The Commandment of Love for Enemies in Matt 5.43–48 and Its Early Jewish Context

Matthias Konradt

Translated by
Wayne Coppins[1]

The commandment of love for enemies handed down in Matt 5.44 and Luke 6.27–28, 35 is undoubtedly one of the most striking forms that the commandment of love for neighbor took in ancient Judaism. There is a *magnus consensus* that we are dealing with authentic Jesus material here.[2] More than that, the commandment of love for enemies is generally regarded as the peak statement of the ethics of Jesus.[3] Its history of interpretation is characterized to a not insignificant degree by Christian claims to superiority vis-à-vis Judaism. Here, the ethical claim is said to soar to something outrageously new, which is foreign to both Judaism and the rest of Greco-Roman antiquity.[4] Howe-

[1] For the German version of the present essay, see M. Konradt, "Das Gebot der Feindesliebe in Mt 5.43–48 und sein früjüdische Kontext," in *Ahavah: Die Liebe Gottes im Alten Testament*, ed. M. Oeming, ABIG 55 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018), 349–89. See also note 8 below. Cf. now also M. Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, GNT 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 42–45, 270–85, 534.

[2] Cf., e.g., D. Lührmann, "Liebet eure Feinde," *ZThK* (1972): 412–38, here 412 ("with the greatest certainty that exegetical scholarship is able to claim"); J. Piper, *'Love your Enemies'. Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis: A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of its Uses*, MSSNTS 38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1 ("'Love your enemies!' is one of the few sayings of Jesus, the authenticity of which is not seriously questioned by anyone"); H. Merklein, *Die Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip. Untersuchung zur Ethik Jesu*, 3rd ed., FzB 34 (Würzburg: Echter, 1984), 230; H.-W. Kuhn, "Das Liebesgebot Jesu als Tora und als Evangelium. Zur Feindesliebe und zur christlichen und jüdischen Auslegung der Bergpredigt," in *Vom Urchristentum zu Jesus (Festschrift für J. Gnilka)*, ed. H. Frankemölle and K. Kertelge (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989), 194–240, here 222–24; as well as G. Theißen and A. Merz, *Der historische Jesus: eine Einführung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 347; G. Theißen and A. Merz, *Wer war Jesus? Der erinnerte Jesus in historischer Sicht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023), 358 ("The Q-tradition on love for enemies reworked in Matt 5.38–48 and Luke 6.27–36 [is] generally [regarded] in its core as authentic"); cf. G. Theißen and A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 391. Contrast, however, J. Sauer, "Traditionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den synoptischen und paulinischen Aussagen über Feindesliebe und Wiedervergeltungsverzicht," *ZNW* 76 (1985): 1–28.

[3] See, e.g., T. Söding, *Nächstenliebe. Gottes Gebot als Verheißung und Anspruch* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2015), 186: "The level of notoriety is not deceptive: love for enemies is the peak statement of the ethics of Jesus (*der Spitzensatz der Ethik Jesu*)."

[4] For an example from the recent history of interpretation, see M. Reiser, "Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity," *NTS* 47 (2001): 411–27, here 423, who states with respect to Jesus' commandment of love for enemies and the renunciation of retaliation: "By these recommendations Jesus unmistakably positions himself as an opponent of all accepted tradition and social teaching of both Jewish and Greek provenance."

ver, in the wake of Christian theology's reconsideration of its relationship to Judaism, the opposite phenomenon can also be observed in the literature – namely, the effort to deny any specific emphasis to Jesus' commandment of love for enemies. Here, it is not regarded as sufficient to place the commandment of love for enemies in its Old Testament-early Jewish context and carefully sketch out its contours against this background; rather, it is flattened out into this context.[5]

Thus, in the analysis of the commandment of love for enemies, the exegete or historian of ancient Judaism and emerging Christianity walks upon a charged terrain. This, of course, should spur historical critical scholarship even more to analyze the findings, as far as possible, *sine ira et studio*, especially since it must be kept in mind that even if a specific profile of Jesus' commandment of love for enemies were to emerge, this would by no means determine *eo ipso* whether or to what extent an ethical advance would be given with the radical understanding of agape as love *for enemies*.[6]

In what follows, I will first survey the tradition-historical findings and focus especially on the early Jewish exegesis of Exod 23.4–5 and the reception of the love commandment in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Due to limitations of space, I will bracket out non-Jewish Greco-Roman ethical traditions, even though there would also be some interesting texts to discuss from this broader context, such as Epictetus' statement about the Cynic philosopher, who lets himself be beaten like a donkey and must still love (δεῖ … φιλεῖν) those who beat him, as a father of all, as a brother (*Diatr.* 3.22.54),[7] or Plutarch's short tractate on the question of how a person can profit from their enemies (*De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*, *Mor.* 86B–92F). Following the survey of the early Jewish traditions of love for enemies, I will turn to Jesus' commandment of

[5] For example, according to A. Strotmann, *Der historische Jesus: eine Einführung*, 3rd ed. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2019), 156, "the Jesuanic commandment of love for enemies and the renunciation of retaliation (Matt 5.38–48 par Luke 6.27–36) are already contained in Lev 19.18, 33–34, only with the difference that the term 'enemy' is lacking.… The usual claim that Jesus expanded, radicalized, and universalized the commandment of love for neighbor through the commandment of love for foreigners and love for enemies is therefore by no means justified." Similarly, W. Stegemann, *Jesus und seine Zeit*, BE[S] 10 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 291 notes that "The exhortation to love one's enemy adds, as it were, only the explicit term 'enemy' to the commandment of love for neighbor from the Torah, but not the subject matter itself." See further, e.g., the criticism of the "Christian compulsion to make claims of superiority" in W. Stegemann, "Kontingenz und Kontextualität der moralischen Aussagen Jesu. Plädoyer für eine Neubesinnung auf die so genannte Ethik Jesu," in *Jesus in neuen Kontexten*, ed. W. Stegemann, B.J. Maline, and G. Theißen (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 167–84: 173–76.

[6] For the psychological, political, and theological reservations that would need to be discussed here, see the concise overview in Söding, *Nächstenliebe*, 20–27.

[7] In Epictetus, the basis of this instruction is the sovereign autarchy of the wise person, who does not let himself be touched by external things (cf. M. Billerbeck, *Epiktet. Vom Kynismus*, PhAnt 34 [Leiden: Brill, 1978], 119) and correspondingly cannot be affected by any insult or the like (cf. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.100). On Epictetus and the thematically relevant texts of Seneca, see the concise overview in Piper, *'Love your Enemies,'* 21–27; see further, e.g., Cicero, Off. 1.25.88: "Neither must we listen to those who think that one should indulge in violent anger against one's political enemies and imagine that such is the attitude of a great-spirited, brave man. For nothing is more commendable, nothing more becoming in a pre-eminently great man than courtesy and forbearance"; trans. W. Miller, LCL 30, 89).

love for enemies – more specifically, to its reception in Matt 5.43–48.[8]

1. Early Jewish Traditions of Love for Enemies

1.1 The Reception and Interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in Early Judaism

If we inquire into the Old Testament and early Jewish backgrounds of the commandment of love for enemies, then it must, as is well known, first be noted that while the syntagma "love your enemies" is not attested prior to the Jesus tradition, it is possible, with Exod 23.4–5 and Prov 25.21, to adduce two Old Testament texts in which good conduct toward the enemy is called for in a concrete way. According to Exod 23.4–5, one is to bring back the enemy's stray ox or donkey and to assist the adversary in helping up his donkey that is lying under its burden. Proverbs 25.21–22 exhorts one to give the hungry or thirsty enemy bread to eat or water to drink (cf., further, Prov 24.17–18).[9]

Proverbs 25.21 is not only quoted by Paul in Rom 12.20 but also finds an early Jewish echo in T. Job 7.11.[10] More important, however, is the reception of Exod 23.4–5, which is attested multiple times in early Jewish writings. Fourth Maccabees 2.14 explains that "reason, through the law, can prevail even over enmity" and, in addition to not cutting down the cultivated trees of enemies in war (cf. Deut 20.19–20[11]), it mentions, as another example, "rescuing the (stray) animal of the personal enemy from ruin and

[8] With the following remarks, I develop further considerations that I first presented in a lecture in the context of a lecture series organized by the theological faculty of the university of Bern on April 29, 2003: "(K)ein Ende der Gewalt? – Theologische Perspektiven" (published under the title "'…damit ihr Söhne eures Vaters im Himmel werdet.' Erwägungen zur 'Logik' von Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe in Mt 5,38–48," in *Gewalt wahrnehmen – von Gewalt heilen. Theologische und religionswissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, ed. W. Dietrich and W. Lienemann [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004], 70–92, and in an expanded and revised version in M. Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, ed. A. Euler, WUNT 358 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 348–80). Individual dependencies on the remarks there or borrowings will not be specified in detail in what follows.

[9] See, however, the different sapiential advice in Sir 12.5a[LXX]: "Treat the humble well, and do not give to an impious person; hold back loaves of bread, and do not give to him, lest by them he prevail over you; for you will get twice as many bad things for all the good things you might do for him" (trans. B. G. Wright in NETS). For Sir 12, see also note 107 below.

[10] Josephus, in the framework of his epitome of the law in *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–218, in the section on obligations to foreigners (2.209–212), explains that "We must furnish fire, water, food to all who ask for them" (211; trans. H. S. T. Thackeray, LCL 186, 379). It cannot, however, be discerned that Prov 25.21 specifically stands in the background here, especially since the explicit concretization to the enemy is lacking (conduct toward *enemies* is first thematized at the end of *Ag. Ap.* 2.211 and unpacked further in 2.212, though there specifically with reference to the enemies in war [211: πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους]). Furthermore, quite similar specifications to those in Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.211 are also found in Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.6 – namely, as an explication of ἄγραφα ἔθη καὶ νόμιμα. What stands in the background here is the common Greek ethic, which was traditionally combined with Buzygian imprecations (cf. Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.8); cf. M. Küchler, *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens*, OBO 26 (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 1979), 229–30.

[11] On the early Jewish reception of Deut 20.19–20, cf. Philo, *Spec.* 4.226–229, *Virt.* 150–154; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.299; *Ag. Ap.* 2.212.

helping it to get back on its feet if it collapses (under its burden)."[12] The interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in Ps.-Phoc. 140–142 is rendered difficult by the problem that the Greek text in line 141 is "hopelessly corrupt."[13] Line 140, "But if a beast of (your) enemy falls on the way, help it to rise,"[14] clearly makes recourse to Exod 23.5. If one follows the conjecture of Bernays for line 141,[15] an allusion to Exod 23.4 would be present there: an animal that has gone astray is not to be left to itself. In this case, line 142 would follow in a sensible way, and 140–142 would result in a thematically coherent unit,[16] for line 142 would then furnish the recourse to Exod 23.4–5 with a look to a social effect of the good conduct toward the animal of an enemy: "It is better to make a gracious friend instead of an enemy."

Exodus 23.4–5 experienced an in-depth reception in the exegetical works of Philo.[17] In *De virtutibus* 116–120, i.e., toward the end of his commentary work called *Expositio legis*,[18] Philo adduces Exod 23.5 and 23.4 (in this order; cf. Ps.-Phoc.140–141!) as additional examples for commandments that aim at gentleness (ἡμερότης) in interaction with one another (*Virt.* 116).[19] The overarching context is the detailed discussion of philanthropy as a defining basic value of the Mosaic legislation (*Virt.* 51–174). In this context, Philo thematizes, among other things, the benevolent conduct toward enemies that is commanded by the Torah (109–120). Here, the commandments in Exod 23.4–5 serve as one attestation for this. From Exod 23.5 Philo draws the teaching – which is ini-

[12] English translation of the German translation of H.-J. Klauck, *4. Makkabäerbuch*, JSHRZ III/6 (Gütersoh: Mohn, 1989), 697–98.

[13] P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, SVTP 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 207.

[14] Trans. P. W. van der Horst, OTP 2, 579. Subsequent translations of Ps.-Phoc. are also taken from van der Horst's translation in OTP 2, 565–82.

[15] See J. Bernays, *Ueber das Phokylideische Gedicht. Ein Beitrag zur hellenistischen Litteratur* (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1856), 32–33. The change of βροτόν to βοτόν and the replacement of the verb ἐλέγξεις with ἀλύξεις at the end are significant (on this, cf. the critical review in J. Thomas, *Der jüdische Phokylides. Formgeschichtliche Zugänge zu Pseudo-Phokylides und Vergleich mit der neutestamentlichen Paränese*, NTOA 23 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992], 172; for additional proposed conjectures, see van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 207–208).

[16] This could, conversely, be regarded as an indication that the text in line 141 is corrupt and must be corrected. Cf. Thomas, *Der jüdische Phokylides*, 177: "The saying about the help for the fallen beast (of burden) of the hostile neighbor is, down to the wording πέσῃ/πεπτωκός, συνέγειρε/συνεγερεῖς, a (sapientially compressed) reproduction of Exod 23.5 (cf. Deut 22.4, there without *hostile*). Evaluated from this perspective, the hope for the transformation of an enemy into a friend in v. 142 is such a fitting addition that it would have been difficult to leave the verse between in v. 141 without a connection to this." In this vein, see also already Bernays, *Ueber das Phokylideische Gedicht*, 33; see further G. M. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts. Ethical Themes in Social Contexts*, JSPES 13 (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 1993, 70–71.

[17] Josephus, in his paraphrase of the Torah in *Ant.* 4.275, refers back to Exod 23.4–5 in connection with the related passage in Deut 22.4 and in the course of doing so deletes the reference to the enemy.

[18] On the *Expositio Legis*, cf. M. Böhm, *Rezeption und Funktion der Vätererzählungen bei Philo von Alexandrien. Zur Zusammenhang von Kontext, Hermeneutik und Exegese im frühen Judentum*, BZNW 128 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 116–22; P. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. M. E. Stone, CRINT 2.2 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), 233–41. See further M. Konradt, "Tora und Naturgesetz. Interpretatio graeca und universaler Geltungsanspruch der Mosetora bei Philo von Alexandrien," in *Juden in ihrer Umwelt. Akkulturation des Judentums in Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. M. Konradt and R. C. Schwingen (Basel: Schwabe, 2009), 90–109.

[19] Cf. previously *Virt.* (84,) 109 and subsequently in the tractate on the virtues also 121, 134, 188.

tially formulated negatively – "that we should not rejoice over the misfortune of those who hate us," since schadenfreude (ἐπιχαιρεκακία[20]) is said to be "a feeling of implacable wrath" (βαρύμηνι πάθος). Philo is thus concerned to reject a vice that is incompatible with a virtuous character. Put differently, also in relation to the enemy, virtuous conduct cannot be suspended. Commenting on the commandment in Exod 23.4, that one must return the stray animal of the enemy, Philo then points out the positive consequences of a benevolent conduct toward the enemy. On the one hand, he seeks to motivate the action with the benefit to oneself that the virtuous person draws from his good conduct, for the one who takes care of the animal of his enemy gains "the greatest and most valuable thing in the whole world, a noble deed" – and thus far more than the "enemy," who receives back only an "irrational animal" (117). On the other hand, analogous to Ps.-Phoc. 140–142, Philo also considers a possible interpersonal gain, since "a dissolution of the enmity" follows such a deed "quite necessarily" (118).[21] With this intention, thus Philo continues, Exod 23.4–5 stands exemplarily for the whole Torah, for it aims in general at "unanimity, community spirit, like-mindedness, and harmony of character" (119). In the organization of the tractate *De virtutibus*, the interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in *Virt.* 116–120 is assigned, as noted above, to the explication of the virtue of philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία). It fits this observation that in the following subsection on the commandments on slaves, εἰς ἡμερότητα (*Virt.* 116) is expanded to εἰς ἡμερότητα *καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν* (*Virt.* 121), which underscores the closeness of ἡμερότης to philanthropy.[22]

There is also an interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in Philo's commentary work *Quaestiones et Solutiones* (*QE* 2.11–12). As justification for the commandment of Exod 23.4,

[20] This vice occurs in Philo also in the long vice catalogue in *Sacr.* 32 (cf. further *Agr.* 93). On ἐπιχαιρεκακία (schadenfreude), cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.6.18 (1107a9–18) in the framework of his comments on μεσότης: "Not every action or emotion however admits of the observance of a due mean. Indeed the very names of some directly imply evil, for instance malice (ἐπιχαιρεκακία), shamelessness, envy, and, of actions, adultery, theft, murder. All these and similar actions and feelings are blamed as being bad in themselves; it is not the excess or deficiency of them that we blame. It is impossible therefore ever to go right in regard to them – one must always be wrong…" (trans. H. Rackham, LCL 73, 97). As in Philo, schadenfreude (ἐπιχαιρεκακία) and envy (φθόνος) appear alongside each other (on the connection between envy and schadenfreude, see further Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.7.15 [1108b1–6]; Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 15 [*Mor.* 463a]; *Curios.* 6 [*Mor.* 518c]). On this, cf. W. T. Wilson, *Philo of Alexandria, On Virtues*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 276–77.

