

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**

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**APOCALYPTIC ESCHATOLOGY IN MATTHEW 25:31-46**

**Its Message for Nairobi's Vijiji Today**

*Moderator*

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

**NAIROBI 2002**

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,  
ἐφ' ὅσους ἐποιήσατε εἰς τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων,  
ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.

Truly, I say to you,  
as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,  
you did it to me.

Matthew 25:40

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited fully and acknowledged.

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This Long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

1 En	First Enoch
2 Bar	Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
2 Esdr.	IV Esdras of the Vulgate
<i>al.</i>	<i>alii</i> - other persons
BAGD	Bauer, W. Arndt, W.F. Gingrich, F.W. F.W. Danker, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Chicago 1979.
BW	"Bible Works 5.0", Computer Program on CD Rom. 2001.
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>cf.</i>	<i>confer</i> ; compare
Dan	Daniel
Did.	Didache
ed.	edited by
Ezek	Ezekiel
ff.	following
Gen	Genesis
GNT	Greek New Testament
ha	hectare
Ibid.	<i>Ibidem</i> - in the aforementioned place
Id.	<i>Idem</i> - the same as previously given or mentioned
i.e.	<i>id est</i> - that is
Isa	Isaiah
km <sup>2</sup>	square kilometre
Ksh	Kenyan Shilling
m <sup>2</sup>	square metre
Matt	Matthew
NLT	New Living Translation
pl.	plural
Ps	Psalms
Rev	Revelation
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sib.Or.	Sibylline Oracles
T.Abr.A	Testament of Abraham
US\$	USA Dollar
v. (vv.)	verse (verses)
Zech	Zechariah

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### **I. Motives**

During my years in Southern Africa I have been amazed to see the diversity of the social conditions in which people live. However, it was only in Kenya that I have encountered human misery in a degree I could not imagine before. On top of this, I have experienced a wide range the faiths/churches and communities to which people seek refuge from their often hopeless existence. The enrolment in the “mushrooming” faith communities does not necessarily mean the improvement of living conditions, but it gives something else in return, perhaps some sense of belonging and above all hope for the better future.

My first visits in the Nairobi's *rijiji* like Kibera, were exciting and challenging at the same time. Walking through the gorges, between the mud huts,

little children as well as adults were surprised seeing *mzungu*<sup>1</sup> visiting *kijiji*. Some attempts of understanding the life “on the other side” became real.

This presentation on the Gospel of Matthew is the fruit of my time spent in *kijiji*, with some reflection on the Matthean community who listened to the same Gospel message. Today it is important to discover that the times and people change but the Gospel message is still relevant and God’s Word remains dynamic.

## 2. Aim

The aim of the present study is manifold. One of the goals to achieve is to present the text of Matthew 25:31-46 in the most possibly understandable and critical way, with special accentuation on the apocalyptic-eschatological motives. Where can we see and how can we understand apocalyptic eschatology as presented by Matthew in the “scene of judgement”?

My second goal is to present a particular situation of the audience of the Matthean Gospel. How did the daily life of Matthew’s community look in the urban setting of Antioch? What was the relation between its life and the text of Matthew 25:31-46? Lastly, we shall try to discover the relevance of the text situated historically and socially, as it applies to today’s particular social setting in Nairobi. This view will be rather subjective, since personal opinion will be expressed more freely than in the first part.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mzungu*, pl. *wazungu*, are Kiswahili words meaning “white” people.

### 3. Presuppositions

The present study is based on a couple of presumed ideas without which it would not make much sense.

One of these is the hypothesis of the geographical situating of the Matthean community in Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the capital of Syria.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the Gospel would have been born in the social environment of Syrian Diaspora, among well established Greek speaking Jewish communities and in an active Christian church,<sup>3</sup> where “a majority of Christians (...) were non-Jews.”<sup>4</sup> Although the place of the composition of the Gospel is disputable, since there is no cardinal evidence for, there is none against either, and many of the biblical scholars are inclined to situate the Gospel writer in that city.

The second presupposition is the date of writing the Gospel in the period of 80-90 C.E.,<sup>5</sup> which occurs within the flourishing Golden Age of Apocalyptic, 200 B.C.E – 100 C.E. We shall later explain the significance of the terminology, yet the point of the specific apocalyptic and eschatological world view adopted by the Matthean community must not be missed.

The third presupposition deals with the terminology used in the present study. The most important endeavour would be to define the term of “apocalyptic eschatology” as well as the exotic term *kijiji* used in the subtitle. Regarding the first, it would be suitable to recall the work of some of the fine biblical scholars. David

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. R.F. BROWN – J.P. MEIER, *Antioch and Rome*, 18-27; W. DICHARRY, *Mark, Matthew, and Luke*, 124.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. L.M. WHITE, “Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance”, 214.

<sup>4</sup> L.M. WHITE, “Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance”, 218.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R.F. BROWN – J.P. MEIER, *Antioch and Rome*, 17.

Sim analysed the relationship between the phenomena of apocalypticism as a socio-religious movement, apocalyptic genre and apocalyptic eschatology. Because the dynamics between the three varies, it would be appropriate not to use one term of “apocalyptic” for all three distinct features.<sup>6</sup> Collins writes about quite accurately:

The use of the ‘apocalyptic’ as a noun in English to refer to an amalgam of literary, social, and phenomenological elements has engendered confusion. Since the work of Koch, Stone, and Hansen there has been widespread agreement that the genre apocalypse should be distinguished from ‘apocalypticism’ and ‘apocalyptic eschatology.’<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting that apocalypticism and apocalyptic eschatology do not necessarily have to relate to the apocalyptic genre. Only after this acknowledgement can we proceed to look at the Gospel of Matthew from our particular perspective.<sup>8</sup> The definition of apocalyptic eschatology, therefore, is complex and not without difficulties; basically we can define it as “an end time scheme which looks to retribution or judgement beyond the realm of history.”<sup>9</sup>

In regard to our term *kijiji*, it has a preference to some other names, which might sound offensive to the indwellers. In South Africa nobody speaks about squatter camps or squatter areas referring to them, for example, as “slums”, but the more dignified name is used “townships”. There are many terms describing the informal settlement including the names of: “*bidonvilles, canico, musseque, tchika, moyndoum el questir* (zinc roof cities), *bravek* (literary, hut areas).”<sup>10</sup> A. Shorter

<sup>6</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 24-26.

