues that several differences between the Lukan material compared to its parallel passage in Matthew helps the reader to better understand Luke's interpretation of Mark 13, for example, the reference to the 'abomination of desolation' found in both Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:15. Luke omitted this and referred instead to Jerusalem being surrounded and its nearing desolation (21:20). Luke may have done this because his gentile readers would not have understood this expression. More likely, however, is that Luke did this in order not to confuse Jerusalem's fall with the events associated with the end time. Similarly, Luke omitted Mark 13:20 (par Matt 24:22) in which Jesus speaks about the shortening of the days for the sake of the elect. Whereas Mark and Matthew used Jerusalem's fall as an example of the persecutions of the end time, Luke was referring in 21:20-24 only to Jerusalem's fall in 70 C.E, and the 'elect' were not involved in this event.

Bock (1996:1667-1679) asserts Luke's relationship to the other synoptic accounts likewise becomes highly complex. Matthew 24:15-22 (par Mark 13:14-20) describes the collapse of

Jerusalem, which is one of the signs of consummation, as well as of fulfillment. The different emphases are most clearly indicated by what Luke lacks. Luke does not mention that the tribulation in this period is the most intense ever to befall humanity. Also, it does not mention that no human would have survived if the Lord had not cut short these days, does not note that the time should not be in the winter, and does not discuss the ‘abomination of desolation,’ only ‘its desolation.’ Conversely, Luke alone mentions ‘the time of the Gentiles.’ What do these differences mean? They indicate that Luke emphasized a different element in Jesus’s teaching at this point. He focused on the nearer fulfillment in the judgment pattern described here, the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., rather than the end (which he introduced directly in 21:25).

Finally, one can conclude that both Matthew and Luke made significant changes to the Markan discourse, in part because they needed to interpret it in the light of their own understanding of the events they were living through and of their expectations for the future. Evidently, both Matthew and Luke tried to respond to the Markan problematic issues listed in chapter 2.2. For example, Matthew kept the vague statement about the ‘abomination of desolation’ of Mark 13:14 and further explained what it means or refers to by interpreting it in the light of the Danielic prophecy (24:15). Both Matthew and Luke thus shed some light on the exegetical problems in Mark 13 that helps contemporary readers to understand what seems vague and unclear in Mark even though not every single issue was addressed by each synoptic author. The reason for keeping some vague or unresolved issues may be that they did not view them as being problematic or vague.

#### **5.4 Contribution of the research**

As we conclude this research, the concern of this section is how this research contributes to the study of the New Testament? The approach that was applied in this study to investigate the meaning of Mark 13:14-23 seemingly has great value for a better understanding of the text under consideration from *within the New Testament canon*. This is not to deny the value of extra-biblical sources for understanding the text or its *sitz im leben*. This study has, however, set itself a very specific task as stated in 1.4.

It has been demonstrated clearly that even though the three evangelists investigated presented this discourse in a quite a similar manner, there are also significant differences between them. Both differences and similarities play a substantial role in presenting the unique perspectives

of each evangelist. Issues that are not clear in Mark, were clarified by both Matthew and Luke either by adding to the narrative or by a change of wording in their redacting of the material available to them for the sake of clarifying the point at hand. For example, in Matthew 24:15-22 in which the first evangelist followed Mark throughout, Matthew cited Daniel's prophecy as additional material to clarify Mark's vague phrase ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ. So, Matthew located that statement in the context of the discourse on the holy place. In this way the Matthean additional material helps the reader to grasp a clear view of the statement from Mark. 'The expressions such as 'must not take the time to go down' is presented clearer in Matthew than its Markan equivalent. ὁ [δὲ] ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ καταβάτω μηδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἄραι τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ,' (Schweitzer 1975:452).

Bunt (2013) maintains that though redaction criticism has been applied to several types of Biblical material, it is most useful in the study of the synoptic gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark and Luke) for the simple reason that we have three writings with clear literary links. The fundamental idea of redaction criticism is to determine the author's redacting or editing of sources available to him/her to discern his/her theological view point. Redaction criticism has many facets that interpreters can use to investigate the meaning of a text. However, in this study, the focus was on the changing of wording, seams in the discourses and omissions and additions in the text.

A synoptic reading of Mark also sheds light on how its contribution was evaluated by its first interpreters. According to Martin (1972:29), the Gospel of Mark has had a chequered history since the time of its creation. It is apparent that the first Christian reaction to this gospel was, however, one of acceptance and acknowledgement of its authority in that Matthew and Luke were content to follow the Markan order and to be guided by Mark's outline of the ministry of Jesus. By understanding how they interpreted Mark, one can also see the early developments of the Jesus tradition and the spreading of the gospel writings. As Burrige (2013:336) asserts, the historical research into early Christian communities requires careful study of how Matthew and Luke edited Mark's account, which reveals each writer's theology, purpose and methods as they acted as 'editors'. There is thus value in new and classic redaction critical studies of Mark. The classic redaction studies were undertaken by Bornkamm (1963[1948]) on Matthew's revision of Mark for use within the new religious community of the church while Conzelmann (1954) in turn worked on Luke's understanding of the events of Jerusalem taking place 'in the middle of time' between Israel and the church.