[21] On this motif of *Entfeindung* (de-enemization) in early Jewish texts, see, in addition to Ps.-Phoc. 142, also Let. Aris. 227. This motif also occurs elsewhere in Hellenistic ethics. For example, Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 8.23 attributes to Pythagoras the view that interpersonal interactions should be configured in such a way that "one does not make friends into enemies but rather enemies into friends" (ἀλλήλοις θ' ὁμιλεῖν, ὡς τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἐχθροὺς μὴ ποιῆσαι, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς φίλους ἐργάσασθαι). In Plutarch's *Apophthegmata Laconica*, the following saying is attributed to the Spartan king Ariston: "When someone praised the maxim of Cleomenes, who, when he was asked what a good king must do, said, 'To do good to the friends, but evil to the enemies,' he (Ariston) said, 'How much better it is, friend, to do good to our friends, but to make enemies into friends" (*Apopthegmata Laconica* Ariston 1 [*Mor.* 218a]). See also Seneca, *Ep.* 95.63 (trans. R. M. Gummere, LCL 77, 97), "Furthermore, when we advise a man to regard his friends as highly as himself, to reflect that an enemy may become a friend, to stimulate love in the friend, and to check hatred in the enemy, we add: 'This is just and honorable.'"

[22] For this combination, cf. Philo, *Cher.* 199; *Spec.* 2.79; 4.18, 24; *Virt.* 188; as well as Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.213.

Philo points again to the virtue of gentleness (ἡμερότης), which finds expression in this commandment (2.11). Second, the vice of greed is fended off through the commandment. Third, Philo makes recourse again to the positive social consequences of the action. The return of the animal removes quarrels, paves the way for reconciliation, and serves peace. The recipient will, "if he is not completely ungrateful, set aside the malice that seeks vengeance" (2.11).[23] In the line of questioning that is pursued here, special attention should be given to the fact that Philo characterizes the return of the animal in 2.11 as a "work of love." If we consider further that his exposition also includes the motif of the removal of "the anger that seeks vengeance" and thus addresses the thematic nexus in which the love commandment is embedded in Lev 19.17–18, then it does indeed appear plausible to regard Philo's exposition as inspired by Lev 19.17–18.[24] The previously presented finding that the interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in *Virt.* 116–120 explicates the virtue of philanthropy fits this harmoniously.

1.2 The Interpretation of Lev 19.17–18 in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

With respect to the early Jewish reception of the love commandment from Lev 19.18, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is the most important reference text for the line of inquiry pursued here. In their extant form, the Testaments are a Christian writing. Nevertheless, against the Netherland school formed around Martinus de Jonge,[25] it is necessary to uphold the older majority position that it is an originally Jewish writing that has merely undergone a Christian revision[26] and that its content can be drawn

[23] The insertion "if he is not completely ungrateful" points, however, to the fact that there is no guarantee of this for the person who does good. Sir 12.1–7 draws from this the consequence and admonishes with sapiential caution that the evildoer should not be considered as a recipient of good deeds (on this, see note 107 below).

[24] Thus Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 63–64. Analogous to this, in the compound word βαρύμηνι in Philo, *Virt.* 116, it may be possible to hear an allusion to Lev 19.18, to the prohibition against bearing a grudge (οὐ μηνιεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς τοῦ λαοῦ σου).

[25] See, e.g., M. de Jonge, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 69–177 and on the paraenesis, in particular, e.g., p. 153: "To do full justice to the *Testaments*, it seems to me, we have to treat the paraenesis found in them as early Christian." Cf. the conclusion of M. de Jonge, "The Parānese in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen. Einige Überlegungen," in *Neues Testament und Ethik (Festschrift für R. Schnackenburg)*, ed. H. Merklein (Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 538–50, here 550: "We can never rule out the possibility that a certain ethical passage has been adjusted to the Christian views of the author of the writing in its final form." In this connection, see also the study of J. R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, JSJ.S 105 (Leiden: Brill), 2005.

[26] On this, see M. Konradt, "Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen," *RAC* 31 (2023): 1166–1181 and D. A. DeSilva, "The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs as Witnesses to Pre-Christian Judaism: A Re-Assessment," *JSPE* (2013), 21–68, who, as the result of his detailed discussion affirms that "there are sufficient text-critical and literary-critical grounds to certify the fact of Christian glossing and expanding, if not the precise extent. There are also sufficient traditional-critical grounds for affirming that the *Testaments* is better explained as a Jewish text that was later adapted to Christian interests than an original Christian composition" (67). The question of whether the Testaments are Diaspora-Jewish or Palestinian-Jewish in origin is likewise controversial. On this, see the concise overview in J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 176–77.

upon for early Jewish ethical instruction. In his dissertation on Lev 19.18, Hans-Peter Mathys advanced the pointed thesis that the Old Testament commandment in its original context is *in substance* already a "commandment of love for enemies"[27] insofar as it is related to the thematization of the "interaction with the brother who has become guilty" in its immediate context in 19.17–18.[28] In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs this reference point of the love commandment in Lev 19.17–18, which Mathys emphasizes, is taken up in detail and developed further. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs provide fabricated farewell discourses for the twelve sons of Jacob, in which they, starting from their own life experiences, teach their descendants proper conduct in the vein of the commandments or warn them against morally corrupt conduct and its consequences.[29] Corresponding to the narrative of Genesis, the action of the brothers toward Joseph and Joseph's conduct toward his brothers receives a lot of attention. For the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, it is characteristic that Joseph's conduct toward his brothers is interpreted in the light of the love commandment. Joseph appears as a model of forgiving love. The Joseph story is, so to speak, configured into a narrative exegesis of the love commandment.

> The point of connection is especially the dialogue between Joseph and his brothers after the death of their father Jacob in Genesis 50.15–21. Due to the brothers' fear that Joseph could now bear a grudge (μνησικακήσῃ) against them and repay all the evil that they did to him, they say that their father instructed them before his death to admonish Joseph to forgive them. Joseph, however, has not even thought of taking revenge. They had meant it for evil, but God made something good out of it, "namely, to let a great people be kept alive" (50.20). Joseph ends his words with the encouragement and promise: "Therefore, have no fear; I will provide for you and your children" (50.21). The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs take up this aspect of the narrative and develop it.[30]

Let us begin with Joseph's own testament. While the first part of the Testament of Joseph – after the initial scenic framework and the introductory song of thanksgiving

[27] H.-P. Mathys, *Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst. Untersuchungen zum altestamentlichen Gebot der Nächstenliebe (Lev 19,18)*, OBO 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 81. In this vein, see already Piper, *'Love your Enemies,'* 32. See further M. Köckert, "Nächstenliebe – Fremdenliebe – Feindesliebe," in *Mazel Tov. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Christentum und Judentum. Festschrift anlässlich des 50. Geburtstages des Instituts Kirche und Judentum*, ed. M. Witte and T. Pilger, SKI Neue Folge 1 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 31–53, here 39–41; Söding, *Nächstenliebe*, 66–68.

[28] Mathys, *Liebe deinen Nächsten*, 67. A different position is taken by F. Crüsemann, *Die Tora. Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes* (Munich: Kaiser, 1992), 376. In vv. 11–12 the concern is with property crimes. Vv. 13–14 deal with the protection of the socially weak and physically disabled. Vv. 15–16 thematizes conduct in court.

[29] On the ethical instruction in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the underlying anthropological premises, see now S. Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch. Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Ethik und Anthropologie in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen*, BZNW 232 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018). Cf. also Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 37–38.

[30] See Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 143–44.

(1.4–2.6) – elaborates in various ways the attempt of Potiphar's wife to seduce Joseph (cf. Gen 39.7–20) and emphasizes Joseph's unshakeable virtuousness *in sexualibus* (2.7–10.4),[31] the second main part is devoted to the solidarity that Joseph demonstrated toward his brothers, despite their wicked conduct (10.5–18.4). The short note in Genesis about the event of the selling of Joseph in Gen 37.28(, 36); 39.1 is greatly expanded by developing the aspect of Joseph's conduct when he was being sold, which receives no illumination in Genesis. Joseph does not place his interests in the foreground but remains persistently silent about his origin (10.6)[32] or insists – in light of the fact that the traders recognize from his appearance[33] that he cannot be a slave – that he is indeed the slave of the brothers who sold him (11.2–3).[34] Love is not yet explicitly spoken of here. Rather, as Joseph's motivation for action it states that he honored his brothers (ἐτίμων τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου, 10.6), acted out of reverence for them (διὰ τὸ φόβον αὐτῶν, 10.6), and, correspondingly, did not want to shame them (ἵνα μὴ αἰσχύνω τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου, 11.2). The connection to love soon becomes clear, however, when one considers the fact that for the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs a significant manifestation of love consists in not making misdeeds public in relation to a third party (T. Gad 4.2–3; cf. Prov 10.12; 17.9; 1 Pet 4.8) but in settling them solely with the person affected (cf. T. Gad 6.3–7).[35] With Joseph, the observance of the behavioral maxim to protect the brothers from the exposure of their sin extends so far that he even accepts his enslavement, for he does not make use of the presented opportunities to clarify the nature of the event and his true identity.[36] Thus, T. Jos. 11.4–16.6 recounts that Joseph initially remained more than three months with the merchant who handled the goods of the Ishmaelites, whose household affairs flourished in this time under Joseph's management, and that

[31] On this, see in detail M. Braun, *History and Romance in Greco-Roman Oriental Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938), 44–95.

[32] On Joseph's silence about his origin or the conduct of his brothers, see also Philo, *Ios.* 247–248 (on this, see notes 36 and 38 below).

[33] Building on Gen 39.6, there is talk of Joseph's beauty and aura also elsewhere in the early Jewish reception of the Genesis story. See, e.g., Jos. As. 6.1–4; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.9, 41, and, in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs themselves, in T. Sim. 5.1; T. Jos. 18.4.

[34] While in Gen 37.26–28 Judas' plan to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites is thwarted by the fact that the Midianite traders pass by, draw Joseph out of the cistern, and sell him (see J. Ebach, *Genesis 37–50*, HThKAT [Freiburg: Herder, 2007], 101), which fits with Joseph's statement that he was stolen from the land of the Hebrews in Gen 40.15, according to T. Gad 2.3 Joseph is sold to the Ishmaelites by Judah and Gad (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.32–33 also says that the brothers sold Joseph). Correspondingly, Joseph's statement in T. Jos. 11.2, 3, that he is "*their* slave (δοῦλος *αὐτῶν*)" refers to the brothers.

[35] On this, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 381–412, here 398–99; Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 241: Joseph's "conduct is the opposite of the behavior of one who hates, as it is described in T. Gad 4.3: The hater recounts to others the misconduct of the one who is hated, whereas Joseph keeps silent about the misdeeds of the brothers." In the Gospel of Matthew, a comparison can be made to Matt 18.15(–17), where Lev 19.17–18 likewise stands in the background. On this, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 396–99.

[36] The motif that Joseph keeps silent about the misdeed of his brothers is also found in Philo, *Ios.* 247–48, 250. There are, however, also significant differences between Philo and the Testament of Joseph in the development of the motif. On this, see D. T. Roth, "Shared Interpretive Traditions of Joseph's 'σωφροσύνη' and 'Silence' in *De Iosepho* and the *Testament of Joseph*." *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 1 (2014): 54–68, here 65–68.

during this time the rumor that Joseph was stolen from the land of Canaan came up and reached to the wife of Potiphar/Petephres,[37] who already cast an eye on Joseph here (12.1–3). The trader is confronted, but Joseph himself, under beatings, still claims to be a slave and is therefore imprisoned until the Ishmaelites return and can be questioned (13.1–14.6). The Ishmaelites have in the meantime heard of Jacob's grief and learned that Joseph is "the son of a great man in the land of Canaan" (15.1–2), so that they confront Joseph – again – upon their return. Even now, however, Joseph continues to stick to his version of the story so as not – as it says again – to shame his brothers (ἵνα μὴ αἰσχύνω τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου, 15.3), after which the Ishmaelites finally sell Joseph (15.4–16.6). The Joseph novella of Genesis knows nothing of any of these events.[38] Rather, it has Joseph tell the cupbearer that he was stolen from the land of the Hebrews (Gen 40.15).[39] The latter underscores even more the fact that the reshaping of the portrayal of Joseph in T. Jos. 10.5–18.4 is inspired by the aim of presenting Joseph as a paradigm of forgiving love in the sense of Lev 19.17–18.

After the biographical retrospect, the paraenesis in T. Jos. 17 initially takes up Joseph's forbearance in a summarizing manner ("See, children, how much I have endured [ὑπέμεινα[40]] in order not to shame my brothers!") and then, immediately building on this in v. 2, exhorts them to love one another, which is interpreted, in correspondence to the preceding biographical retrospect, in relation to their interaction with misdeeds: "And you, then, love one another and in forbearance conceal one another's misdeeds (καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ συγκρύπτετε ἀλλήλων τὰ ἐλαττώματα)!" In the flow of T. Jos. it is thereby made explicit that Joseph's silence about his origin must be understood as an expression of his *love* for the brothers.[41] The

[37] T. Jos. follows the rendering of the name in the LXX: Πετεφρῆς (see Gen 37.36; 39.1; T. Jos. 13.1, 4).

[38] The haggadic embellishment of the Genesis narrative in T. Jos. 11–16 finds a counterpart neither in Jubilees nor in Josephus' retelling in *Ant.* 2. Jub 34.11; 39.2 and Josephus, *Ant.* 2.39 note the selling of Joseph only briefly (cf. also L.A.B. 8.9). Philo, *Ios.* 247–248, by contrast, at least provides a short reflection on the fact that Joseph, during the time of his tribulation, was never tempted to disclose his real origin and thematize the misconduct of his brothers before others (cf. H. W. Hollander, "The Ethical Character of the Patriarch Joseph: A Study in the Ethics of *The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*," in *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*, ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975], 47–104, here 70 and H. W. Hollander, *Joseph as an Ethical Model in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, SVTP 6 [Leiden: Brill] 1981, 45).

[39] However, the wrongdoing of the brothers is also not explicitly mentioned in Gen 40.15.

[40] The use of the verb ὑπομένειν connects the second main part of the Testament of Joseph with the first. More specifically, 17.1 (*Ὁρᾶτε, τέκνα, πόσα ὑπέμεινα*, ἵνα μὴ καταισχύνω τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου) is on the whole analogous to the introduction of the paraenesis after the first biographical retrospect (3.1–9.5) in 10.1: *Ὁρᾶτε οὖν, τέκνα μου, πόσα* κατεργάζεται ἡ *ὑπομονὴ* καὶ προσευχὴ μετὰ νηστείας. Moreover, the endurance (ὑπομονή) of Joseph was already spoken of in the prologue to 3.1–9.5 in 2.7 (trans. H. C. Kee, *OTP* 1:819): "In ten testings he showed that I was approved, and in all of them I persevered, because perseverance is a powerful medicine and endurance brings many good things (ἐν δέκα πειρασμοῖς δόκιμόν με ἀνέδειξε, καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς ἐμακροθύμησα· ὅτι μέγα φάρμακόν ἐστιν ἡ μακροθυμία, καὶ πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ δίδωσιν ἡ ὑπομονή)."

[41] Cf. D. J. Harrington, "Joseph in the Testament of Joseph, Pseudo-Philo and Philo," in *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*, ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, SCSt 5 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 127–131, here 128; Hollander, "The Ethical Character of the Patriarch Joseph," 71; Hollander, *Joseph as an Ethical Model*, 46; Roth, "Shared Interpretive Traditions," 67 ("*T. Jos* views Joseph's silence as a demonstration of a kind and good heart that exhibits love for others by concealing their misdeeds."); Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 239–41.

admonition to conceal the misdeeds of one another in forbearance in 17.2b is a concretization of the call to love one another.