<sup>7</sup> J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 31.

<sup>9</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> D. MOSCHETTI, *Urban Ministry in Africa*, 18.

calls the informal settlement/squatter areas “slums”, “shanty-towns”,<sup>11</sup> but within the squatter areas the dwellers call it *kijiji*.<sup>12</sup>

#### **4. Methodology, Contents and Structure**

The method followed in the present study is critical. Practically, this means that the opinions of a broad cross-section of biblical scholars as well as sociologists are employed. These opinions will be presented in order to support the proposed argument and/or will be grouped and compared, aiming at making the best objective choice if a significant difference of scholarly stances would occur. In the conclusions of the chapters, some observations may be expressed, referring to the nature of the problems discussed, as well as some preferences being made regarding the outcome of the discussion undertaken.

In the third chapter a sociological analysis will mostly prevail, however basing it on the previously analysed biblical text. The personal experience presented will hopefully contribute to the articulation of the relevance of this study.

In general, the flow of the study provides four major approaches. The broad view of the chosen text first, attempting to answer some general introductory questions, will be helpful to make initial contact with the text itself. It will also help to situate the chosen passage within the context of the whole Gospel, Bible and extrabiblical literature.

Secondly, the narrow view will be provided, where the detailed exegetical analysis will help us enter and deepen the understanding of the biblical passage as

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<sup>11</sup> A. SHORTER, *The Church in the African City*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> In pl. *vijiji*. This is a word in Kiswahili for “village” not town, but is commonly used in Nairobi to designate slum settlement.

from within the text itself. As the third step, the broad view of the text will be in focus again. The reflection upon the major themes and concepts will perhaps help to synthesise whatever was analysed previously. This will be followed by the analysis of the social setting of the audience/community to whom the scripture passage (Gospel) refers. On the basis of this analysis, we shall try to find the relevance of all the above to the contemporary situation of life in Nairobi city.

Lastly, the major, general conclusion will follow containing final statements about the matters studied, implications of the study, unsolved difficulties and invitation for further research.

The present study will consist of three chapters preceded by the introduction and ending with the general conclusion. Each chapter will have some subdivisions aimed at presenting the material in an intelligible and easily grasped way.

## Chapter I

### Introductory Questions

#### I. Introduction

The aim of the present chapter is to introduce the text, Matthew 25:31-46, and look at it from different angles, as well as at some of the technical problems connected with the text. Initially, we will look at the text as a whole, trying to determine, or rather justify, the borders of the pericope: where does it start (*terminus a quo*) and where does it end (*terminus ad quem*)? Later, we shall try to answer some questions, such as: are there any important textual variations of the pericope, which might influence the exegesis of the text? What about the context of the text: is the text rooted in the Gospel or perhaps it is a redactional addition? How does the text fit into the context of contemporary writings?

It is a very important task to look also at the texts parallel to our pericope. It will be a two-fold task of comparing the text with some canonical writings from the Bible as well as the important writings outside the canon, but which would play a major role in a proper understanding of the text in focus.

## 2. Delimitation of the Text

The pericope, Matthew 25:31-46, is considered commonly as one piece of text. However, the more careful reading provides some evidence of the compilation done by the Gospel writer. Matthew, a skilful writer, seemed to combine probably three themes/traditions into one corpus: a) glorification and enthronement of the Son of Man coming to judge; b) a metaphor of a shepherd separating his flock; and c) the king rewarding and punishing his subjects. The skill of the writer made of the text, one story with an intelligible beginning and end.

### 2.1 *Terminus A Quo*

The text of the pericope starts with the phrase of the coming of the Son of Man in v. 31, where the word “δέ [‘but’] sets the section off from the preceding.”<sup>13</sup> Although the title of the Son of Man does not appear again in the text, it was intended to be a part of the whole composition.<sup>14</sup> The text of v. 31 can be clearly distinguished from the last words ending the preceding parable and showing the Matthean conclusion consistent in the series of Matthew 8:12; 13:42.50; and 22:13; (see also Luke 13:28).

### 2.2 *Terminus Ad Quem*

The text of the pericope ends with the proclamation of the verdict, the result of the judgment (v. 46). The next sentence is not a part of a former narrative and

<sup>13</sup> R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 511.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 417.

definitely starts a new section.<sup>15</sup> The last phrase, even if not of “weeping and gnashing teeth” as it is a custom for Matthew, concludes the pericope with punishment, although the very last words pronounce the verdict of eternal life.

### 3. Textual Criticism

According to Metzger there are no significant textual variations of the pericope, of its phrases or wording.<sup>16</sup> There is no indication among other commentators on the text of Matthew 25:31-46, towards any of the textual variations found in the manuscripts.<sup>17</sup> Therefore we shall proceed in the analysis of the text as found in *textus receptus*.

### 4. Context of the Text in Question

#### 4.1 Immediate Context

Matthew 25:31-46 forms a last unit in a larger Eschatological Discourse, 24:1-25:46, and it is an integral part of it. The themes present in the passage are to be found elsewhere in the discourse. Davies and Allison show the following:

The coming of the Son of Man (v. 31)	24:27.30.37.39.44
Eschatological Glory (v. 31)	24:30
Angels (v. 31)	24: 31.36
All people (v. 32)	24:9.14
Eschatological judgement (vv. 32ff.)	24:37-25:30

<sup>15</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 416.

<sup>16</sup> See B. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*.

<sup>17</sup> For more information regarding the textual criticism refer to the Appendix II.