Such redaction-critical approaches not only highlighted the intentions of each evangelist but also led to theories about the communities that produced the gospels. The gospels were read as ‘community’ documents where the history of the community is overlaid upon the story of Jesus, giving a ‘two-tier’ approach to reading them. Therefore, interpretation began to focus on the development of groups such as the Matthean community or the Johannine community. Thus both form and redaction critical approaches ended up concentrating more on the early Christian communities and churches than on the figure of Jesus himself. However, according to Wenkel (2014), while the community authorship theory states that early redaction theory connected the gospels with specific audiences and narrowly defined communities (e.g. Johannine, Matthean etc.), this was based on speculative reconstructions. In reaction to these criticisms’ community authorship is currently widely rejected.

Bauckham (1998:2) recently championed as hermeneutical key the idea that the gospels were written for all Christians. In the end, the hermeneutical issue is whether the gospels should be read as a narrative about Jesus or as a narrative about a hypothetical Christian community that scholars can reconstruct behind the gospels. Bauckham (1998:2) argues that the gospels were written for all Christians and not specific churches, which has wide ramifications both for the historical study and the contemporary reading of the gospels. This approach also closely relates to the way in which the whole of the early Christian movement should be understood. In general, according to Carson, Moo and Morris (1992:45), the problems of redaction criticism are its exaggerated claims, false assumptions and inappropriate application. Pursued properly, however, redaction criticism offers the promise of real help in interpreting the gospels.

Firstly, by focusing on the final, authorial stage in the production of the gospels, it offers immediate help to the interpreter and theologian. In this respect it contrasts favourably with both form and source criticism which both, in their concern with the prehistory of the gospel tradition, are important for the historian of early Christianity but are often of only minimal help to the interpreter of the final works. Redaction criticism looks at the level of the final literary product – the written gospel material itself (the book).

Secondly, this method of interpretation reminds us that the evangelists wrote with more than (though not less than) historical interest. The evangelists were preachers and teachers, concerned with applying the truths of Jesus’s life and teaching to specific communities in their own day. This theological purpose of the evangelists has sometimes been lost, with a consequent loss of appreciation for the significance and application of the history that the

evangelists narrate.

Thirdly, this approach recognizes and increases our appreciation of the multiplicity of the gospels. The story of Jesus has come to us not in one super gospel but in four gospels each with its own distinct and important contribution to make to our understanding of Jesus. While creating occasional problems on a historical level, this fourfold gospel should be appreciated for the richness of perspectives it brings.

In the light of this Morris (1968:107) made the claim that Jesus is such a gigantic figure that we need all four portraits to understand him. This compels gospel readers to appreciate the artistry and meaning of each of those portraits. The synoptic additional material by both Matthew and Luke provides significant insight. For example, Matthew associated the ‘abomination of desolation’ with the prophecies of Daniel while Luke saw this event as a fulfilment of all that has been written (Lk 21:22). In accordance with Matthew’s perspective, it seems plausible to suggest that this event of abomination of desolation is not just futuristic but historical. So, even though there were past events from Daniel’s era, this one is more horrific and terrifying because not only will the temple be defiled, it will also be destroyed. Furthermore, because of the temple’s destruction, the entire city will be in desolation. Therefore, the synoptic authors cited or alluded to Mark and other sources to support their viewpoint as they sought to explain the Markan discourse.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The first chapter gave an overview of the background and problem statement of this study. In the second chapter the focus was on the interpretation of Mark 13:14-23 by contemporary scholars to determine why it is often referred to as the most difficult text in the entire book of Mark. At the same time chapter 2 tried to examine what other Markan scholars have noted to be problematic in the text. As the study has shown, there is a vast range of different opinions among scholars about the meaning of this text in regard to these and other exegetical issues.

**This study has attempted to understand how Matthew and Luke addressed these issues and specifically if they interpreted and utilised Mark 13:14-23 differently in terms of it being anticipatory or descriptive in terms of the events it refers to.** As stated in 1.4 the major concern of this study is not what Mark intended with his discourse, but rather how Matthew and Luke understood Mark 13.

In terms of the main research question (1.4) this study has shown that these events of Mark 13 are both anticipatory and descriptive as presented by the synoptic writers. However, if one only uses the focus texts (Matt 24:15-25 & Luke 21:20-24) of the study then it is not that easy to conclude whether Matthew and Luke are descriptive about the ‘abomination of desolation’. However, scholars such as Creed, Danker, and Zmijewski argue that Luke’s different emphasis (on the destruction of Jerusalem) compared to other synoptic gospels, is evidence for the descriptive view. Conversely, Bock (1996:1675) argues that Luke in the sixties saw the handwriting on the wall for Jerusalem based on the covenant unfaithfulness of Israel, just as Jesus did. It seems, plausible to conclude that both Matthew and Luke viewed the event of ‘abomination of desolation’ as historical and at the same time as an event that prefigures the end of the world. Their message is that followers of Jesus must be acutely aware of their place in salvation history, that they are living in the ‘end times’ between the first and the second coming of Christ. Finally, the redaction critical study of both Matthew 24:15-28 and Luke 21:20-24 has provided a significant insight for the understanding of Mark 13:14-23.



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