Beyond this, the continuation of the instruction in the Testament of Joseph indicates that love, alongside the interaction with the misdeeds of others carried by the readiness to forgive, also includes the caritative dimension of acting for the well-being of others and caring for them. Thus, Joseph appeals to the fact that he loved his brothers to an even greater degree (περισσοτέρως ἠγάπησα αὐτούς) after the death of their father and abundantly supplied them – to their amazement – with everything that their father had commanded him[42] (17.5, cf. Gen 50.21). Concretely, this means not only help in hardships (T. Jos. 17.6a) but also that Joseph gave them everything that was in his hand (v. 6b) and that his land was also their land (v. 7). In short, love, according to T. Jos. 10.4–18.4, is manifested not only in Joseph's selfless interaction with the misdeeds of his brothers, which takes adversity in stride and is ready to forgive, but also shows itself after the reconciliation in the generous engagement with which Joseph made the well-being of his brothers his own business. Moreover, with a view to Matt 5.44, it must also be noted that the motif of praying for one's enemies also appears in the concluding paraenesis in T. Jos. 18.2: "And if someone wishes to do evil against you, *you* pray through doing good for him (καὶ ἐὰν θέλῃ τις κακοποιῆσαι ὑμᾶς, ὑμεῖς τῇ ἀγαθοποιΐᾳ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ)!"

In addition to the extensive elucidation in the Testament of Joseph, recourse to Joseph's exemplary love is also found in more concise form in other testaments. This applies to the first testament in the sequence of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Testament of Simeon, where with envy a vice that is illustrated through the misconduct of the brothers against Joseph stands at the center, i.e., concretely through the action of Simeon against his brother, which is determined by envy. Thus, Joseph's attitude shines more brightly here against the dark foil of the misconduct of Simeon, who was jealous of Joseph because the father's love applied to him in a special way (T. Sim. 2.6) and therefore sought to kill him (2.7–12). Despite this specific prehistory and guilt of Simeon (cf. T. Sim. 3.2), Joseph also did not hold this evil that Simeon committed against him, as T. Sim. 4.4 explains: "But Joseph was a good man and had God's Spirit in him;[43] [he was] compassionate and merciful, he did not hold the evil against me, but loved also me – as the other brothers (εὔσπλαγχνος καὶ ἐλεήμων, οὐκ ἐμνησικάκησέ μοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἠγάπησέ με, ὡς τοὺς ἄλλους ἀδελφούς)."

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the positive counterpart to Simeon – as well as to Dan and Gad who likewise come off especially badly in their misconduct

[42] T. Jos. 17.5 modifies the biblical *Vorlage* here, for in Gen 50.16–17 it is the brothers who bring the commandment of the father – here related solely to the forgiveness – into play, of which there is no mention in T. Jos. 17. In Gen 50 it remains open whether we are dealing here with a kind of emergency lie (thus in Jewish interpretation, e.g., b. Yebam. 65b; Gen. Rab. 100 on 50.16) or whether the brothers speak the truth (on this gap in the text, see Ebach, *Genesis 37–50*, 653). The modifying interpretation of Gen 50.16 in T. Jos. 17.5 apparently presupposes the latter.

[43] The statement that Joseph had God's Spirit in him is probably dependent on Gen 41.38^{LXX} (… ὃς ἔχει πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ); cf. H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*, SVTP 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 118.

toward Joseph in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs – is Zebulon, whose testament is devoted to the virtue of compassion and mercy. Zebulon demonstrated this compassion, first, toward Joseph, who was oppressed by the brothers (T. Zeb. 2.4–7; 4.2). Second, compassion and mercy then characterize Zebulon's caritative conduct toward the needy (T. Zeb. 5.1–8.3). Finally, the recourse to Joseph's conduct toward the brothers appears as a third field of application of compassion and mercy, so that a threefold concretion of compassion and mercy that encompasses different problem situations emerges in the Testament of Zebulon: as turning to the persecuted/oppressed, to those who are in need from a socio-economic perspective, and to sinners.[44] With respect to the latter, Zebulon, as noted, presents Joseph as a model to his descendants: "When we came down to Egypt, Joseph did not hold a grudge against us (οὐκ ἐμνησικάκησεν εἰς ἡμᾶς). When he saw me, he had mercy (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη). Paying attention to him, do not hold a grudge (ἀμνησίκακοι γίνεσθε), my children, and love one another (ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους), and, do not reckon, each of you, the evil of his brother (μὴ λογίζεσθε ἕκαστος τὴν κακίαν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ)" (T. Zeb 8.4–5). It is easy to recognize that T. Sim. and T. Zeb. 8.4–5 are connected by a common word field: love stands in the closest connection to mercy and compassion and appears as a positive counterpart to not bearing a grudge or not holding a suffered injustice against the one who committed it.[45]

> In T. Zeb 8.4 the change from the first-person plural in the first part of the sentence – the non-reckoning of evil applies to all the brothers (οὐκ ἐμνησικάμησεν *εἰς ἡμᾶς*) – to the following narrowing to Zebulon is conspicuous: *ἐμὲ* δὲ ἰδὼν ἐσπλαγχνίσθη. It is questionable, however, whether the narrowing to Zebulon refers only to the participle or to the whole sentence.[46] In the second case, the special position of Zebulon could be connected with the fact that, according to T. Zeb 2.4–7, it was previously Zebulon in particular who had, for his part, compassion with Joseph, when Simeon and Gad sought to kill him (2.1), so that Joseph, in the Testament of Zebulon, had mercy specifically on the brother who had shown mercy to him. However, a consistent distinction is not only opposed by T. Sim 4.4, where in Simeon's (!) recourse to Joseph's conduct the non-reckoning of evil is – as presented above – directly connected to the fact that he is εὔσπλαγχνος καὶ ἐλεήμων, but also by the fundamental statement in T. Zeb 8.6fin.: ὁ … μνησίκακος σπλάγχνα ἐλέους οὐκ ἔχει. For T. Zeb 8.4 these

[44] On this, cf. F. Mirguet, "Emotional Responses to the Pain of Others in Josephus' Rewritten Scriptures and the Testament of Zebulun: Between Power and Vulnerability," *JBL* 133 (2014): 838–57, here 852–55; S. Wandel, *Gottesbild und Barmherzigkeit. Lukanische Ethik im Chor hellenistischer Ethikkonzeptionen*, WUNT 2/548 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 290–300; Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 413–41, here 415n9.

[45] On this, see M. Konradt, "Menschen- und Bruderliebe? Beobachtungen zum Liebesgebot in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen," *ZNW* 88 (1997): 296–310, here 302. On the specified word field, cf. also Zech 7.9–10^{LXX}; 1 Clem 2.4–5; Herm. *Mand.* 9.2–3 (cf. Hollander, "The Ethical Character of the Patriarch Joseph," 75; Hollander, *Joseph as an Ethical Model*, 123n33).

[46] For the second option see Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 224.

> overall findings suggest that ἐμὲ δὲ ἰδών (v. 4c) designates merely the trigger or starting point of the mercy of Joseph, which nevertheless applied to all the brothers. Put differently, here too Joseph's mercy encompasses the brothers who acted in a hostile manner toward him.

Finally, Joseph's example also finds an echo in the presentation of the ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος (T. Benj. 4.2) or ἀγαθὸς ἀνήρ (T. Benj. 3.1; 4.1; 6.1) in the Testament of Benjamin, where mercy appears as an essential characteristic of the "good person" in T. Benj. 4. Testament of Benjamin 4.2–3 relates mercy concretely to the interaction with sinners: "The good person does not have a dark eye. He has mercy on all, even if they are sinners (ἐλεᾷ γὰρ πάντας, κἂν ὦσιν ἁμαρτωλοί). Even if they plot against him for evil, he conquers evil by doing good (cf. Rom 12.21!), since he is sheltered by the good." While this is formulated in a general way, Joseph is the main model.[47]

While Lev 19.17–18 finds its positive explication in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in the example of Joseph, Gad serves as a negative example. The Testament of Gad, with its discussion of the vice of hate, forms, together with the Testament of Simeon on envy (see above) and the Testament of Dan on anger, a triad of testaments in which the misconduct of the brothers toward Joseph is thematized.[48] Within this triad, the Testament of Gad displays a distinctive feature that is connected with the fact that Lev 19.17–18 presents the biblical basis for the ethical reflections in the Testament of Gad. Simeon's envy and Dan's anger are triggered by the love that the father Jacob showed toward Joseph (T. Sim 2.6–7; T. Dan 1.5–8), whereas Gad's hatred is triggered by a misdeed of Joseph. For Joseph told the father that the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah slaughtered the good animals and ate them against the objection of Judah and Ruben, whereas it was actually a lamb torn by a bear that Gad had rescued from the mouth of the bear (T. Gad 1.6–7, 9). A small shadow falls upon Joseph, the "figure of light," only here in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[49] This special case can be explained precisely through the fact that Lev 19.17–18 serves as a biblical reference text for the thematization of hate, for hate is here the inadequate reaction to the misdeed of another. Instead of correcting Joseph because of his misdeed, as Lev 19.17 requires, Gad hated him for it in his heart. The warning against hate in T. Gad 4.1–7 lets Gad's misconduct against Joseph in v. 6 be heard again[50] and emphasizes in this way the disproportion between the cause of the hate and its behavioral consequence. Hate, i.e., the person who hates, does not want to let even the person who sinned "in little" (ἐν ὀλίγῳ) live. Joseph's misdeed was only such a small one; nevertheless, hate had driven Gad to want to kill him.

In T. Gad 6.1–7, Gad elucidates to his descendants how one should rightly act in the sense of Lev 19.17–18. For the line of inquiry pursued here, v. 3 is central: "Love one another from the heart! And if someone sins against you, speak to him in peace (εἰπὲ αὐτῷ ἐν εἰρήνῃ), after you have removed the poison of hate (ἐξορίσας τὸν ἰὸν τοῦ

[47] See the explicit reference to Joseph in T. Benj. 3.1, 3, 6, 7; 5.5.

[48] On the belonging together of these three testaments, see Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 112–15.

[49] See Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 161–63.

[50] See Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 168.

μίσους)!" The connection to Lev 19.17–18 is evident.[51] Εἰπὲ αὐτῷ ἐν εἰρήνῃ takes up in an interpretive way Lev 19.17b's admonition to reprove or correct the neighbor (LXX: ἐλεγμῷ ἐλέγξεις τὸν πλησίον σου),[52] and ἐξορίσας τὸν ἰὸν τοῦ μίσους (cf. also T. Gad 6.1b) takes up Lev 19.17a's instruction not to hate one's brother in the heart. Thus, the misconduct of the other should not lead to the disturbance of the relationship becoming permanent let alone to its escalation through one's own hatred. Rather, the love commandment is explicitly related to the interaction with a fellow human from whom one has suffered wrong.

In grounding the demand for love, T. Jos. 17.3 makes explicit reference to the harmony of the brothers, in which God takes delight (τέρπεται γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ ὁμονοίᾳ ἀδελφῶν). The fact that this motif also appears in the recourse to Joseph's conduct toward the brothers in T. Zeb. 8.6–9.3 underscores its significance. If one holds a grudge because of the evil suffered, this destroys the unity (8.6: τοῦτο χωρίζει ἑνότητα), which 9.1–3 clothes in a vivid picture: Water that flows in the same direction carries stones, etc., along with it; water that divides itself is soaked up by the earth. Overcoming disruptions of social harmony and care for one another in the sense of the love commandment are elementary presuppositions for the cohesion of the fellowship. If the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are a diaspora writing,[53] then the profile is sharpened against the background of the minority situation of the Jewish diaspora communities.[54] Beyond this, with the casuistic explication of the admonition pronounced in 6.3 in 6.4–7, T. Gad 6 includes the personal or private sphere. The one who has sinned against someone should also be forgiven if he persistently denies it. In the background stand sapiential deliberations about how one can best obtain a peaceful climate in one's environment. The one who denies wrongdoing out of shame will repent "so that he no longer offends against you, but he will even honor and fear you and keep peace with you" (6.6). In the sense of the love commandment, peaceful interaction must be the goal of the conduct. If, however, one has to deal with a shameless person who does not refrain from his evil, then one should simply let the matter rest and leave vengeance to God (6.7); thus, in this case, the concern is at least with not letting the situation escalate.

In sum, the embellishment of the narrative of Genesis in the Testament of Joseph and in other passages in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs serve to stylize Joseph as a prototype of the ideal – which proceeds from Lev 19.17–18 – of not meeting inimical conduct with one's own hate and rancor but rather of overcoming evil through love. The development of the love commandment in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs thereby includes the aspect of love for enemies and renunciation of retaliation. If we ask about the social horizon of the love-ethical reflection, then we must

[51] On this, see the synopsis in Opferkuch, *Der handelnde Mensch*, 172–73. See further J. L. Kugel, "On Hidden Hatred and Open Reproach: Early Exegesis of Leviticus 19:17," *HTR* 80: 43–61, here 50–51.

[52] On this, see the interpretation of the admonition to reproof or correction in 1QS 5.24–25: "Each one is to reprove his fellow in tru[th] and humility and merciful love for one another."

[53] On this question, see note 26 above.

[54] See T. Söding, "Solidarität in der Diaspora. Das Liebesgebot nach den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen im Vergleich mit dem Neuen Testament," *Kairos* 36/37 (1994/1995): 1–19, here 4: The exhortations to love "are meant to strengthen the cohesion of Jewish life in the diaspora."

note that this is primarily related to the personal enemy within the fellowship – the concern is with the "brother" – and that, on the one hand, the care for the flourishing of the minority group, which would be endangered in its survival by escalating hostile conduct, appears as a major motivating factor and, on the other hand, sapientially informed prudential considerations about how one can live in peace with his neighbors play a role. However, with respect to the reach of the demand for love it is necessary to specify that the conduct toward the "brother" is inculcated positively and not exclusively,[55] i.e., it is not said that different behavioral maxims apply to outsiders. On the contrary, not only do we find the generally formulated admonition "be merciful to *all*, even if they are sinners," in T. Benj. 4.2, but with T. Jos. 16.6 we also have a concrete individual case in which the conduct practiced by Joseph toward his brothers also applies *mutatis mutandis* to someone who is an outsider for Joseph: Joseph did not make public the embezzlement of an Egyptian eunuch when he was sold in order to protect him.[56] Moreover, in the overall context of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, it must be noted that with the mercy toward the socially weak we encounter a second important field of application of the love commandment alongside the interaction with the "brother" who has become guilty, and the instruction in this case has a universal dimension.[57] The different social reach in the two fields of application of the love commandment in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs probably reflects the de facto horizons of meaning.[58] While the removal of disruptions of life together is of fundamental importance chiefly in one's immediate social environment, the removal of social hardships is also a peremptory obligation in relation to those with whom one does not have a closer relationship.

> Notably, in Philo, Joseph's reconciliatory attitude toward his brothers is explicitly understood as a manifestation of his virtuousness that is fundamentally practiced in relation to all people. For according to Philo, Joseph follows "two counselors: piety toward the father, to whom I chiefly attribute my grace, and natural philanthropy, which I practice toward all, but especially toward those of my blood (τῇ φυσικῇ φιλανθρωπίᾳ , ᾗ πρὸς ἅπαντας διαφερόντως δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀφ' αἵματος χρῶμαι)" (*Ios.* 240; cf. 263–264).

If the thematic circle is extended further (and the theme of Matt 5.38–41 is included), it must be added that alternatives to the *talio* are also rather widespread in Early Judaism.

[55] Cf. Söding, "Solidarität in der Diaspora," 6. See further Konradt, "Menschen- und Bruderliebe?," 309 as well as M. de Jonge, "The Two Great Commandments in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," *NT* 44 (2002): 271–92, here 286n28.

[56] On this, cf. T. Gad 4.2–3, where the opposite behavior is linked to hatred: the hater, who does not want to hear the words of the commandments of God about love for neighbor, wants to make known the misdeed of another to all immediately and urges that he should be condemned.