The kingdom (v. 34)	24:14; 25:1
Punishment of the wicked (v. 41, 46)	24:51; 25:30 <sup>18</sup>

According to Harrington, the pericope immediately follows the Q material of Matthew 24:36-25:30 of parables, with the main theme of vigilance “preparing for the coming of the Son of Man.” He presents an idea about the judgement scene as an outcome of the former three parables: those who watched are going to be rewarded and those who did not will be punished, but “everyone should have known what to do.” Concluding, the Gospel writer did not place the judgement scene after the vigilance parables by chance but it was a carefully prepared composition.<sup>19</sup>

Patte understands the pericope of Matthew 25:31-46 as the unfolding of the preceding problems arising from the parables of the servants and maidens,<sup>20</sup> therefore it is an integral part of the whole structure of the apocalyptic discourse.

## 4.2 Remote Context

### 4.2.1 Context within the Gospel of Matthew

The text of Matthew 25:31-46 “fits well with Matthew’s theology”<sup>21</sup> and if we consider the consistency in vocabulary there would be no doubt that the passage is an integral part of the Gospel by Matthew.

<sup>18</sup> W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 417.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 358.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D. PATTE, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 347. The main problem Patte identifies with finding the criterion for distinguishing the true disciples, those who are in and those who are out. The criterion is what people do and what they do not do. More elaboration on this problem will be found in the following chapters.

<sup>21</sup> B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 699.

#### 4.2.2 *Apocalyptic Context of the Day*

At this point of our investigation it is worth noting that the Gospel of Matthew, apocalyptic/eschatological discourse and especially the passage of our concern, are part of the apocalyptic environment of the day. The whole discussion and arguments from the historical and sociological point of view have been developed by the works of recent scholars.<sup>22</sup> Some more elaboration on the idea of apocalyptic eschatology shall be given in subsequent chapters.

### 5. Parallels

However, there are no direct biblical parallels of the entire text and scholars commonly agree upon the fact of the exclusiveness of this Matthean material.<sup>23</sup> there is no doubt about the existence of similar texts in the Bible and a multitude of apocryphal apocalyptic books.

#### 5.1 *Biblical References*

##### 5.1.1 *Old Testament*

In the Old Testament we are able to distinguish a few texts corresponding to the verses of Matthew 25:31-46, namely,

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<sup>22</sup> See G.N. STANTON, *A Gospel for a New People*; D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*; ID., *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. B.L. VIVIANO, "The Gospel according to Matthew", 699. D.C. SIM says: "it can be safely assumed that much of this material derives from the evangelist's special sources." *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 124. See also K.H SCHELKE, *Theology of the New Testament*, 307ff.

v. 32, Ezekiel 34:17ff. separation and judgement of the sheep and goats. But here the prophet speaks rather about the abuses within the community of Israel.

vv. 35-36, Isaiah 58:7. sharing bread, sheltering and clothing are enumerated.

v. 40, Proverbs 19:17, refers to compassion for the poor.

v. 46, Daniel 12:2, refers to the resurrection to everlasting life or condemnation.

### *5.1.2 New Testament*

There are no direct synoptic parallels of the entire text. The parallels of some words or phrases or some references can be found in:

- v. 34, Luke 12:32, is about a little flock; Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 mention foundations of the world;

- vv. 35-36, James 1:27, care for the orphans and widows; 2:15-16, satisfying the necessities of the body of our brothers and sisters; Hebrews 13:2, hospitality; 2 Timothy 1:16, probably talks about the visiting in the prison;

- v. 40, Mark 9:41, a cup of water to the thirsty; Hebrews 6:10, service to the holy ones;

- v. 41, Mark 9:48, eternal fire; Luke 16:23, torment in Hades; Revelation 20:10, torments for ever in the lake of fire;

- v. 46, John 5:29, resurrection of life for those who have done good and resurrection of judgement, for those who have done evil.

## 5.2 *Extra Biblical Literature*

J. Jeremias mentions interesting parallels to the Egyptian Book of the Dead and Midrash, where he quotes the words of a dead man listing his good deeds: “I have given satisfaction to God by doing that in which he delights: I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothed the naked...”<sup>24</sup>

Davies and Allison present interesting parallelisms in the apocalyptic literature in the following chart:

	Dan	1 En.	1 En.	Rev.	2 Bar.	T.Abr.A	Sib.Or.
Enthronement of Judge	7:9-10 (7:10)	62:2-3	90:20	20:11	(73:1)	11:4; 12:4	2:239f.
Presence of angels	7:10	62:11	90:21-2			11:5; 12:1-18	2:242
Gathering of people		62:3		20:12	72:2		
Separation into two groups		62:5		20:12-15	72:2	11:1ff	2:252-4
Reward of righteousness	7:18	62:8.13-16	90:23-7	(20:15)	73:1-74:4		2:313-38
Punishment of the wicked	7:26	62:10-12; 63:1-12	90:28-36	20:15	72:6	11:11; 13:12	2:249-312 51.283-312

Especially striking is the parallel of dialogue, particularly analogical to the one we are concerned with, in Midrashic Psalm 118:17.<sup>25</sup>

Carter in his commentary, also adds some references to 4 Ezra 7:31-44, acknowledging the apocalyptic character of the judgement scene, thus repeating the above features and adding as a last feature, the “establishing of God’s empire”.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 208.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 418-419.

## 6. Conclusion

Concluding this chapter let us put forward some essential observations so that we can have some general ideas about the text. We have looked at some length at the problems connected with more important issues like: delimitation of the text, textual criticism, context of the text and its parallels.

From the research conducted we can conclude that the pericope of Matthew 25:31-46 is a distinct piece of the text belonging specifically to Matthean material. It starts and finishes in a manner typical to Matthew and determined by characteristic conclusions of punishment.

In the process of textual criticism we have not noticed any of the significant problems to dwell upon, although all variations of the text have been presented together with their witnesses.

Regarding the context of Matthew 25:31-46, we can presume that the text is a Matthean composition, perhaps with some pre-Matthean material.<sup>26</sup> Although the whole text cannot be strictly called a parable, it has been situated in a chain of parables and contains some of the elements of a parable. It fits well within the Apocalyptic Discourse and in fact it is its apogee. On the other hand, from the study of parallel texts, we notice how the passage is close to some of the apocalyptic writings and contains all the features classifying it in the apocalyptic genre. But Matthew was too skilled and creative a writer to slavishly follow well-known paths and so explores, rather, a new challenge of putting in writing what life brings.