[57] See T. Iss. 5.2 ("Love the Lord and the neighbor, have mercy on the weak and the poor!") together with T. Iss. 7.6 ("Every person"). See, further, the universal orientation of the call for mercy in T. Zeb. 5.1.

[58] On this, see, in further detail, Konradt "Menschen- und Bruderliebe?," esp. 307–309.

The saying of Prov 24.29 – "Do not say, 'Just as he has done to me, shall I do to him; to each I will repay as his deeds deserve'" – has some parallels in early Judaism, especially in the romantic novel Joseph and Aseneth,[59] where the center of the ethics is occupied by the maxim that it is not fitting for human beings who revere God to return evil for evil (Jos. As. 23.9; 29.3; cf. 28.10, 14; see further Sir 10.6; T. Benj. 4.3; Ps.-Phoc. 77; 2 En. 50.4); this cannot, however, be elucidated in detail here.[60] Instead, our task in what follows will be to examine the Matthean commandment of love for enemies and to embed it in the context that we have sketched in this section.

2. The Commandment of Love for Enemies in Matt 5.43–48

2.1 Preliminary Observations

The commandment "love your enemies" stands alone neither in Matt 5.44 nor in Luke 6.27, but there are more differences than shared features in the following context in the two versions. In Luke 6.27–28, the commandment of love for enemies is the headpiece of a four-membered series of imperatives: "Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who abuse you!" In Matt 5.44, the series has only two members, and already at this point there is no consensus about which scope must be presupposed for the version of the Sayings Source, i.e., whether Luke (or a pre-Lukan Q-redaction) expanded it[61] or whether Matthew (or a pre-Matthean Q-redaction[62]) shortened it.[63] In the first case, one can explain Luke 6.28a as an influence from community tradition, as it is illustrated by Rom 12.14; 1 Pet 3.9, and consider further the possibility that "do good to those who hate you" is to be categorized as an "explanatory paraphrase for Greek listeners."[64] Against this view, it can, however, be

[59] On Joseph and Aseneth as a romantic novel, see R. Bloch, "Joseph und Aseneth: ein früher jüdischer Liebesroman," in *Jüdische Drehbühnen. Biblische Variationen im antiken Judentum*, Tria Corda 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–28.

[60] For an overview, see Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 34–173; J. F. Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5.38–42*, JSNTS 281 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), esp. 55–72; and very concisely – with a focus on Joseph and Aseneth – Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 356–58.

[61] Thus, e.g., W. C. van Unnik, "Die Motivierung der Feindesliebe in Lukas VI 32–35," *NT* 8 (1966): 284–300, here 298; Lührmann, "Liebet eure Feinde," 416–17; P. Hoffmann, "Tradition und Situation. Zur 'Verbindlichkeit' des Gebots der Feindesliebe in der synoptischen Überlieferung und in der gegenwärtigen Friedensdiskussion," in *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, ed. K. Kertelge, QD 102 (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 50–118, here 52–53.

[62] On the assumption of pre-Synoptic redaction, cf., e.g., H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)*, ed. A. Yarbro Collins, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995), 300.

[63] Scholars who suggest that Matthew shortened it include Merklein, *Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip*, 225; U. Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, ed. H. Koester, trans. J. E. Couch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 284 (GV = U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus [Mt 1–7]*, 5th ed., EKK I/1 [Zürich: Benzinger Verlag, 2002], 402); J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Dallas, Word 1989), 292, 294.

[64] F. Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, ed. H. Koester, trans. C. M. Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 236; GV = F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Lk 1,1–9,50)*, EKKNT III/1 (Zürich: Benzinger, 1989), 316.

objected that in 6.33, 35, Luke himself uses the verb ἀγαθοποιεῖν rather than καλῶς ποιεῖν. As basic content, one can at least observe that the interpersonal act of concrete help for the enemy in the sense of love is supplemented in each case by the admonition *to pray* for the enemy.[65]

In Luke, a second four-membered series on the renunciation of retaliation follows in 6.29–30. In Matthew this material, which again differs in scope, appears *before* the commandment of love for enemies. Once again, we can only speculate about the sequence of the logia in Q.[66] What is certain is only that the commandment of love for enemies stood directly together with the saying about the renunciation of retaliation. The basic content of the tradition in Q also included the fact that love of enemies was negatively demarcated from an ethical practice based on the idea of reciprocity (Matt 5.46–47; Luke 6.32–34) and positively connected to the motif of divine sonship (Matt 5.45; Luke 6.35) and, at the end, to the idea of the *imitatio Dei* (Matt 5.48; Luke 6.36).

Thus, it is indeed possible to discern the basic contours of the Q-version, which was respectively taken up and developed in Matt 5 and Luke 6. However, the details of the textual reconstruction of Q are fraught with manifold problems.[67] A discussion of these problems would not only take us beyond the framework of this study but would also not lead to clear results. Moreover, even with the hypothetical reconstruction of Q, we would not yet have found a sound basis for the context of the commandment of love for enemies in the life of the "historical Jesus" but would only have in view the application of the demands in the group of Q-tradents on the basis of their social context. In light of this constellation, it is advisable to make a virtue out of necessity and focus on the configurations of the commandment of love for enemies in the preserved New Testament texts. In this essay, I will restrict my attention to the configuration that Jesus' commandment of love for enemies has received in Matt 5.43–48.[68]

2.2 The Commandment of Love for Enemies in the Framework of the Matthean Series of Antitheses

The most conspicuous characteristic of the commandment of love for enemies in the Gospel of Matthew is the fact that the material presented in Q 6.27–36 appears in the form of antitheses in Matthew. There is a broad consensus that the antitheses form in Matt 5.38–48 (as in 5.31–32) is secondary and can be attributed to the shaping hand of the First Evangelist.[69] The instructions on the renunciation of retaliation and love for

[65] It is, however, disputed whether, in addition to Matt 5.44b par. Luke 6.27a, the exhortation to prayer in Matt 5.44c par. Luke 6.28b, is to be traced back, reaching beyond Q, to the historical Jesus (cf. Hoffmann, "Tradition und Situation," 72).

[66] On this, see, by way of example, the detailed discussion in Hoffmann, "Tradition und Situation," 64–72.

[67] According to Söding, *Nächstenliebe*, 148, the differences are "so grave that a reconstruction of the common tradition must appear audacious (*waghalsig*)."

[68] On the Lukan reception of the commandment of love for enemies, see Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 337–40.

[69] This thesis is not, however, completely unchallenged. The traditional character of *all* the antitheses is advocated – in connection with the rejection of the Q hypothesis – by, e.g., H.-J. Wrege, *Die Überlieferungs-*

enemies were allocated to two antitheses and placed as the conclusion of the series of antitheses (5.21–48).[70] In vv. 38–42, Matthew first thematizes the reaction to hostile conduct from the other and then transitions with the commandment of love for enemies (vv. 43–48) to the aspect of active conduct for the sake of the enemy.

It is fundamental for the understanding of this text that the instructions of Jesus in the antitheses are not set in opposition to the Torah commandments themselves.[71] In the Matthean composition of the Sermon on the Mount, the antitheses are preceded by a programmatic passage in which Matthew assigns to Jesus the task of fulfilling (πληρῶσαι) the Torah and the Prophets and categorically rejects the opposing view that Jesus came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. The other active use of the verb πληροῦν in Matt 3.15 and the stereotypical use of the passive verb in the formula that introduces the reflection quotations[72] clearly indicate that Matthew seeks to set a specific christologi-

geschichte der Bergpredigt, WUNT 9 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968), 57; J. Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 3rd ed. (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1979), 240–41 (ET = J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, trans. J. Bowden [New York: Scribner, 1970], 252); on Matt 5.38–48, see further Piper, *'Love your Enemies,'* 51–55. A. Sand regards it as probable that the reshaping of the Q-material already took place prior to Matthew in the case of the third, fifth, and sixth antitheses. See A. Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, BU 11 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1994), 48.

[70] The question of whether Matthew found the antithesis form in his sources in the case of the rest of the antitheses or at least the first two and was inspired by these to rework the material taken up in 5.31–32 (33–37), 38–48 (on this, see, e.g., Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 227–28; GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 326–27) or, alternatively, whether all six antitheses were first constructed by Matthew (thus, e.g., I. Broer, "Die Antithesen und der Evangelist Matthäus. Versuch, eine alte These zu revidieren," *BZ NF* [1975], 50–63) cannot be answered with certainty (on this, see M. Konradt, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, trans. M. E. Boring [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020], 78–79; GV = M. Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, NTD 1, 2nd ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023], 80–81; Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 272). While there is no Synoptic parallel to the fourth antithesis on swearing, reference can be made here to Jas 5.12, where the antithetical form is likewise lacking. Since Jas 5.12 presents the older version in terms of tradition history (on this, see G. Dautzenberg, "Ist das Schwurverbot Mt 5,33–37; Jak 5,12 ein Beispiel für die Torakritik Jesu?" *BZ NF* 25 [1981]: 44–66; B. Kollmann, "Das Schwurverbot Mt 5,33–37/Jak 5,12 im Spiegel antiker Eidkritik," *BZ NF* 40 [1996]: 179–93), the antithetical form is also probably secondary here. There is no comparable material for the first two theses. As an argument for the assumption that Matthew inherited the antithetical form in the case of the first two antitheses, it is claimed that the antitheses stand in tension to the basic statement in 5.17–20. Thus, against the view of a redactional origin of all the antitheses, Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 227 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 327) argues that "it must interpret 5:17–20 in such a way that all the antitheses fit the interpretation," which Luz does not think is the case. This objection falls away, however, when it is recognized that Matthew viewed the theses not as Torah commandments but rather as interpretations of the Torah, i.e., with the insight that the antitheses are to be read not as statements that are critical of the Torah but rather as statements that are critical of Torah interpretation (on this, see below). The argument that the counter-theses in 5.22, 28 could not have existed independently of the theses in 5.21, 27 also carries little weight. Conversely, this opens up nothing more than the *possibility* of a redactional origin of *all* the antitheses.

[71] For the understanding of the antitheses in the context of 5.17–20 sketched below, see, in greater detail, M. Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. W. Coppins and S. Gathercole, trans. W. Coppins, BMSEC 10 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2022), 75–100, here 76–89 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 288–315, here 289–303). See also Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 270–75, and the compact summary of Matthew's Torah hermeneutic in Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 102–104 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 317–19).

[72] See Matt 1.22; 2.15, 17, 23; 4.14; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35; 21.4; 27.9; cf., further, 26.54, 56.

cal emphasis with the linguistically conspicuous talk of the *fulfillment* of the Torah.[73] For Matthew, it belongs to the tasks of the Messiah to disclose the will of God laid down in the Torah and the Prophets in its full sense. The instructions of Jesus in the series of antitheses serve to unpack this in an exemplary way, i.e., to show how exactly the Torah commandments are to be understood and what life practice they correspondingly aim at. The kingdom of heaven stands open to the one who walks according to them (5.20; cf. 7.13–27).

As a counterpart, 5.20 highlights the "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees, of whom the evangelist paints an entirely bleak picture in a sharply polemical way.[74] The conflict between the Matthean communities and the Pharisees at the time of the composition of the Gospel is reflected in the emphatic prominence of the Pharisees as opponents of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.[75] Matthew has placed the instructions of Jesus in 5.21–48 within this horizon. Matthew presents Jesus here as the one (cf. 23.8–12) true interpreter of the will of God presented in the Torah and the Prophets in opposition to the – according to Matthew – inadequate teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, i.e., Matthew did not view the theses as statements of the Torah; instead, the theses, according to the Matthean understanding, were meant to reproduce what the scribes and Pharisees presented as Torah.

> In the phrasing that introduces the theses, ἐρρέθη is a *passivum divinum*; by τοῖς ἀρχαίοις the Sinai generation is meant. The point of reference is thus the proclamation of the will of God at Sinai set down in the Torah. However, with the introductory ἠκούσατε – which is lacking only in v. 31, which can be explained by the direct thematic connection between the second and third antithesis – the (interpretive) mediation of the Torah comes into view.[76] If one inquires further into the relationship of the wording of the theses to Old Testament commandments, one finds that a word-for-word agreement with Old Testament commandments can be observed only for v. 27 and v. 38; the rest of the theses do not appear in the

[73] Parallels are rare. In addition to the New Testament attestations in Rom 8.4; 13.8; Gal 5.14; and (with ἀναπληροῦν) 6.2, reference can be made in early Jewish texts to T. Naph. 8.7 (καὶ γὰρ αἱ ἐντολαὶ τοῦ νόμου διπλαῖ εἰσι καὶ μετὰ τέχνης πληροῦνται); Sib. Or. 3.246; Philo, *Praem.* 83.

[74] On the negative presentation of the scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew, see M. Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. W. Coppins and S. Gathercole, trans. K. Ess, BMSEC 2 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 101–39, 219–39, and elsewhere, and the literature cited there (GV = M. Konradt, *Israel, Kirche und die Völker im Matthäusevangelium*, WUNT 215 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 108–50, 236–57, and elsewhere).

[75] On this, see, fundamentally, J. A. Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 35–38, 68–70, 79–90, 115–16; A. J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 44–67. See also Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 1–36 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 3–42).

[76] On this, cf. Kuhn, "Das Liebesgebot Jesu," 213–14; Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 208, 217; J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, vol. 1, HThKNT 1.1, 2nd ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1988), 153; Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 84–85 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 298–99); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 273–74.

> Torah in this form.[77] In light of 5.17–20, these mixed findings can most plausibly be interpreted in such a way that Matthew imputes to the scribes and Pharisees that they either take the Torah commandments literally in a way that is only superficial, without penetrating more deeply to the intention of the commandment – such as in the case of the prohibition against adultery in v. 27[78] – or they explicitly restrict what is commanded in its sphere of validity through their interpretation.[79] The thesis in v. 43 is an especially clear example of this, for it is clear that Matthew could not have thought that he was reproducing a Torah commandment here verbatim. Matthew goes on to quote the commandment of the love for neighbor two more times with the correct wording in 19.19 and 22.39 and even honors it as a main commandment, which is even explicitly placed on par with the commandment of love for God and with the latter summarizes the Torah and the Prophets (22.39–40). He could not have done this if the addition καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου in 5.43 could have been regarded by him in any way as an authentic expression of the meaning of Lev 19.18.

Thus, 5.21–48 is, in *thesis* and *counter-thesis*, the unfolding of the statement in 5.20, namely that the righteousness expected from the disciples must far surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees if they wish to enter the kingdom of heaven. Put differently, whoever acts according to the Torah interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees as this is presented in the theses reaches a level of righteousness that is not sufficient to gain access to the kingdom of heaven.[80] If one also draws upon 5.19, then the profile of this statement is sharpened further, for according to v. 19, the relaxation of the smallest commandments – which, in the light of 23.23, includes, for example, tithing[81] – leads to less prestige in the kingdom of heaven but not to exclusion.[82] The deficiency of the scribes and Pharisees must therefore be greater: Matthew charges them with failing with respect to the great commandments (cf. 12.7; 23.23!). The commandment of love for neighbor is one of these.

For the thesis in v. 43 this means that Matthew presents here the commandment

[77] On this, cf. C. Burchard, "Versuch, das Thema der Bergpredigt zu finden," in C. Burchard, *Studien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des Neuen Testaments*, ed. D. Sänger, WUNT 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 27–50: 40–41; Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 82–83 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 296–297); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 273.

[78] On this, cf. Kuhn, "Das Liebesgebot Jesu," 213, who regards it as "almost typical for Jewish biblical exegesis" that the interpretive practice, as this applies "especially in the case of the second thesis," "is only heard as an undertone (nur mitzuhören ist)."

[79] On this, see, in detail, Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 85–87 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 299–301).

[80] For critical engagement with K. Wengst on the interpretation of Matt 5.21–48 as antitheses, see the appendix at the end of this article.

[81] On the aspect of the hierarchy of commandments in the Matthean understanding of the law, see Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 78–80 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 292–94). See also Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 271–72.

[82] For the interpretation of 5.19, see Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 79–80 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 293); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 271–72.

of love for neighbor *as the scribes and Pharisees, according to him, interpret it*. This is connected to the fact that the opposition of neighbor and enemy is not contained in the Torah commandment itself for Matthew.[83] This means that Matthew does not understand Lev 19.18 in such a way that through the talk of "neighbor" certain circles of people would be denied in principle as possible recipients of the love that is to be practiced. Instead, the opposition of neighbor and enemy, as it appears in the thesis in Matt 5.43, is inserted into Lev 19.18, according to Matthew, only through the lack of understanding of the scribes and Pharisees, who are presented in a notoriously negative way by the evangelist, and is thus taken up in Matt 5.43–44 only in this sense as a consequence of the citation of this faulty interpretation.[84] The commandment of love for enemies is, correspondingly, not understood as a criticism of the reach of the Old Testament commandment but rather helps Matthew to elucidate *its* full significance. Put differently, Matthew does not present love of enemy as a surpassing of the Old Testament commandment[85] but as a tool for its interpretation.[86]

---

[83] Contrast, e.g., W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 550: "In our estimation, what Matthew has done is take the key words 'hate' and 'enemy' … and turn them into a negative qualification in order to bring home the limitation of an OT directive in contrast with the all-encompassing nature of a word of Jesus."

[84] As Old Testament background, texts such as Deut 23.4–7 (e.g., R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 225) or Ps 139.19–22 (e.g., R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], 96–97) have been mentioned, but no fundamental commandment (!) to hate one's enemy can be derived from these texts or related texts. A text that comes close to Matt 5.43 is 1QS 1.3–4, 9–11 (cf. e.g., Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 190–91): "*3* … to love everything 4 which he selects and to hate everything that he rejects; … *9* …; to love all the sons of light, each one *10* according to his lot in God's plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance with his guilt *11* in God's vindication …" (trans. F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 71; cf. Josephus' statement on the Essenes in *J. W.* 2.139: Among other things, the oaths that must be sworn include μισήσειν δ' ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀδίκους καὶ συναγωνιεῖσθαι τοῖς δικαίοις). In the same writing, however, we can also read in 10.17–18: "*17* … I shall not repay anyone with an evil reward; *18* with goodness I shall pursue man" (trans. García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 95). T. Söding, "Feindeshass und Bruderliebe. Beobachtungen zur essenischen Ethik," *RdQ* 16 (1993): 616 concludes from the interplay of these (and other) texts that here "a pronounced nonviolent hatred of enemies is preached. … The hatred toward the wicked is … to be expressed exclusively in the radical separation from them (1QS 9.20 and elsewhere)." The difficulty of producing convincing attestations for the virulence of the interpretation of the commandment adduced in Matt 5.43 underscores the polemical anti-Pharisaic character of the attribution (for an urgent warning against hatred in early Jewish paraenesis, see the Testament of Gad). On the further context of tradition of Matt 5.43, see below. See also Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 275.

[85] A different position is taken by Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 230 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 331), who states in relation to the antitheses as a whole: "The antitheses do not interpret the Bible; they extend and surpass it."

[86] There is a tension in the statements of O. Wischmeyer on this question. See O. Wischmeyer, *Love as Agape: The Early Christian Concept and Modern Discourse*, ed. W. Coppins and S. Gathercole, trans. W. Coppins, BMSEC 4 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2021), 45–46 (GV = O. Wischmeyer, *Liebe als Agape. Das frühe Konzept und der modern Diskurs* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 45). On the one hand, Wischmeyer postulates that "the sixth antithesis of the Sermon of the Mount … presents Jesus not in continuity but in discontinuity with Lev 19.18" (45) and that with the commandment of love for enemies "Lev 19.18 itself becomes obsolete without this being made explicit" (46). On the other hand, she affirms only a few lines later that "according to Matthew, however, the continuity of the two commandments is preserved: Jesus does not abolish the old commandment but newly and authoritatively interprets it" (46).

2.3 The Criticized Understanding of the Love Commandment and Its Expansive Interpretation as Love for Enemies

The restrictive understanding of the neighbor that the love commandment receives through the interpretation presented in v. 43 is often interpreted in the sense of an inner-Jewish limitation of the demand for love.[87] In support of this view it can be pointed out that the terms that are parallel to "neighbor" in Lev 19.17–18 do, in fact, refer to the Jewish community as the horizon of application for the love commandment. Furthermore, a purely inner-Jewish orientation of the love commandment is attested in some early Jewish texts (e.g., Tob 4.13; Jub. 36.4, 8; 46.1;[88] CD 6.20–21). However, it by no means represents *the* early Jewish understanding of the demand for love.[89] The Matthean context gives no indication that Matthew seeks to accuse the scribes and Pharisees here of restricting the sphere of validity of the love commandment to the people of God, Israel.[90] According to v. 46, the concern is instead with the restriction of love to those who love you,[91] i.e., with the restriction of love to the circle of friends and acquaintances.[92] It must be noted further that according to v. 44b, for Matthew the enemies include those who persecute you (plural). Since the conflict with the Pharisees and the synagogue dominated by them stands at the center of the conflict to which the Matthean communities see themselves exposed,[93] the explicit inclusion of the enemies in the love commandment primarily has other Jews in view, which evidently permits the inverse conclusion that the restrictive interpretation of the love commandment that Matthew attributes to the scribes and Pharisees does not consist in

[87] See, e.g., D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC 33A (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 134; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 224; C. N. Chandler, "'Love Your Neighbor as Yourself' (Leviticus 19:18b) in Early Jewish-Christian Exegetical Practice and Missional Formulation," in *'What Does the Scripture Say?' Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, vol. 1: *The Synoptic Gospels*, ed. C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias, LNTS 469 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 12–56, here 26–27; as well as D. L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 176 and Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 288; GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 407–408 (as an option alongside the vulgar-ethical interpretation [on this, see below]).

[88] On the love commandment in the book of Jubilees, in which, alongside the focus on "love for brothers" in 20.2, a universalizing of the sphere of validity of the demand for love is intimated, see Söding, "Feindeshass und Bruderliebe," 602–10 and, specifically on 20.2, 607.

[89] On this, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 369n69.

[90] For this reason alone, the thesis that Matt 5.43 was inspired by the accusation of misanthropy that was made against the Jews in antiquity (G. Dautzenberg, "Mt 5,43c und die antike Tradition von der jüdischen Misanthropie," in *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium [Festschrift für W. Pesch]*, ed. L. Schenke [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988], 47–77) must be regarded as entirely improbable, for Jewish tendencies toward demarcation from non-Jews (cf., by way of example, Let. Aris. 139–142) are not visible as the background of 5.43.

[91] Cf. as an expression of everyday morality, Hesiod, *Op.* 352: "Love the one who loves (you); and go to the one who goes (to you) (τὸν φιλέοντα φιλεῖν καὶ τῷ προσιόντι προσεῖναι)." According to Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.24, it is a universally valid law to return benefits to the benefactor. And according to Ps.-Aristotle, *Rhet. Alex.* 1.1421b37ff., the principle of doing good to friends and showing thankfulness to benefactors belong to the unwritten laws.

[92] Cf., e.g., J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 265: "the neighbor has become one's friend."

[93] See note 75 above.

the restriction of those who are to be loved to their compatriots.[94] Rather, the understanding of the love commandment that is criticized here boils down to its reduction to a vulgar-ethical "common sense."

The fact that this restrictive interpretation of the love commandment is further flanked by the admonition that the enemy is to be hated makes it clear that an emotional dimension is just as little in the foreground as with the verb "love." "Hate the enemy" means to give him no support or even to harm him in an extreme case. The thesis in v. 43 is thus *de facto* nothing other than a variant, in biblical language, of the vulgar-ethical maxim – which was widespread in the ancient world (and also often criticized by philosophers) – that one should support the friends and harm the enemies.[95]

Jesus' counter-thesis makes an antithetical connection to *the interpretive second part* of the thesis. Even the enemy is to be *loved* and not hated. This de-limitation of love for neighbor is fundamental and comprehensive. Not only personal enemies are in view but, as the talk of "persecutors" shows, also those who oppose the adherents of Jesus

[94] On this aspect, see, in detail, Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 369–71.

[95] In Sosiades' collection of the sayings of the Seven Wise Men, which John Stobaeus III 1.173 hands down, the conduct toward the friends and the conduct toward the enemies is concisely juxtaposed with the words "Be well-disposed to the friends, fend off the enemies (φίλοις εὐνόει, ἐχθροὺς ἀμύνου)" (text in J. Althoff and D. Zeller, eds., *Die Worte der Sieben Weisen*, TzF 89 [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006], 64). In the *Theognidea* we find the passage, "May the great wide bronze sky fall upon me from above, the fear of earth-born men, if I do not aid those who are my friends (οἵ με φιλεῦσιν) and cause my enemies (τοῖς δ' ἐχθροῖς) pain and great misery" (*Theognidea* 1.869–872; trans. D. E. Gerber, LCL 258, 299). In Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.83–84 we read, "Let me befriend a friend, but against an enemy, I shall, as his enemy, run him down as a wolf does" (trans. W. H. Race, LCL 56, 247). Plato, *Meno* 71e has Meno list as a virtue of the man "that he be competent to manage the affairs of his city, and to manage them so as to benefit his friends and harm his enemies" (trans. W. R. M. Lamb, LCL 165, 269). See further, e.g., Euripides, *Med.* 809–810 ("Let no one think me weak, contemptible, untroublesome. No, quite the opposite, hurtful to foes, to friends kindly. Such persons live a life of greatest glory"; trans. D. Kovacs, LCL 12, 357); *Heracl.* 585–586; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.14; 2.6.35; 4.2.16; Plato, *Resp.* 332e; 336a ("'But do you know,' I said, 'whose saying I think it is: the one which says that it is just to benefit friends, and to harm enemies?'"; trans. C. Emlyn-Jones and W. Preddy, LCL 237, 41); Isocrates, *Or.* 1.29; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 8.29.1 (… ὡς οὔτε φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν δυνάμενον ἔτι οὔτ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς …); Cicero, *Off.* 1.25.88 (see note 7 above); Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.14.18 ("when a man has done you either good or harm you know how to pay him back in kind"; trans. W. A. Oldfather, LCL 131, 303); as well as the passage from Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica* 218 (*Mor.* 218a), which is quoted in note 21. Cf. M. W. Blundel, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) for an overview (26–59) and a detailed investigation of the findings in the tragedies of Sophocles (60–259). On the understanding of Matt 5.43 in the presented sense, cf. W. Klassen, *Love of Enemies: The Way to Peace* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 84; Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 305–306; Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 206; M. Ebner, "Feindesliebe – ein Ratschlag zum Überleben? Sozial- und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu Mt 5,38–47 par. Lk 6,27–35," in *From Quest to Q (Festschrift für J.M. Robinson)*, ed. J. M. Asgeirson, K. de Troyer, and M. M. Meyer, BETL 146 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 119–42, here 135–36; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 265; Reiser, "Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity," 422; E. Baasland, *Parables and Rhetoric in the Sermon on the Mount: New Approaches to a Classical Text*, WUNT 351 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 272. The affinity of Matt 5.43 to the aforementioned vulgar-ethical maxim does not, however, mean that for Matthew the concern in Matt 5.43 is not with an (inadequate) interpretation of Lev 19.18 (contrast Baasland, *Parables and Rhetoric*, 271).

as a *group*. Thus, the opponents of the community are also included here.[96] If the preceding admonitions on the renunciation of retaliation – which are, as we have seen, thematically related – are also consulted, this dimension that reaches beyond the personal enemy is reinforced. Verses 39–41 present different examples of the humiliation of "little people" through those who are socially stronger. The little people are struck, confronted with court procedures involving the seizure of their property, and forced into service by Roman soldiers.[97] Through intentional counter-provocations – they also hold out the other cheek; they also surrender the cloak and are thus naked; they go the second mile – they regain the sovereignty of action; they are no longer mere objects and victims of the actions of the more powerful.[98] In the flow of Matt 5, the definition of the neighbor who is to be loved, which includes the enemy, also encompasses the wrongdoers in the examples in vv. 39–41. Thus, Roman soldiers are, for example, included. This underscores the fact that v. 44 is aimed not only at personal enemies. At the same time, it must also be noted that – as also in vv. 39–41 – it does not become clear that more than a local horizon of the experience of "little people" is in view.

If one enquires into the relationship between the two admonitions in vv. 44b, c, then ὑμᾶς προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων in v. 44c is not to be read epexegetically as a comprehensive definition of the preceding imperative ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν nor is v. 47 a sufficient exegesis of v. 46. Instead, v. 44c presents *one* exemplary concretization. Love of enemies *also* includes praying for them, as this was also identified as one element of the conduct of the person who loves in T. Jos. 18.2. Love for enemies is not, however, exhausted in prayer,[99] but rather includes – as Luke 6.27, 35 makes explicit through καλῶς ποιεῖτε τοῖς μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς or ἀγαθοποιεῖτε – the concrete doing of good to the enemy. Conversely, the exhortation to pray for the persecutors makes clear that the admonition to love one's enemies aims not "merely" at external good conduct but has in view an attitude that proceeds from the "heart" (cf. Matt 5.28). Here, the content of the prayer remains open. It could include the aspect of the petition for the repentance or behavioral change of the enemy as well as the petition that nothing bad may happen to the enemy. The longer Lukan version makes the latter explicit when it exhorts the addressees to bless the enemy (cf. Rom 12.14; 1 Pet 3.9; cf. also 1 Cor 4.12).

[96] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 287 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 405); Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1:551; C. S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 203; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 225; and others.

[97] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 273 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 386), "In their Matthean version all three sayings reflect the experience of 'little people' who are beaten, who are threatened by debtor's trials, and who suffer under foreign occupations."

[98] On the interpretation of Matt 5.38–42, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 360–68; Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 278–80.

[99] The minimalistic interpretation of the commandment of love for enemies in Ebner, "Feindesliebe," esp. 136–40 is already questionable for this reason, for Ebner reduces the required reaction to the behavior of the hostile counterpart in the sense of the love commandment to the spiritual aspect of prayer. Ebner also ties the situational context of enmity to the experience of the rejection of the message, which he seeks to embed in a history-of-religions way through a reference to a passage in Epictetus' Cynic diatribe cited at the beginning of this article (see note 7), which is sometimes presented as an analogy to the commandment of love for enemies. However, this tying of the commandment of love for enemies to the challenge of needing to process failures in the proclamation does not emerge from Matt 5.43–48.

At the same time, prayer is "the last thing that someone can do when one's hands otherwise remain tied."[100]

2.4 Love for Enemies as Imitatio Dei: The Theological Grounding of Love for Enemies

The Matthean Jesus motivates the addressees to love for enemies by connecting it with the promise – which is to be understood eschatologically – that those who love their enemies will become sons of the Father in heaven (v. 45a). The son of God terminology used here builds on sapiential traditions in which divine sonship is joined to the motif of following the will of God.[101] Matthew is concerned more specifically with the correspondence to the action of the Father, as the continuation of the text in v. 45 makes clear. For God himself "makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."[102] Thus, as God, in his philanthropy, lets his life-preserving benefits come to all human beings without distinction, humans should likewise encounter all human beings, even the "evil enemy," in the spirit of love.

The motif of correspondence to the action of God, which underlines the promise of becoming children – or, more literally, sons – of God,[103] is taken up and strengthened through the direct exhortation to *imitatio Dei* in 5.48.[104] Differently from Luke, who – probably on the basis of Q – speaks concretely of the imitation of the mercy of God (cf. Let. Aris. 208), Matthew calls for perfection. Thus, in Matthew, the *imitatio Dei* motif is not only understood more fundamentally than in Luke (and Q), but it is also more strongly weighted.[105] The motif of perfection returns in Matthew in the pericope of the rich young man in 19.21. There too it is connected to the interpretation

[100] Söding, *Nächstenliebe*, 157.

[101] See Sir 4.10; Wis. Sol. 2.18; 5.5. On this, see G. Theißen, "Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe (Mt 5,38–48/Lk 6,27–38) und deren sozialgeschichtlicher Hintergrund," in *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums*, WUNT 19, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 160–97, here 161–62.

[102] Here, the formulation in Matthew is more detailed than in Luke, where it merely says that God "is generous toward the ungrateful and the bad" (αὐτὸς χρηστός ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηρούς) (6.35). Whereas Matthew has a concrete reference to God's action as Creator (sun, rain), the Lukan passage has only the mere characterization of God as χρηστός. Furthermore, with respect to Matthew's double members πονηροὺς καὶ ἀγαθούς and δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους, the Lukan version only provides parallels to the two negative members. In this case, the Q version is probably better preserved by Luke, for the Matthean juxtaposition of "evil and good," "righteous and unrighteous" corresponds to the opposition of neighbor and friend in 5.43, which was introduced through the secondary formation of antitheses, whereas Luke's "one-sided" formulation ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηρούς corresponds to the – originally not antithetically formulated – commandment to love the enemy.