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 491.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. I. SABOURIN, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 841; for an interesting elaboration on the above topic, see J. LAMBRECHT, *Out of the Treasure*, 265-273; See also D. SIM *Apocalyptic eschatology*, 125. Not like R.H. GUNDRY who withholds the judgement regarding pre-Matthean source, *Matthew. A Commentary*, 512.

## **Chapter II**

### **Exegetical Analysis**

#### **1. Introduction**

Within the frame of this chapter, the form/structure of the passage of Matthew 25:31-46, and its detailed analysis, will be considered as the two major points in focus. In the first there will be a quest for some answers: is the whole text really a parable or can we consider some alternative literary styles within it? How can we divide text in an intelligible way if possible? And what would be the framework of each part if it is possible to distinguish such?

In the part devoted to the analysis of details and particularly important elements for our study, we shall base it on what we have worked out in the former part, that is, we shall keep the division of the pericope and work on it within the sections.

Because various scholars express different opinions regarding some of matters discussed below, we shall try to present even the opposing stances so that the reader can have some further knowledge, especially about the crucial and/or controversial issues.

## 2. Form/Structure of the Passage

The literary style of the pericope is not a parable<sup>38</sup> but “an apocalyptic revelation discourse”,<sup>37</sup> “an apocalyptic drama”<sup>39</sup> and this view is shared by Stanton.<sup>31</sup> Westermann confirms that Matthew 25:31-46 “is not a parable, [it is rather] an appeal for merciful action (...) dressed up as a story of the Last Judgement.” However he classified it in his division of parables as instruction for present future action.<sup>32</sup> Meier poetically states that “it is not a parable but the unveiling of the truth which lay behind all the parables in chapters 24-25.”<sup>33</sup> Jeremias calls it *masal* – ‘an apocalyptic revelation’.<sup>34</sup> Davies and Allison, after a number of scholars suggest the term, “word-picture of the Last Judgement”, defend the statement comparing other judgement scenes in apocalyptic literature.<sup>35</sup> Carter calls it simply a “judgement scene”<sup>36</sup> and so does Harrington who avoids any lengthy discussion about the subject.<sup>37</sup> Only vv. 32-33 could be considered as a parable.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> ALBRIGHT and MANN in their commentary, call it continually “a parable”. Although they recognize some confusion in changing the terminology from “The Man” to “The King”, and the possibility of two (or three?) separate themes (traditions?) compiled together by the word *then* – *to*, the explanation is vague. *Matthew*, 306-310. See also U. LUZ *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, 128.

<sup>39</sup> B. F. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

<sup>40</sup> M. F. BORING, “Matthew”, 455.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. G. N. STANTON, *A Gospel for a New People*, 222.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. C. WESTERMANN *The Parables of Jesus*, 189.192.

<sup>33</sup> J. P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 302.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206. “*Mashal* (plural: *meshalim*) is the Hebrew term, meaning likeness, comparison, or proverb: ‘parable’ is the nearest English equivalent. The *mashal* began in the Hebrew Bible: Nathan’s parable in II Samuel 12:1-6 in an excellent example: there are many others, going back to Jotham’s fable in Judges 9, where the trees speak to each other.” M. HILTON, G. MARSHALL, *The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism*, 55.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. W. D. DAVIES – D. C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 418-419: D. A. deSILVA calls it “a sort of vision of the Last Judgement.” *The Hope of Glory*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 492.

<sup>37</sup> See D. J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. B. F. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

Different scholars suggest various divisions of the text. The most commonly seen structure is where the introductory v. 31 and the metaphor in vv. 32-33 merge. The judgement of the righteous is distinguished from the judgement of the wicked. The last, v. 46, serves as a conclusion.<sup>39</sup> Here we divide the whole pericope into the three following major sections:<sup>40</sup> gathering of all the nations before the Son of man, separation of sheep and goats, and judgment by the king of the blessed and the accursed.

### ***2.1 Gathering of All the Nations before the Son of Man***

Most probably we deal here with a Matthean redaction of source material. It means that “the evangelist composed v. 31, as an introduction to the traditional material, in order to align it to his peculiar conception of the judicial role of the Son of Man.”<sup>41</sup> The title, “Son of Man”, is probably Matthean stylisation here, since it does not agree with the later “King” in v. 34 (cf. Matt 16:27).<sup>42</sup> The Son of Man takes the place of God (cf. Dan 7:9.13.14; Zech 14:5), and summons all the nations, including Israel.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See I. SABOURIN, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 843; J. LAMBRECHT, *Out of the Treasure*, 261-262.

<sup>40</sup> I have been encouraged to follow this way of dividing the text thanks to interesting observations by D. C. SIM in his *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 124.

<sup>41</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 118.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206. See also A. GEORGE, “The Judgement of God”, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. B.I. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

## 2.2 *Separation of Sheep and Goats*

If vv. 31-33 of Matthew chapter 25 were a parable proper, there would not be so much of allegory<sup>44</sup> in it. Considering the above verses as a single unit well suits the aim Matthew wanted to achieve, but the mystery of the meaning of the separation of the goats and sheep by a shepherd is gone.<sup>45</sup> The shepherd is the Son of Man, animals are the nations, separating is the judgement - it is a perfect allegory. But perhaps originally, it was an independent parable told by Jesus.

Therefore, the little piece including only two verses, 32b and 33, could be considered actually a parable.<sup>46</sup> It contains some technical terms used by shepherds and is skilfully composed into the introduction.<sup>47</sup> Albright and Mann express the interesting opinion, that this image is actually not a picture of a final judgement. A shepherd cares for both kinds of animals and there is no final disposition described.<sup>48</sup>

## 2.3 *Judgment by the King of the Blessed and the Accursed*

This is a longer story, starting from v. 34 up to 46, which has a very interesting shape. Following the work of Davies and Allison, it was possible to expand and detail the structure of the text. It is composed as two dialogues between

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<sup>44</sup> "In an allegory a story on one level is intended to have meaning on a second, and each individual element of the story which is told corresponds to an element of the message which is intended. In a parable (...) there are no point to point correspondences, but only a general point, which should be given the widest possible application." E.P. SANDERS & M. DAVIES, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 176.

<sup>45</sup> The image of the sheep and goats could be understood metaphorically in itself, if there was no comparative word "as", E.P. SANDERS & M. DAVIES, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 178.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel according to Matthew", 669.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. W.F. ALBRIGHT & C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 310.

the king/judge and two groups of people: those on the right and those on the left. Each conversation is shaped into a pattern of: a) narration, b) the king's declaration, c) description of the deeds, d) response of the people, and e) the king's justification of the initial declaration. Each dialogue contains a characteristic "then" (τότε, vv. 34, 37, 41, 44, 45) and is concluded by the king with the profound, "Truly, I say to you" (Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, vv. 40 and 45). The story ends with the narrative prediction of the fate of the two groups of people.

The two speeches of the king/judge and the responses/questions of the two groups are carefully elaborated. They consist of two sets of six pairs of a statement and a response. There is a fourfold repetition of six deeds. It could be considered as a rhetorical device helping the memory. The details of the particular deeds diminish in the last set of responses/questions of the group on the left. It becomes clear in the following chart:

*The judge's first speech*

'hungry/gave me food'  
 'thirsty/gave me drink'  
 'stranger/welcome me'  
 'naked/clothed me'  
 'sick/visited me'  
 'prison-came to me'

*Those on the right*

'hungry and feed you'  
 'or thirsty and gave you drink'  
 'stranger and welcome me'  
 'or naked and clothed you'  
 'sick  
 or in prison and came to you'

*The judge's second speech*

'hungry/gave me no food'  
 'thirsty/gave me no drink'  
 'stranger/did not welcome me'  
 'naked/not clothed me'  
 'sick  
 and in prison not visit me'

*Those on the left*

'hungry'  
 'or thirsty'  
 'or stranger'  
 'or naked'  
 'or sick  
 or in prison /not serve you'<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> W.D. DAVIS – D.C. ALISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 416-417.

### 3. Detailed Analysis

In the preceding subdivision we have seen the structure of the passage in focus, with a general view of each section. We shall now analyse in detail some crucial elements important for our study, coming from the same three sections of the passage, which are: the coming of the Son of Man, the metaphor of the sheep and goats and the judgement scene.

#### 3.1 *Coming of the Son of Man*

The scene of the glorious coming of the Son of Man is short in verses but definitely rich in meaning. Because of these two verses containing the event of the Son of Man, all the following material changes its flavour and serves a particular purpose set by Matthew.

I want to draw attention to the interesting understanding of the coming/parousia (παρουσία) of the Lord/Son of Man.<sup>50</sup> which might give us some light on perceiving the thrust of the passage. The primary meaning of παρουσία<sup>51</sup> is “presence” of the Lord; although unperceivable, there is a mysterious connection between the presence of the Lord among his followers and the Lord being present in the service for the Lord’s dear ones.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The title used in v. 31 is “Son of Man”, however in vv. 37 and 44 the title used is “Lord”. Does Matthew use the title “Lord” purposely to indicate Jesus Christ the Risen Lord? Or is it a usual way of polite addressing? Perhaps here we have some broad developed Christology, where Jesus is the Son of Man, messianic Shepherd, King, the Son of the Father, the exulted Lord and Eschatological Judge. K.H SCHULKE, *Theology of the New Testament*, 310.

<sup>51</sup> See BAGD, 629-630.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. D. PATT, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 350. An interesting connection came to my mind in regard to the scrutiny of the righteous and wicked, as they are called. The scrutiny of life at the end of the world, at the judgement, might remind one also of the

### 3.1.1 *Son of Man*

“The Son of Man here acts in the place of God.”<sup>53</sup> He had been given the power and glory from the Ancient of Days (cf. Dan 7:13-14) and assumed the position of a judge.<sup>54</sup> The sitting posture is a posture of ruling,<sup>55</sup> however it should not be hastily presumed that the Son of Man sits on the throne of God.<sup>56</sup> Davies and Allison are not surprised at the transition of titles from “the Son of Man” to “the King”;<sup>57</sup> not like Allen, who thinks the story about the judgement with a king in its centre was adapted to refer to the Son of Man.<sup>58</sup> Patte understands the Son of Man as a powerful “eschatological judge with kingly authority”, and connects this with the later use of the title “King”.<sup>59</sup>

In the understanding of apocalyptic eschatology, the figure of the Son of Man has a special significance. At the end of the first of the two ages (aeons) the saviour figure/Son of Man/Jesus was expected to arrive and introduce the turning of the ages.<sup>60</sup> Matthew equated the arrival of the Son of Man with the early Christian beliefs in the parousia of Jesus. The understanding of the parousia in Matthew is

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scrutiny of one’s life at the moment of death. According to some theologians, one can make a project of one’s authentic or inauthentic life. The acts and consequently habits performed and established during one’s lifetime, shape the final outcome of human maturity and development, which could be fully appreciated only at the end, at the time of death. The authentic person’s life is characterised by an unselfish and loving attitude which perhaps we could compare with the first group – the righteous. The second alternative is the attitude of an inauthentic person whose life is selfish and closed in a narrow egoism. Such persons would find it difficult to relate in a loving and unselfish manner in eternity just as they found it difficult to relate in this world. This is the sad fate of the wicked.