[103] One can discover a connection to the christological use of the Son of God title in the Gospel of Matthew insofar as in this the aspect of the obedience to the will of the Father has fundamental importance (on this, see U. Luz, *Studies in Matthew* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005], 83–96, here 93–96; GV = U. Luz, "Eine thetische Skizze der matthäischen Christologie," in *Anfänge der Christologie. Festschrift für F. Hahn*, ed. C. Breytenbach and H. Paulsen [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991], 221–35, here 231–34]).

[104] This motif is frequent. It appears with special density in the Letter of Aristeas (see, e.g., Let. Aris. 188, 190, 192, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211).

[105] See Theißen, "Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe," 162–63.

of the love commandment.[106] This shows that perfection is understood by Matthew in relation to the Torah. It is based on the perfect fulfillment of the Torah, which is hermeneutically centered in the love commandment according to the interpretation of Jesus. In short, whoever (also) loves his enemy practices the commandment of love perfectly and thus imitates God.[107]

The message of the *basileia*,[108] which is characteristic for Jesus, is often specified as the overarching theological context for the commandment of love for enemies on the level of the historical Jesus[109] – more specifically, the consistent understanding of the demand for love in the sense of love for enemies is connected to the boundless goodness of God, which he, in light of the inbreaking of his kingly reign, demonstrates and which is manifested above all in Jesus' turning to sinners. However, there is no talk of the *basileia* in Matt 5.43–48 (or in Luke 6.27–36), at least not explicitly. Instead, Matthew makes recourse, as we have seen, to a creation-theological argument. Here, as a related text, we can refer, first, to the talk of God's ἀγαπᾶν τὰ ὄντα πάντα in Wis. 11.24, even though there is no explicit talk of God's *love* in Matt 5, and we also find, at least at first glance, a strikingly similar statement in Seneca's *De Beneficiis*: "'If you are imitating the gods,' you say, 'then bestow benefits also upon the ungrateful; for the sun rises also

[106] In Matt 19.16–22 perfection does not designate a second stage after the keeping of the commandments thematized in vv. 17–20. Instead, Jesus' demand that the rich man sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor (v. 21) interprets what the love commandment – which has been added in 19.19 vis-à-vis the Markan *Vorlage* (Mark 10.19) by Matthew – means in the case of the rich man and in light of his encounter with Jesus. For justification of this understanding of the text, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 95–112, here 98–100. Cf. also Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 123–26 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 340–43); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 271, 294.

[107] The motif of correspondence to the action of God also underlies Sir 12.1–7^{LXX}, though in comparison to Matt 5.43–48, under the exact opposite banner. Sirach admonishes the reader not to assist the sinner and not to give to the godless, "because the Most High also hates sinners and he will render punishment on the godless" (12.6^{LXX}). In v. 5, the aspect of sapiential caution is present. The enemy must not be fed with bread "lest he gain mastery over you through it." The wise man must therefore consider that "there are cases in which through doing the good one can bring about the opposite" (G. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira*, ATD.A 1 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], 115). In the Hebrew version, this aspect is more strongly emphasized insofar as v. 5 contains there the concrete admonition not to give weapons to the evildoer, lest he use them against the giver at the next opportunity. This concretization is deleted in the Greek translation in v. 5.

[108] On this, cf., e.g., H. Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft. Eine Skizze*, SBS 111, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989); M. Konradt, "Das Verständnis der Königsherrschaft Gottes bei Jesus von Nazareth," in *Theokratie und theokratischer Diskurs. Die Rede von der Gottesherrschaft und ihre politisch-sozialem Auswirkungen im interkulturellen Vergleich*, ed. K. Trampedach and A. Pečar, Colloquia historica et theologica 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 101–15; Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 41–43.

[109] See P. J. Du Plessis, "Love and Perfection in Matt. 5:43–48," *Neotest.* 1 (1967): 28–34, here 28; V. P. Furnish, *The Love Commandment in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1973), 67–69; Piper, *'Love your Enemies,'* 80–88; J. Becker, "Nächstenliebe – Brüderliebe. Exegetische Beobachtungen als Anfrage an ein ethisches Problemfeld," *ZEE* 25 (1981): 5–18, here 7–8; U. Luz, "Jesu Gebot der Feindesliebe und die kirchliche Verantwortung für den Frieden," in *Christen im Streit um den Frieden. Beiträge zu einer neuen Friedensethik*, ed. W. Brinkel, B. Scheffler, and M. Wächter (Freiburg: Dreisam, 1982), 119–34, here 125–27 (cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 274–75, 287; GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 389, 405; on this see note 114 below); Hoffmann, "Tradition und Situation," 108–109; Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 197; Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft*, 119–20, 122–23.

upon the wicked, and the sea lies open also to pirates.'"[110] However, on the level of the Gospel of Matthew, the embedding of the love commandment in the proclamation of the *basileia* is clear if 5.43–48 is placed in the larger context. Matthew opens the public activity of Jesus in 4.17 programmatically with the notice that Jesus began to proclaim: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." In the summary presentation of the activity of Jesus in 4.23 (cf. 9.35), the talk of the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας) takes up 4.17. More specifically, what is quoted in 4.17 in direct speech as the content of the κηρύσσειν is now taken up in the expression εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας.[111] The teaching of Jesus presented in the Sermon on the Mount[112] serves to unfold exemplarily what it means to repent in light of the nearness of the kingdom of God. It is directed at those who have let themselves be addressed by the proclamation of the "gospel of the kingdom."[113] In this context, special attention must be given to the fact that the message of the inbreaking reign of God goes hand in hand with the fact that sinners are not tied to their past but the door of repentance is opened precisely for them insofar as Jesus turns also and specifically to them (cf. Matt 9.12–13!). Against this background, love for enemies can be understood as corresponding to the loving turning of God to human beings that grants a new beginning and is not tied to conditions.[114] The disciples should, as it were, join in the movement of the loving turning of God to human beings and thus correspond to the inbreaking kingdom of God by likewise not tying their turning to human beings to conditions that are defined by the previous behavior of the other. Relating the love demonstrated by God in light of the dawning of his kingly reign to the demand of love that is issued to the disciples in this way corresponds to the fundamental significance of the *imitatio* idea in 5.43–48.

In vv. 46–47 a motif of demarcation stands alongside the motif of correspondence to God and becoming children of God. Here, the restrictive definition of the love com-

[110] *Ben.* 4.26.1; trans. J. W. Basore, LCL 310, 257. Cf. further Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 9.11, 27.

[111] Cf. Burchard, "Versuch," 31: 'The gospel of the kingdom' is a "substantivization of 4.17."

[112] Cf. ἐδίδασκεν in 5.2 as well as the corresponding note in 7.28–29.

[113] The audience of the Sermon of the Mount is formed more specifically by the disciples as a narrower circle (5.1–2) as well as the crowds from all Israel who follow Jesus according to 4.25 (on the place specifications in 4.25, see Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 50–52) as a wider circle (cf. 7.28–29), whom Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 163 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 242) fittingly designates as "potential church" (cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 167, 389; GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 247, 540).

[114] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 287 (GV = *Mt 1–7*, 405): "The extreme demand to love one's enemy corresponds to God's extreme love toward sinners and outcasts." The further-reaching interpretation that the disciples with the love for their enemies correspond to the fact that God granted them his loving care when they were still enemies of God (cf. Rom 5.10) (cf. W. Huber, "Feindschaft und Feindesliebe. Notizen zum Problem des 'Feindes' in der Theologie," *ZEE* 26 (1982): 128–58, here 155; Becker, "Nächstenliebe," 7–8; Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft*, 119–20; as well as Merklein, *Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip*, 234–37) overloads the Matthean context. What comes to expression here is more likely a theological thinking that is nourished by the Pauline doctrine of justification. In terms of tradition history, one can, however, point out that a connection between "love for enemies" and knowledge of one's own sinfulness is in view in Sir 28.1–7 (on this, see Theißen, "Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe," 171) and Matthew himself, in the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matt 18.23–35, emphasizes the motif that the mercy received from God is to be passed on to the fellow human beings. It is, however, not recognizable that Matthew had an analogous connection in mind in the case of the commandment of love for enemies in 5.44.

mandment through the scribes and Pharisees is, as indicated above, equated with the vulgar-ethical principle of turning only to those from whom one experiences something good. But mutual love is a behavior that even tax collectors and "gentiles,"[115] who are far from God, manage to produce. More is expected from the disciples – namely, a life that is nourished from their relation to God and corresponds precisely to the conduct of the heavenly Father. Here, it is instructive to incorporate the connection of the series of antitheses to v. 16, for the instructions of Jesus in the antitheses unpack the works that the disciples should allow to be seen before people, so that they may glorify the heavenly Father. The fact that the works of the *disciples* should inspire those who see them to praise *God* implies that the way of life of the disciples is an expression of their relationship to God, that their action grows out of their bond with the heavenly Father, and that, putting it concisely, the loving God lets them live in such a way that the praise for these works comes to God.

2.5 Overcoming Enmity?

While the commandment of love for enemies in Matt 5.43–48, as presented in the preceding section, is grounded theologically, we must at the same time inquire into the extent to which Matthew also connects socio-pragmatic aspects with love for enemies. The motif of the reinforcement of the internal cohesion of one's own group, which appears in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, does not play a discernable role in 5.43–48, but one can point to the fact that the regulation for the practice of correction in Matt 18.15 stands in the tradition of the love commandment. If a community member sins, this is not to be made public but should first be discussed privately, which is meant to protect the sinner from exposure in the fellowship.[116] Unlike what we find

[115] Instead of tax collectors and "gentiles," the term "sinners" consistently appears in Luke 6.32–34. The difference could be interpreted in such a way that Matthew has preserved here the Jewish coloration of the tradition (cf., e.g., Merklein, *Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip*, 226). Against this view, it could be objected that in Matthew the designation "gentiles" with the substantivized adjective ἐθνικός also occurs in 6.7; 18.17, and in 18.17, analogous to 5.46–47, it appears together with "tax collectors," whereas outside the Gospel of Matthew, it does not appear in the Synoptic tradition. However, a conclusion for 5.47 does necessarily follow from the fact that ἐθνικός is, in the Synoptic comparison, a linguistic peculiarity of Matthew or of the Matthean special material. At any rate, an impressive example of the phenomenon that Matthew made a word found in his sources into one of his "favorite words" appears, in the Matthean use of ὀλιγόπιστος (Matt 6.30; 8.26; 14.31; 16.8; as well as 17.20), which was inspired by Q 12.28. Alongside the explicit demarcation from sinners and "gentiles," we find, through the variation – which probably goes back to Matthew – of the question τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; (v. 46) to τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; in v. 47 (in Luke 6.32–34 the question appears three times with the wording ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν;), the demarcation from the scribes and Pharisees, for with περισσόν Matthew refers back to 5.20 (ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων). Cf., for many, Hoffmann, "Tradition und Situation," 83: "The redactional keyword connection of περισσόν (5.47) to περισσεύειν (5.20) makes clear that in the love for neighbor opened up to love for enemies Matthean redaction sees the 'more' of the righteousness of the disciples that distinguishes them from the Pharisees and scribes."

[116] On Matt 18.15–17 and on the tradition-historical background, see Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 394–401 and T. Jabbarian, *Die Niedrigkeit Jesu und seiner Jüngerschaft. Eine Studie zur Korrelation von Ethik und Christologie in Mt 16,21–20,34*, WUNT 2/549 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 112–24. Cf.

in the Didache, where the exhortation to love for enemies is followed by the promise "and you will have no enemy" (Did. 1.3), Matt 5.43–48 also contains no explicit statement on a social perspective of hope connected to love for enemies that would provide an analogy to the motif of the removal of enmity, which occurs in the interpretation of Exod 23.4–5 in Philo and in Ps.-Phoc. 140–142.[117] Again, however, the context brings us further, for in context the commandment of love for enemies causes one to think back upon the beatitude on the peacemakers in 5.9, not only with respect to *content* but also because the commandment of love for enemies and the beatitude on the peacemakers are connected through the promises that are respectively attached to them. In both cases, the concern is with becoming children of God. Moreover, 5.9 and 5.45 are the only texts in the Gospel of Matthew in which the term son of God is related to the followers of Jesus. This is no accident but rather points to the consciously shaping hand of the First Evangelist, who sought to establish a connection here.[118] If the diachronic profile of the text is incorporated, then it is probably possible to go one step further. The commandment of love for enemies comes from the Sayings Source; the beatitude on the peacemakers is Matthean special material or Matthean redaction. This suggests that the formation of the beatitude on the peacemakers in the Matthean community was inspired by the commandment of love for enemies.[119] The promise of becoming children of God is taken from the commandment of love for enemies and love for enemies is interpreted as peacemaking. This means that Matt 5.9 probably presents a direct reflection of the understanding of love for enemies in the Matthean community: love for enemies is an act of peacemaking.

If v. 16 is drawn upon again, then it must be added that Matthew presupposes here that the works of the disciples will have a positive impact on outsiders. More than that, the exhortation in v. 16 – namely, that the disciples should let their light shine before human beings – expresses in imperative form what was previously announced to them in v. 13 and v. 14: they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This means that for Matthew, "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" are, among other things, indeed fundamentally, those persons who love their enemies. For the impulse that goes out from them for the renewal of social relationships toward peace form the necessary counterweight to failed configurations of the social climate in which life is not

also Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 146–48 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium,* 429–30); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament,* 307–310.

[117] Against the presence of an intention of removing enmity in the commandment of love for enemies, see, e.g., Furnish, *The Love Commandment*, 1973, 67; W. Schrage, *Ethik des Neuen Testament*, GNT 4, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 83 (no equivalent in W. Schrage, *Ethics of the New Testament*, trans. D. E. Green [Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1990], 78). See also Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:552, 556 ("Jesus does not promise that love will turn enemies into friends" [552]).

[118] Reference must be made further to the interlinking of the commandment of love for enemies and the beatitudes through the back-reference of 5.44b to the beatitude on the persecuted disciples in 5.10, 11–12. On the connection to the beatitudes, see Lührmann, "Liebet eure Feinde," 414–15; as well as R. Schnackenburg, "Die Seligpreisung der Friedenstifter (Mt 5,9) im matthäischen Kontext," *BZ NF* 26 (1982): 161–78, here 167–70.

[119] Cf. Lührmann, "Liebet eure Feinde," 425, with a view to the aspect of the promise of becoming children of God.

able to flourish. Such impulses can, as v. 47 illustrates, assume a quite banal everyday form: whoever greets his enemy begins the communication anew and opens thereby the chance for a process that overcomes enmity.[120]

It does not follow from what has just been said that love for enemies is fundamentally a social strategy and thus a *calculating* action. Love for enemies is not *based* on the weighing of its social chances. However, in Matt 5 we find a behavior *founded* in the *imitatio Dei* and presupposing a certain image of God that with the renewal of interpersonal relationships toward peace *also* includes a social perspective of hope,[121] as this also appears in a similar way in early Jewish texts: doing good toward the enemy bears the chance of reconciliation in itself.[122]

2.6 The Commandment of Love for Enemies and the Golden Rule

In Luke 6 the Golden Rule – probably in the sequence of Q – appears in the middle of the composition that circles around love for enemies in vv. 27–35: "As you wish that human beings do to you, do likewise to them!" (v. 31).[123] This compositional bringing together of an extraordinary demand such as love for enemies, on the one side, and an ethical maxim that is usually regarded as an ethical commonplace of the ancient world,[124] on the other hand, has often provoked astonishment or led interpreters to diagnose a tension.[125] However, the composition does indeed make good sense. Here, it is fundamentally necessary to note that contrary to the claim of Albrecht Dihle,[126] the Golden Rule as it appears in Luke 6.31 (and Matt 7.12) neither arises from the idea of requital nor is it bound to it. For not what one has *de facto* experienced from others is made the standard of one's own action but rather what one wishes to experience from others – irrespective of how the other person has, in fact, acted.[127] From a material-ethical per-

[120] Naturally, there is no guarantee that the greeting will be returned, but it is hardly to be denied that a greeting is an opening act to the *overcoming* of enmity.