<sup>53</sup> B. J. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. D. J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 356.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 492.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. W. D. DAVIES – D. C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 421.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. W. D. DAVIES – D. C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 420.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. W. C. ALLEN, *Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 265.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. D. PATTE, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 348.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. D. C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 93.

peculiar – Jesus was to arrive as a saviour bringing relief to the oppressed; “like the author of the Apocalypse, the evangelist has conformed the Christian notion of the return of Jesus to an apocalyptic-eschatological perspective.”<sup>61</sup>

### 3.1.2 *Angels*

The angels, according to the Jewish tradition, witnessed the judgement. In the apocryphal apocalyptic literature they also participated in the judgement of human beings, sometimes being the record keepers.<sup>62</sup> The angels accompany the Son of Man as the court assistants at the end of the world in several other passages in Matthew – 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31 (cf. Dan 7:10,16).<sup>63</sup>

### 3.1.3 *All the Nations Will Be Gathered*

The word συναχθήσονται is a divine passive of συνάγω.<sup>64</sup> meaning that it is done by God<sup>65</sup> although the action is carried out by the angels.<sup>66</sup> It is also a technical term of the shepherds, indicating a Messianic Age (cf. John 10:16; 11:52).<sup>67</sup>

There are different ways of understanding πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.<sup>68</sup> One group of scholars is characterised by a particularistic notion of the phrase, of which the

<sup>61</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 108-109.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 420, footnote 16. If we take into account the alternative reading ἄγιοι, the meaning could be directed to the saints who accompany Jesus (cf. Zech 14:5). See also D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 35-41.

<sup>63</sup> A. GEORGE, “The Judgement of God”, 10.

<sup>64</sup> See BAGD, 782.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

<sup>66</sup> In this case it would not be considered as passive divine. Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 422.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206.

examples are given here. Stanton interprets the term as “evangelised nations”; in effect, the judgement scene would be a judgement of the Church. Although the hypothesis is quite interesting from the social point of view, it is highly improbable. Eventually, he agrees that “in [Matthew] 25:32 πάντα τὰ ἔθνη must refer to all non-Christians.”<sup>66</sup> Harrington analyses the meaning and use of ἔθνη in the Gospel of Matthew, and the fact that there is a text of a separate judgement for the tribes of Israel in Matthew 19:28, and concludes in the same way.<sup>67</sup> According to Allen, it is the Gentiles who are judged on the basis of their approach to the Jewish-Christian community.<sup>68</sup> Patte supports his own position in a very interesting way of reasoning, that, according to Matthew, the end will come only when the gospel will have been preached to all nations throughout the world (Matt 24:14), therefore the judgement would not include a small group of the disciples and a big group of non-evangelised, but all who will have at least heard something about the Christ.<sup>69</sup>

Another large group of scholars stands in the position of a broad understanding of the term as entire humanity.<sup>70</sup> Gundry denies the particular understanding of all the nations because: a) we cannot presume the nations would be converted before the Son of Man comes (cf. the above argument by Patte), otherwise there would be no persecution, and yet Matthew indicates the increase of persecution just before the end (Matt 10:22-23; 24:9,30); and b) it would not be in line with the

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<sup>66</sup> See BAGD, 218.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. G.N. STANTON, *A Gospel for a New People*, 212-214.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 358-359.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. W.C. ALLEN, *Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 265.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. D. PATTE, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 348.

<sup>71</sup> “The gathering of all the nations for the judgement (Matt 25:32) fits in with the universalist outlook of Jesus (Matt 8:11-12; 10:18; 28:19; Mark 13:10)”. A. GEORGE, “The Judgement of God”, 10.

use of ἔθνη elsewhere in the Gospel.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the term πάντα τὰ ἔθνη designates rather, all the nations of the world<sup>75</sup> including the Gentiles as well as Israel,<sup>76</sup> although elsewhere in Matthew these words refer only to the Gentiles.<sup>77</sup> Exhaustive discussion on the topic is found with Davies and Allison, who present six options as to how to understand “all nations” with the preference to “all humanity”.<sup>78</sup> Sabourin shares this universalistic view, adding the idea of actual individuals/persons, as members of the larger groups/nations, who are called and judged.<sup>79</sup> Carter is also for the universalistic understanding of all nations at the judgement, that is, Christians, Jews and Gentiles; although ethnicity would not be an issue here but social factors of treating the marginalized would be of great importance.<sup>80</sup> Another profound statement in favour of the universalistic approach to the understanding of not only the meaning of “all nations”, but also the “judgement” as a whole, is found with Meier: “The cleavage between good and bad thus goes through the whole humanity; it does not run neatly between the church and unbelievers. The criterion for the definitive separation is not constituted by church membership but by the deeds of love and mercy shown to the poor and outcast of humankind.”<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Cf. R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 511.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 356.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 422.

<sup>79</sup> L. SABOURIN, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 844. So suggests GUNDRY because of a shift from neuter πάντα τὰ ἔθνη to masculine αἱ ἔθνη, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 512.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 492.

<sup>81</sup> J.P. MEIER, *The Vision of Matthew*, 177-178.

### 3.2 *The metaphor of the Sheep and Goats*

There is no substantial material to argue that Matthew purposely used the image of sheep and goats in order to imitate apocalyptic genre in his writing. However, it is interesting what some scholars say about the use of animal figures in the apocalyptic writings: "Throughout the apocalyptic literature great use is made of animal figures of all kinds to symbolise men and nations. (...) The righteous who come after the patriarchs are described under the figures of sheep or lambs, no doubt under the influence of Ezekiel 34:3, 6, 8, where the same symbolism is used."<sup>82</sup>

#### 3.2.1 *Separating the Sheep from Goats*

The word ἀφορίζει<sup>83</sup> is a technical term of the shepherds; in Palestine the flocks were mixed for pasture during the day, but for the night, the shepherds separated the sheep from the goats because of different climactic demands the animals had during the night.<sup>84</sup> The word ἐρίφα or ἐρίφια could be translated also as rams; in this case the reason for the separation could be milking of the sheep at evening.<sup>85</sup>

Carter surprisingly states that both kinds of animals are valued and the emphasis here is not on the quality of animals but the fact of separation, the motive of which occurs on several other occasions in the Gospel (cf. Matt 3:12; 13:24-30;

<sup>82</sup> D.S. RUSSELL, *Between the Testaments*, 99.

<sup>83</sup> See BAGD, 127.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES - D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 423; J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206. See also BAGD, 309.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. J. LAMBRECHT, *Out of the Treasure*, 261; cf. W.D. DAVIES - D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 423, footnote 33.