[121] Put differently, even though it is correct that "utilitarian considerations" are remote here (thus Luz, "Jesu Gebot der Feindesliebe," 124), this does not mean that Matthew does not at all have in view the possibility of a positive change of the social situation. Worlds lie between the latter and a utilitarian calculation.

[122] See above on Philo, *Virt.* 116–119; Philo, *QE* 2.11; Ps.-Phoc. 140–142; as well as Jos. Asen. 29.3–4. See further T. Gad 6.6; T. Benj. 5.4.

[123] On the following, cf. M. Konradt, "Liebesgebot und Christusmimesis. Eine Skizze zur Pluralität neutestamentlicher Agapeethik," *JBTh* 29 (2014): 65–98, here 72–73. Cf. also Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 295–96.

[124] This is based, in part, on the fact that statements that must be carefully distinguished from the version presented in the Jesus tradition (Matt 7.12; Luke 6.31) are also evaluated as attestations of the Golden Rule. For a differentiating view, see M. Konradt, "The Golden Rule," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law*, ed. B. A. Strawn, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 350–56.

[125] See, e.g., A. Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel*, SAW 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 113–14; F. W. Horn, *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas*, GTA 26, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 105–107.

[126] See Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel*, passim.

[127] See P. Borgen, "The Golden Rule: With Emphasis on its Usage in the Gospels," in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men and Other Essays on Christian Origins* (Trandheim: Tapir, 1983), 99–114, here 109, 111; L. J. Topel, "The Tarnished Golden Rule (Luke 6:31)," *TS* 59 (1988): 475–85, here 477–78; B. Kollmann,

spective, the Golden Rule is basically empty. It does not contain any material specification of what behavior is to be expected or hoped for from others but rather presupposes such a specification. This means that the material-ethically empty maxim obtains the specification of its content from the respective context in which it is used. For Luke 6.31, it follows from this that the Golden Rule receives here its material concretization through the surrounding exhortations, i.e., its content is defined by the commandment of love for enemies. Conversely, the placement of the Golden Rule in the middle of the composition on love for enemies (6.27–35) implies that the commandment of love for enemies merely unpacks what follows from the Golden Rule – when it is consistently thought through – as a behavioral orientation, i.e., love for enemies is nothing other than the consistent application of the Golden Rule. For one hopes for help in situations of distress even from someone with whom the social relationship is disrupted. Thus, conversely, if one applies the Golden Rule consistently, one must turn also to the enemy.

Matthew has removed the Golden Rule from the direct context of love for enemies and placed it at the end of the body of the Sermon on the Mount in 7.12. The connection to love for enemies is not, however, eliminated with this rearrangement. For Matthew has connected the placement of the Golden Rule as the conclusion of the body of the Sermon on the Mount with the fact that it functions as a summary of the Law and the Prophets, which Jesus has come to fulfill according to 5.17 and whose fully valid understanding is exemplarily unfolded in the antitheses. This means that in Matthew the Golden Rule, in terms of content, is no longer related *solely* to the renunciation of retaliation and love for enemies but rather to the whole series of antitheses, including love for enemies, and, conversely, the series of antitheses as a whole are rationalized and made understandable through the Golden Rule. Here, we find a description of conduct that one hopes to receive for oneself from others. Let us begin with the first antithesis, the radical interpretation of the prohibition of murder:[128] no person, who is in their right mind, can wish to be beaten down by another person – even if it is only verbally. Thus, one should not act aggressively toward others. Likewise, however, one hopes even from their enemy that they will not refuse to help him or her in a situation of distress. Accordingly, one must also love the enemy in this way.

Notably, the connection between the love commandment and the Golden Rule also appears in (other) Jewish sources – namely, in Sir 31.15 and in Targum Ps.-Jonathan on Lev 19.18. Its reception in the Synoptic Jesus tradition exhibits a special profile insofar as the linking of the Golden Rule to the love commandment is deepened there

"Die Goldene Regel (Mt 7,12/Lk 6,31). Triviale Maxime der Selbstbezogenheit oder Grundprinzip ethischen Handelns?," in *Er stieg auf den Berg und lehrte sie (Mt 5,1f.). Exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Bergpredigt*, ed. H.-U. Weidemann, SBS 226 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2012), 97–113, here 102–104, 112; as well as M. Wolter, *The Gospel According to Luke – Volume I (Luke 1–9:50)*, ed. W. Coppins and S. Gathercole, trans. W. Coppins and C. Heilig, BMSEC 4 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 281 (GV = M. Wolter, *Das Lukasevangelium*, HNT 5 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 258), who fittingly states that "This phrasing of the Golden Rule has nothing to do with the principle of retribution."

[128] On the understanding of Matt 5.21–22, see Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 105–108 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 320–24); Konradt, *Ethik im Neuen Testament*, 286–88.

through the radical understanding of love as love for enemies. And it is by no means unimportant here that the Golden Rule in Luke 6.31 and Matt 7.12 appears in its positive rather than negative version.[129] The concern is not merely with refraining from harming the other but rather with the positive demand that one help them actively and that one concern oneself with his or her well-being in the same way as one is interested in one's own well-being.

3. Summary

Through the formation of the antitheses, Matthew explicitly emphasizes the commandment of love for enemies as an interpretation of the commandment of love for neighbor in Lev 19.18. He advocates here a de-limitation *in principle* of the benevolent conduct toward fellow human beings that is demanded in the love commandment, though without – if one considers the social context – transcending the sphere of everyday behavior. The loving care for all human beings without distinction is, for Matthew, an essential demonstration of the relationship to God, for responding to experienced love with love is a behavior that even tax collectors and "gentiles," who are far from God, manage to produce. There are several points that correspond to this. First, the fact that the enemy is also incorporated into the loving care for others means imitating God in his philanthropy and corresponding to him in his loving care for human beings, which characterizes the inbreaking of his kingly rule. Second, the promise of becoming children of God is connected to love for enemies. Finally, there are also undertones of a social-pragmatic dimension in the commandment of love for enemies. Love for enemies bears within it chances for the reshaping of social life together. A social-pragmatic perspective also appears with different aspects in the early Jewish texts presented in the first part of this article. However, unlike what we find in Lev 19.17–18 and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Matt 5.43–48 does not specifically reflect on the shaping of inner-community relationships, which is connected to the de-limitation of the demand for love in principle. However, the aspect of internal cohesion also plays no role in Philo's interpretation of Exod 23.4–5. Rather, the goal that Moses pursues with his legislation and that is paradigmatically reflected in the commandment of Exod 23.4–5 is assigned a universal dimension. For where harmony, community spirit, and the like

[129] For the difference between the two versions, see Theißen, "Die Goldene Regel (Matthäus 7:12/Lukas 6:31). Über den Sitz im Leben ihrer positiven und negativen Form," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 386–99. As Theißen has shown, the positive form usually occurs with reference to specific spheres of life: in the ethos of family (Isocrates, *Or.* 1.14; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 1.37), in the ethos of friendship (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 6.1.47; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 5.21); and in the ethos of rulership (Isocrates, *Or.* 2.24; 3.49; 4.81; for related maxims, cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.142.3; Cassius Dio, *Hist. rom.* 52.34.1); only the negative form also occurs as a fundamentally formulated maxim (Isocrates, *Or.* 3.61; b. Šabb. 31a). In relation to this, Matt 7.12 and Luke 6.31 display the distinctive characteristic that an extraordinary expansion of its sphere of application is connected to the positive formulation of the Golden Rule. A direct connection between the commandment of love for enemies and the golden Rule appears – though only in its negative form – in Epistula Apostolorum 18 (trans. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], 567): "Love your enemies, and what you do not want done to you, that do to no one else."

are encountered, "the whole human race may attain to the highest happiness" (Philo, *Virt.* 119).

From a tradition-historical perspective, we can conclude on the whole that on the map of early Jewish ethics, the commandment of love for enemies does not appear as a solitary point but rather as a peak in a mountain range. Expressed non-metaphorically, the fact that the commandment of love for enemies is clothed in an antithesis in Matt 5 should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that the commandment of love for neighbor positively takes up early Jewish traditions and develops them further. At the same time, in the overall panorama of early Jewish ethics, it is also recognizable as an independent expression of the basic motif of the helping care for other human beings. Its explosive power lies not only in the fundamental de-limitation, in the universalization of the demand in principle, but also in its theological grounding. For with this grounding, love for enemies appears as a direct manifestation of the action dimension of faith, which cannot be suspended from case to case. It is a direct and consistent expression of faith in the one God, who, as Creator, lets his benevolent deeds also come to the unrighteous and who, in light of the inbreaking of his kingly reign, does not tie any sinner to his or her past but clears away the earlier deeds and offers a new chance to obtain salvation. The Johannine peak statement "God is love" (1 John 4.8, 16) compresses this thematic nexus into a concise saying. Matthew 5.43–48 signals how consequential such a theological statement is from an ethical perspective.

Appendix: Klaus Wengst and the Interpretation of Matt 5.21–48 as Antitheses

Klaus Wengst has challenged the understanding of Matt 5.21–48 as antitheses and in doing so also engaged critically with my interpretation.[130] Wengst and I agree that Jesus' instructions in 5.21–48 should be understood as interpretations of the Torah. Wengst, however, also seeks to keep 5.21–48 free from a criticism of other Jewish interpretations of the Torah. He reaches this goal by viewing the theses as reproductions of words of the Torah ("The introductions of the six units characterize what is quoted as authoritative quotations from the Torah" [13]), while calling into question every adversative emphasis with respect to the words that introduce Jesus' instructions. In his view, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν can be sufficiently explained against the background of rabbinic terminology, and he concludes from this that the particle δέ – which is, in itself, possible, of course – is not to be understood as adversative and that the personal pronoun ἐγώ – against the usual Greek linguistic usage – is not emphatic. In his view, the expression means something like: "'I now say to you,' or, more freely, 'I interpret this in this way'" (15). The inadequate plausibility of this interpretive attempt is easy to see, however, already with reference the last antithesis, which is the focus of the present article. It would be necessary to translate: "You have heard that it was said, 'You should love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' I interpret this in this way: 'You should love your enemies …'" How the exhortation to love one's enemies can be understood as an interpretation of

[130] K. Wengst, "Keine 'Antithesen,' sondern Auslegung der Tora. Zu Mt 5,17–48," *ZNT* 36 (2015): 12–21.

the statement "you should hate your enemy" remains incomprehensible. Instead, here it becomes visible with exemplary clarity that there is no way to get around the view that two instructions are respectively *set over against each other* in 5.21–48. To this extent and in this sense, it also continues to be appropriate to speak of "antitheses," though, as we have shown, the entities that are set over against each other are not Torah commandments and instructions of Jesus but rather *interpretations* of the Torah that Matthew ascribes to the scribes and Pharisees and Torah *interpretations* of the Matthean Jesus.

In this context, it appears extremely bizarre when Wengst opposes my interpretation with the accusation that I remain – with regard to determining the relationship between Judaism and Christianity – "in the old schema of surpassing."[131] First, this ignores the fact that I understand the conflict between the Matthean community and the Pharisees to be a conflict that is still intra-Jewish in principle[132] and, correspondingly, also read 5.21–48, from a history-of-religions perspective, as an *intra-Jewish* discourse. Second, this goes hand in hand with the fact that I have sought to support this view with respect to the side of Jesus' instructions by embedding them in early Jewish traditions.[133] Third, I have explicitly pointed out that the positions that are ascribed to the scribes and Pharisees in 5.20–48 cannot be used as historical evidence for the reconstruction of their views but must be regarded as part of the anti-Pharisaic polemic that runs through the entire Gospel of Matthew – and is just as little affirmed by me as by other exegetes who soberly identify it.[134] While Wengst notes my reference to the fact that the theses cannot be used as historical evidence for the Pharisees understanding of the law, he criticizes me for not carrying this out and for the fact that "no attestations are produced … for the claimed theses."[135] The language of "claimed theses" is peculiar insofar as the concern is with the Matthean theses. What is meant is apparently the thesis that Matthew viewed these – in the words of Burchard[136] – as "statements of the 'righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.'" The reference to the fact that no attestations were produced for this is by no means a convincing objection against this thesis. On the contrary, if one overlooks for a moment the fact that the extra-New Testament source situation is full of gaps to a great degree, the criticism made by Wengst is, in fact, an implication of the statement that the ascription of positions in Matt 5.21–48 *must be attributed to Matthean polemic* (on this, the position that Matthew imputes to

[131] Wengst, "Keine 'Antithesen,' sondern Auslegung der Tora," 14: "im alten Schema der Überbietung."

[132] See Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 98–100 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 313–15); for a more detailed discussion of the relationship of the Matthean community/communities to Judaism, see Konradt, *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles*, 355–67 and especially Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 1–36 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 3–42).

[133] See Konradt, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 79–98 (GV = Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 81–100); for the reception of the decalogue in Matt 5, in particular, see Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 101–30, esp. 108–12, 116–19, 122–23 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 316–47, esp. 324–28, 332–35, 339–40).

[134] On this, see the critical comments in Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 99–100 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 314–15).

[135] Wengst, "Keine 'Antithesen,' sondern Auslegung der Tora," 13.

[136] Burchard, "Versuch," 40.

the scribes and Pharisees in 15.4–6 is also instructive).[137] Conversely, when looking at the side of Jesus' instructions, one cannot convincingly dismiss the view that Matthew, with the talk of the *fulfillment* of Torah and Prophets in 5.17, aims to set a christological emphasis[138] and claims that the will of God expressed in the Torah and the Prophets is first "brought to light in a fully valid way" by Jesus[139] as "bubbles of words"[140] by pointing out that one can find passages in (other) early Jewish texts that are related to the statements of Jesus. Here, the simple but fundamental distinction between text and reality is neglected. Every author (including Matthew) can make statements and claims that cannot be brought into harmony with the extra-textual "reality" without further ado. This applies especially to polemical texts (such as the Gospel of Matthew). Correspondingly, the fact – which must be experienced exegetically – that the Gospel of Matthew makes the claim that Jesus is not merely an interpreter of the law alongside others (cf. Matt 23.8, 10) must, first, be distinguished from the question of how "original" the Matthean Jesus' interpretations of the commandments are in detail, to the extent that this can be sufficiently reconstructed through the history-of-religions findings. With respect to the accusation made by Wengst, a fourth point is connected to this. According to the rules of the art, the most noble task of the exegete who works historically is to work out which statements are made in a text *sine ira et studio*.[141] The statements that Wengst labels as "bubbles of words" must naturally be read in this sense. This also says nothing about how I appraise the claim made by Matthew or what it means for me theologically. While an exegete who also understands him or herself to be a theologian, will, in the exegesis of biblical texts, also be challenged to take a position in relation to the statements of the texts that have been worked out in individual cases, this is a second step. Finally, an exegete must be especially suspicious of his/her exegesis if the position that he/she works out for a biblical text appears too similar to his or her own theology and then reflect upon the fact that biases are not held only by others.

Bibliography

Althoff, J., and D. Zeller, eds. *Die Worte der Sieben Weisen*. TzF 89. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006.

Baasland, E. *Parables and Rhetoric in the Sermon on the Mount. New Approaches to a Classical Text*. WUNT 351. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

[137] On this, see, e.g., U. Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, ed. H. Koester, trans. J.E. Couch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 330–31; GV = U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Mt 8–17)*, EKK 1/2 (Zürich: Benzinger, 1990), 422–23); Konradt, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 234–35 (GV = Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 243–44).

[138] On this, see, e.g., Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 217 (GV = Luz, *Mt 1–7*, 314).

[139] Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 76; cf. Konradt, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 74.

[140] Thus Wengst, "Keine 'Antithesen,' sondern Auslegung der Tora," 15 ("*Wortblasen*"), with reference to the passages quoted above.

[141] On this, see Konradt, *Christology, Torah, and Ethics*, 15 (GV = Konradt, *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*, 18–19).

Becker, J. "Nächstenliebe – Brüderliebe. Exegetische Beobachtungen als Anfrage an ein ethisches Problemfeld." *ZEE* 25 (1981): 5–18.

Bernays, J. *Ueber das Phokylideische Gedicht. Ein Beitrag zur hellenistischen Litteratur*. Berlin: W. Hertz, 1856.