13:47-50; 24:36-25:30).<sup>88</sup> “The separation of the good and the wicked is the fundamental theme to be found in the traditional eschatology concerning the judgement. Jesus alluded to it time and again (...)”.<sup>87</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Right and Left*

Sheep were considered as more valuable animals and this is why they appear on the right: because of the usual white colour, they might have been a symbol of righteousness.<sup>89</sup> Sheep on the right would represent the elect. The right hand-side in Judaism as well as in other cultures is a place of honour and blessing (cf. Gen 48:13-20; Ps 110:1).<sup>90</sup> Or perhaps because most of the people are right handed and the right hand is naturally more important.<sup>91</sup> The left hand-side in turn, would be considered as negative, cursed and unlucky.<sup>92</sup> Would therefore, the goats/kids on the unfavourable side represent animals of less value?<sup>92</sup>

### 3.3 *The Judgement Scene*

The judgement scene is a rich and complex passage. Its structure we have discussed already in chapter one; below we shall concentrate on some essential

<sup>88</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 493-494. The sheep would designate the disciples of Jesus (cf. Matt 10:16; 18:12; 26:31), the audience would identify with the sheep too.

<sup>89</sup> A. GEORGE, “The Judgement of God”, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *Parables of Jesus*, 206.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. L. SABOURIN, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 842. See also W.D. DAVIES D.C. ALISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 424.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 512. There are many traditions and taboos about eating and doing things with the right hand rather than left in many cultures all over the world.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 494.

<sup>92</sup> As it is stated in B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, 669.

elements necessary for analysis in our research. Curiously enough, Matthew does not actually use the term “judgement” (κρίσις<sup>41</sup>) here.

The notion of Son of Man/Jesus as a judge, seems to occur only in Matthew.<sup>42</sup> In other Gospel material, like Mark and Q, it is God who performs the function with Jesus as an advocate (cf. Rev 20:11-15; 3:5).<sup>43</sup> Sim states that Jesus, as the Son of Man presiding over the judgement, sitting on his throne of glory, is peculiar to Matthew 25:31 (and 19:28) only, and does not occur in any other early Christian literature. Possibly Matthew merged two traditions, that is, the Jewish notion of the judicial role of the Son of Man, and the Christian tradition that the Son of Man is Jesus coming as an eschaton.<sup>44</sup>

### 3.3.1 *The King*

Suddenly the Son of Man who was also a shepherd, became a king.<sup>45</sup> If we consider the reference to Jesus, he would be a king in the kingdom of God,<sup>46</sup> in continuation of the infancy and passion narratives, but here without “hiddenness” or irony.<sup>47</sup> The other possibility is to consider the Son of Man as a king who is to rule in his kingdom in line with Matthew 13:41; 16:28; and 20:21. Even if in the original material the king connoted God, Matthew consciously attributed the eschatological

<sup>41</sup> See BAGD, 452-453.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. A. GEORGE, “The Judgement of God”, 10. And only in Matthew 25:31, whereas in Matthew 10:32-33 (cf. Mark 8:39) he is a witness before God’s tribunal; here Son of Man carries out the verdict of his Father.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 119, 123. However there is the whole discussion about whether Matthew had used some of the Jewish apocalyptic material like “Parables of Enoch” and “1 Enoch 37-71” in his depicting of the Son of Man. *Ibid.*, 119-123.

<sup>45</sup> We have discussed this issue above, regarding the Son of Man.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 425.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 356.

judgement to the Son of Man.<sup>100</sup> Against this Gundry states that, “The king cannot represent God the Father, for the king refers to God as his Father. Though the blessedness of the sheep comes from the Father, the Son pronounces the sentence of blessedness. Therefore Jesus the Son, not God the Father, is acting as the royal judge.”<sup>101</sup>

### 3.3.2 *The Six Works of Love*<sup>102</sup>

A list of works of mercy can also be found in rabbinical tradition (notice an imperative of burying the dead missing in Matthew) as well as in biblical (cf. Job 22:7; Isa 58:7; Ezek 18:7,16) and apocryphal texts.<sup>103</sup> Jeremias discusses the rabbinical idea of “good works, *ma’ šim t-ōbīm*, i.e. works of love and gifts of love”, in reference to Matthew 25:31-46. According to Jewish casuistry, the merit of doing good works compensates for sins: it is like capital accumulated in heaven. At the final judgement the most important thing was that the “merits should outweigh transgressions.”<sup>104</sup>

According to Davies and Allison the composition consists of three pairs of good deeds and is poetic in nature. We shall briefly analyse every component:

<sup>100</sup> Cf. D.C. SIML, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 125. For evidence of Matthew’s redactional work, could be taken additional expression “Come o blessed *of my father*” (emphasis mine) in v. 34, and in v. 32a “before him will be gathered all the nations” what could be the influence of Joel 3:11-12, where the judge was Yahweh, 125-126.

<sup>101</sup> R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 513.

<sup>102</sup> D. HAMM makes an interesting statement: “the seven [sic!] works performed by the righteous (or neglected by the unrighteous) in Matt 25:31-46 are conventionally named the works of mercy in rabbinical tradition”. *The Beatitudes in Context*, 99.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES - D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 425-426. Our pericope omits this command. Is it a harmonisation to Matthew 8:22 or is there another reason?

<sup>104</sup> Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *New Testament Theology*, 147-148.

– “Hungry”, cf. Matthew 1:16; Psalm 146:7: The act is first of all performed by Jesus himself cf. Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-9.

– “Thirsty”, cf. Matthew 10:42: the service was done to the disciples but here those who give the water do not know to whom they give.

– “Stranger” – cf. Job 31:32; Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:1-8: Abraham was the one who welcomed God.

– “Clothing the naked” – cf. Genesis 3:21, as an act of imitating God.

– “Visiting the sick” – cf. Matthew 8:14-17, was an act performed by Jesus.