Betz, H. D. *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)*. Edited by A. Yarbro Collins. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995.

Billerbeck, M. *Epiktet. Vom Kynismus*. PhAnt 34. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

Bloch, R. "Joseph und Aseneth: ein früher jüdischer Liebesroman." Pages 1–28 in *Jüdische Drehbühnen. Biblische Variationen im antiken Judentum*. Tria Corda 7. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

Blundel, M. W. *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Böhm, M. *Rezeption und Funktion der Vätererzählungen bei Philo von Alexandrien. Zur Zusammenhang von Kontext, Hermeneutik und Exegese im frühen Judentum*. BZNW 128. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005.

Borgen, P. "Philo of Alexandria." Pages 233–82 in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*. Edited by M. E. Stone. CRINT 2.2. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984.

————. "The Golden Rule: With Emphasis on its Usage in the Gospels." Pages 99–114 in *Paul Preaches Circumcision and Pleases Men and Other Essays on Christian Origins*. Trondheim: Tapir, 1983.

Bovon, F. *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Lk 1,1–9,50)*. EKKNT III/1. Zürich: Benzinger, 1989.

————. Luke 1: *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*. Edited by H. Koester. Hermeneia. Translated by C. M. Thomas. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

Braun, M. *History and Romance in Greco-Roman Oriental Literature*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938.

Broer, I. "Die Antithesen und der Evangelist Matthäus. Versuch, eine alte These zu revidieren." *BZ NF* 19 (1975): 50–63.

Burchard, C. "Versuch, das Thema der Bergpredigt zu finden." Pages 27–50 in C. Burcharrd, *Studien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des Neuen Testaments*. Edited by D. Sänger. WUNT 107. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.

Chandler, C. N. "'Love Your Neighbor as Yourself' (Leviticus 19:18b) in Early Jewish-Christian Exegetical Practice and Missional Formulation." Pages 12–56 in *'What Does the Scripture Say?' Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*. Volume. 1: *The Synoptic Gospels*. Edited by C. A. Evans and H. D. Zacharias. LNTS 469. London: T&T Clark, 2012.

Collins, J. J. *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Crüsemann, F. *Die Tora. Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes*. Munich: Kaiser, 1992.

Dautzenberg, G. "Ist das Schwurverbot Mt 5,33–37; Jak 5,12 ein Beispiel für die Torakritik Jesu?" *BZ NF* 25 (1981): 47–66.

————. "Mt 5,43c und die antike Tradition von der jüdischen Misanthropie." Pages 47–77 in *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium (Festschrift für W. Pesch)*. Edited by L. Schenke. Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988.

Davies, W. D., and D. C. Allison. *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Volume 1. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988.

Davila, J. R. *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* JSJ.S 105. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Davis, J. F. *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5.38–42*. JSNTS 281. London: T&T Clark, 2005.

de Jonge, M. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament as Part of Christian Literature: The Case of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
————. "Die Paränese in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen. Einige Überlegungen." Pages 538–50 in *Neues Testament und Ethik (Festschrift für R. Schnackenburg)*. Edited by H. Merklein. Freiburg: Herder, 1989.
————. "The Two Great Commandments in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs." *NT* 44 (2002): 371–92.
DeSilva, D. A. "The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs as Witnesses to Pre-Christian Judaism: A Re-Assessment." *JSPE* 22 (2013): 21–68.
Dietrich, W., and W. Lienemann, eds. *Gewalt wahrnehmen – von Gewalt heilen. Theologische und religionswissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004.
Dihle, A. *Die Goldene Regel*. SAW 7. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962.
Du Plessis, P. J. "Love and Perfection in Matt. 5:43–48." *Neot* 1 (1967): 28–34.
Ebach, J. *Genesis 37–50*. HThKAT. Freiburg: Herder, 2007.
Ebner, M. "Feindesliebe – ein Ratschlag zum Überleben? Sozial- und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu Mt 5,38–47 par Lk 6,27–35." Pages 119–42 in *From Quest to Q (Festschrift für J. M. Robinson)*. Edited by J. M. Asgeirsson, K. de Troyer, and M. M. Meyer. BETL 146. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000.
Elliott, J. K. *The Apocryphal New Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
France, R. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
Furnish, V. P. *The Love Commandment in the New Testament*. London: SCM, 1972.
García Martínez, F., and E. J. C. Tigchelaar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Volume 1. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
Gnilka, J. *Das Matthäusevangelium*. Volume 1. HThKNT 1.1. 2nd edition. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1988.
Gundry, R. H. *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
Hagner, D. A. *Matthew 1–13*. WBC 33A. Dallas: Word Books, 1993.
Harrington, D. J. "Joseph in the Testament of Joseph, Pseudo-Philo and Philo." Pages 127–31 in *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*. Edited by G. W. E. Nickelsburg. SCSt 5. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975.
Hoffmann, P. "Tradition und Situation. Zur 'Verbindlichkeit' des Gebots der Feindesliebe in der synoptischen Überlieferung und in der gegenwärtigen Friedensdiskussion." Pages 50–118 in *Ethik im Neuen Testament*. Edited by K. Kertelge. QD 102. Freiburg: Herder, 1984.
Hollander, H. W. *Joseph as an Ethical Model in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. SVTP 6. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
————. "The Ethical Character of the Patriarch Joseph: A Study in the Ethics of *The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*." Pages 47–104 in *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*. Edited by G. W. E. Nickelsburg. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975.
Hollander, H. W., and M. De Jonge. *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary*. SVTP 8. Leiden: Brill, 1985.
Horn, F. W. *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas*. 2nd edition. GTA 26. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986.
Huber, W. "Feindschaft und Feindesliebe. Notizen zum Problem des 'Feindes' in der Theologie." *ZEE* 26 (1982): 128–58.
Jabbarian, T. *Die Niedrigkeit Jesu und seiner Jüngerschaft. Eine Studie zur Korrelation von Ethik und Christologie in Mt 16,21–20,34*. WUNT 2/549. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021.
Jeremias, J. *Neutestamentliche Theologie*. 3rd edition. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1979 [1971].
————. *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*. Translated by J. Bowden. New York: Scribner, 1970.

Keener, C. S. A *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
Klassen, W. *Love of Enemies: The Way to Peace*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
Klauck, H.-J. *4. Makkabäerbuch*. JSHRZ III/6. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1989.
Köckert, M. "Nächstenliebe – Fremdenliebe – Feindesliebe." Pages 31–53 in *Mazel Tov. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Christentum und Judentum. Festschrift anläßlich des 50. Geburtstages des Instituts Kirche und Judentum*. Edited by M. Witte and T. Pilger. SKI Neue Folge 1. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012.
Kollmann, B. "Das Schwurverbot Mt 5,33–37/Jak 5,12 im Spiegel antiker Eidkritik." *BZ NF* 40 (1996): 179–93.
————. "Die Goldene Regel (Mt 7,12/Lk 6,31). Triviale Maxime der Selbstbezogenheit oder Grundprinzip ethischen Handelns?" Pages 97–113 in *Er stieg auf den Berg und lehrte sie (Mt 5,1f.). Exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Bergpredigt*. Edited by H.-U. Weidemann. SBS 226. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2012.
Konradt, M. *Christology, Torah, and Ethics in the Gospel of Matthew*. Edited by W. Coppins and S. Gathercole. Translated by W. Coppins. BMSEC 10. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2022.
————. "'...damit ihre Söhne eures Vaters im Himmel werdet'. Erwägungen zur 'Logik' von Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe in Mt 5,38–48." Pages 70–92 in *Gewalt wahrnehmen – von Gewalt heilen. Theologische und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven*. Edited by W. Dietrich and W. Lienemann. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004.
————. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*. NTD 1. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023.
————. "Das Gebot der Feindesliebe in Mt 5.43–48 und sein frühjüdischer Kontext." Pages 349–89 in *Ahavah. Die Liebe Gottes im Alten Testament*. Edited by M. Oeming. ABIB 55. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018.
————. "Das Verständnis der Königsherrschaft Gottes bei Jesus von Nazareth." Pages 101–15 in *Theokratie und theokratischer Diskurs. Die Rede von der Gottesherrschaft und ihre politisch-sozialem Auswirkungen im interkulturellen Vergleich*. Edited by K. Trampedach and A. Pečar. Colloquia historica et theologica 1. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.
————. *Ethik im Neuen Testament*. GNT 4. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022.
————. *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*. Edited by W. Coppins and S. Gathercole. Translated by K. Ess. BMSEC 2. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014.
————. *Israel, Kirche und die Völker im Matthäusevangelium*. WUNT 215. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
————. "Liebesgebot und Christusmimesis. Eine Skizze zur Pluralität neutestamentlicher Agapeethik." *JBTh* 29 (2014): 65–98.
————. "Menschen- und Bruderliebe? Beobachtungen zum Liebesgebot in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen." *ZNW* 88 (1997): 296–310.
————. *Studien zum Matthäusevangelium*. Edited by A. Euler. WUNT 358. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
————. "Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen," *RAC* 31 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2023), 1166–81.
————. "The Golden Rule." Pages 350–56 in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law*. Volume 1. Edited by B. A. Strawn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
————. *The Gospel according to Matthew*. Translated by M. E. Boring. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020.
————. "Tora und Naturgesetz. Interpretatio graeca und universaler Geltungsanspruch der Mosetora bei Philo von Alexandrien." Pages 87–112 in *Juden in ihrer Umwelt. Akkulturation des Judentums in Antike und Mittelalter*. Edited by M. Konradt and R. C. Schwingen. Basel: Schwabe, 2009.

Küchler, M. *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens*. OBO 26. Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 1979.
Kugel, J. L. "On Hidden Hatred and Open Reproach: Early Exegesis of Leviticus 19:17." *HTR* 80 (1987): 43–61.
Kuhn, H.-W. "Das Liebesgebot Jesu als Tora und als Evangelium. Zur Feindesliebe und zur christlichen und jüdischen Auslegung der Bergpredigt." Pages 194–230 in *Vom Urchristentum zu Jesus (Festschrift für J. Gnilka)*. Edited by H. Frankemölle and K. Kertelge. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989.
Lührmann, D. "Liebet eure Feinde." *ZThK* 69 (1972): 412–38.
Luz, U. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Mt 8–17)*. EKK I/2. Zürich: Benzinger Verlag, 1990.
————. *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Mt 1–7)*. EKK I/1. 5th edition. Zürich: Benzinger Verlag, 2002.
————. "Eine thetische Skizze der matthäischen Christologie." Pages 221–35 in *Anfänge der Christologie. Festschrift F. Hahn*. Edited by C. Breytenbach and H. Paulsen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991.
————. "Jesu Gebot der Feindesliebe und die kirchliche Verantwortung für den Frieden." Pages 119–34 in *Christen im Streit um den Frieden. Beiträge zu einer neuen Friedensethik*. Edited by W. Brinkel, B. Scheffler and M. Wächter. Freiburg: Dreisam, 1982.
————. *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*. Edited by H. Koester. Translated by J. E. Crouch. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
————. *Matthew 8–20*. Edited by H. Koester. Translated by J. E. Crouch. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.
————. *Studies in Matthew*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.
Mathys, H.-P. *Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst. Untersuchungen zum altestamentlichen Gebot der Nächstenliebe (Lev 19,18)*. OBO 71. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986.
Merklein, H. *Die Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip. Untersuchung zur Ethik Jesu*. FzB 34. 3rd edition. Würzburg: Echter, 1984.
————. *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft. Eine Skizze*. SBS 111. 3rd edition. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989.
Mirguet, F. "Emotional Responses to the Pain of Others in Josephus' Rewritten Scriptures and the Testament of Zebulun: Between Power and Vulnerability." *JBL* 133 (2014): 838–57.
Nolland, J. *Luke 1–9:20*. WBC 35A. Dallas: Word, 1989.
————. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
Opferkuch, S. *Der handelnde Mensch. Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Ethik und Anthropologie in den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen*. BZNW 232. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018.
Overman, J. A. *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of the Matthean Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.
Piper, J. *'Love your Enemies'. Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis: A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of its Uses*. MSSNTS 38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
Reiser, M. "Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity." *NTS* 47 (2001): 411–27.
Roth, D. T. "Shared Interpretive Traditions of Joseph's 'σωφροσύνη' and 'Silence in De Iosepho and the Testament of Joseph." *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 1 (2014): 54–68.
Saldarini, A. J. *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
Sand, A. *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*. BU 11. Regensburg: Pustet, 1974.
Sauer, G. *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira*. ATD.A 1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000.
Sauer, J. "Traditionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu den synoptischen und paulinischen Aussagen über Feindesliebe und Wiedervergeltungsverzicht." *ZNW* 76 (1985): 1–28.

Schnackenburg, R. "Die Seligpreisung der Friedenstifter (Mt 5,9) im matthäischen Kontext." *BZ NF* 26 (1982): 161–78.
Schrage, W. *Ethics of New Testament*. Translated by D. E. Green. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990.
————. *Ethik des Neuen Testament*. GNT 4. 2nd edition. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989.
Söding, T. "Feindeshass und Bruderliebe. Beobachtungen zur essenischen Ethik." *RdQ* 16 (1993): 601–19.
————. *Nächstenliebe. Gottes Gebot als Verheißung und Anspruch*. Freiburg im Breslau: Herder, 2015.
————. "Solidarität in der Diaspora. Das Liebesgebot nach den Testamenten der Zwölf Patriarchen im Vergleich mit dem Neuen Testament." *Kairos* 36/37 (1994/1995): 1–19.
Stegemann, W. *Jesus und seine Zeit*. BE[S] 10. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010.
————. "Kontingenz und Kontextualität der moralischen Aussagen Jesu. Plädoyer für eine Neubesinnung auf die so genannte Ethik Jesu." Pages 167–84 in *Jesus in neuen Kontexten*. Edited by W. Stegemann, B. J. Malina, and G. Theißen. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002.
Strotmann, A. *Der historische Jesus: eine Einführung*. 3rd edition. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2019.
Theißen, G. "Die Goldene Regel (Matthäus 7:12//Lukas 6:31). Über den Sitz im Leben ihrer positiven und negativen Form." *BibInt* 11 (2003): 386–99.
————. "Gewaltverzicht und Feindesliebe (Mt 5,38–48/Lk 6,27–38) und deren sozialgeschichtlicher Hintergrund." Pages 160–97 in *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums*. WUNT 19. 3rd edition. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989.
Theißen, G., and A. Merz. *Der historische Jesus: eine Einführung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.
————. *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Translated by J. Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998.
————. *"Wer war Jesus?" Der erinnerte Jesus in historischer Sicht*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023.
Thomas, J. *Der jüdische Phokylides. Formgeschichtliche Zugänge zu Pseudo-Phokylides und Vergleich mit der neutestamentlichen Paränese*. NTOA 23. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992.
Topel, L. J. "The Tarnished Golden Rule (Luke 6:31)." *TS* 59 (1998): 475–85.
Turner, D. L. *Matthew*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
Van der Horst, P. W. *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*. SVTP 4. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
Van Unnik, W. C. "Die Motivierung der Feindesliebe in Lukas VI 32–35." *NT* 8 (1966): 284–300.
Wandel, S. *Gottesbild und Barmherzigkeit. Lukanische Ethik im Chor hellenistischer Ethikkonzeptionen*. WUNT 2/548. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021.
Wengst, K. "Keine 'Antithesen,' sondern Auslegung der Tora. Zu Mt 5,17–48." *ZNT* 36 (2015): 12–21.
Wilson, W. T. *Philo of Alexandria, On Virtues*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 3. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Wischmeyer, O. *Liebe als Agape. Das frühe Konzept und der moderne Diskurs*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.
————. *Love as Agape: The Early Christian Concept and Modern Discourse*. Edited by W. Coppins and S. Gathercole. Translated by W. Coppins. BMSEC 9. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2021.
Wolter, M. *Das Lukasevangelium*. HNT 5. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.
————. *The Gospel According to Luke – Volume I (Luke 1–9:50)*. Edited by W. Coppins and S. Gathercole. Translated by W. Coppins and C. Heilig. BMSEC 4. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016.
Wrege, H.-T. *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der Bergpredigt*. WUNT 9. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968.

Zerbe, G. M. *Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts. Ethical Themes in Social Contexts*. JSPES 13. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.