– “Visiting the prisoners” – cf. Psalm 69:33; Hebrews 10:34, 13:3, although not a standard in the Jewish tradition (“imprisonment was rare among the Jews [because they did not build jails]”<sup>165</sup>); here it might have been the reminiscence of John the Baptist’s imprisonment.<sup>166</sup>

Carter presents the works of mercy from a very interesting point of view of the marginalized. The works would be a response of the new society made of disciples in the “empire of God”, to the social discrimination, mismanagement, greed of honour and social credit. Instead, such works offer the opportunity to practice indiscriminate love without reciprocity.<sup>167</sup> The actions done are a way of life in preparation for judgement and would be a good response to the needs of the poor, especially in the city like Antioch (which could be considered as a place where the Matthean Community developed). This is how Carter describes it:

Among the unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions, the uneven and inadequate food and water supply, limited sewage disposal, the epidemics and infections fed by urine, feces, trash, corpses, decay and insects, and the general

<sup>165</sup> D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 427-428.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 495.

misery of poverty, lack, and debt, disciples are to use their limited resources to meet these basic human needs of the poor.<sup>108</sup>

### 3.3.3 *The Least Needy*

The word ἐλαχίστος is a superlative of μικρός<sup>109</sup> used earlier in the Gospel (Matt 10:42; 11:11; 18:6,10,14) referring to the followers of Jesus.<sup>110</sup> Davies and Allison give some five possibilities to identify the least/needy with the preference for universalistic understanding of “everyone in need, whether Christian or not”.<sup>111</sup>

Stanton, as we have already noticed discussing the meaning of all nations, debates between the universalistic and particularistic interpretation and consequently with the latter understanding of the least/needy. He notices striking omissions in the list of the needy, like orphans and widows, mourning ones, disabled and the dead. Therefore Matthew’s list cannot be considered as a general list of the needy in the society. Stanton’s arguments lead to understanding the particular situation of the Christian community as the envoys of the Son of Man. If all the non-Christians are obliged to serve the Son of Man, they are also obliged to show mercy to his followers, that is, Christians.<sup>112</sup>

In vv. 40 and 45, the judge identifies himself with the least. Whatsoever was done or not done to the least, “affected” the judge. Patte calls the Son of Man merciful, probably in association with the mercy shown by Jesus during his life. But

<sup>108</sup> W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 495. Further elaboration on this will be found in chapter three, where we shall discuss the social milieu of the Matthean community.

<sup>109</sup> See BAGD, 521.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 428-429.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. G.N. STANTON, *A Gospel for a New People*, 218-221. For the same way of reasoning see D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 357-358.

the point brought forth is that he is merciful, and expects mercy from his servants because he would benefit from the merciful deeds of his servants. It is as if the servants are his agents to reach out to those who would presumably receive his mercy and compassion.<sup>113</sup> In the same line Meier states that:

Both the good and the wicked are astounded not by the fact that they are being judged by Jesus the glorious Son of Man, nor even precisely by the fact that judgement is rendered according to works (a common Jewish and Christian theme), but rather by the revelation that the glorious Son of Man totally identifies himself with suffering [hu]mankind. In the most lowly and despised members of humanity the glorious Son of Man is present.<sup>114</sup>

The notion of the love for the least, interpreted as love for Son of Man/Jesus himself, seems to be a novelty here because it functions as the criterion of the judgement. Elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew the criterion for the judgement is connected with the mission (Matt 10:15; 11:20-24; 12:41-42; 23:37-39), witness (Matt 10:32-33) and fraternal charity (Matt 5:21-22; 6:4,14-15; 7:1-2; 18:35).<sup>115</sup>

Gundry looks at 'the least' from an angle of discipleship. The least would be those who fled under persecution and carried the Gospel with them. The response of true discipleship would be to accept them in an hospitable way.<sup>116</sup>

### 3.3.4 *Fate of the Wicked*

The punishment of the wicked is not merely exclusion from the communion with the rest, but actually includes all the horrors of the fate of sinners.<sup>117</sup> In v. 41, the punishment would be executed by fire. Compared to the other New Testament

<sup>113</sup> Cf. D. PATTI, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 349.

<sup>114</sup> J.P. MEIER, *The Vision of Matthew*, 178.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. A. GEORGE, "The Judgement of God", 10.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 514.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 130.

writings it looks as if Matthew not only affirms, but he constantly and fervently promotes this way of punishment.<sup>118</sup> The text of Matthew 25:41 specifies in a crystal clear way, what a terrible fate is waiting for the opponents of God, be it angelic or human.<sup>119</sup> Also, in the apocryphal apocalyptic literature, the punishment of the wicked done by fire in a gloomy dark place is quite a common feature.<sup>120</sup>

There are many opinions as to why Matthew had to use such strong language in determining the fate of those who did not respond with love to serve the Lord.

One of the approaches can be seen here:

The final parable [sic!] returns to an explicit delineation of behaviours the Lord looks for in people, and that receive either the reward of honor and approval (...) or the shame of exclusion and disapproval – ‘Go away from me, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels’ (25:41). These strong sanctions are used to support works of love, and deeds of charity and mercy toward the hungry, weak, sick, poor, and imprisoned. This concluding vision helps the hearers understand that ultimately their honor depends not on networking with the rich and powerful but with responding in mercy and generosity towards the needy and nobodies.<sup>121</sup>

### 3.3.5 *Fate of the Righteous*

The place and conditions of the existence of the righteous seem to be completely opposite to those of the wicked and are characterised by light, abundance and happiness. In general, the new age would be of restoration or new order.<sup>122</sup>

Matthew depicted the fate of the righteous in many and varied ways: in our pericope he used the symbol of “eternal life” found elsewhere in the New

<sup>118</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 134, 137. Although in v. 46 ἄρσ is substituted with κόλασις in line with כַּלְעָס in Daniel 12:2, with the meaning of “pruning off”. cf. R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 516.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 136.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. H.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 47-49.

<sup>121</sup> D.A. deSILVA, *The Hope of Glory*, 63.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 49-50.

Testament. The righteous would share the mode of existence of angels as the wicked share in the condemnation of the devil and his angels. What comes to mind is the razor-sharp dualistic view of the evangelist – there is no third option.<sup>123</sup>

The attitude with which the things are done is of great importance. The works performed by the righteous were done not because of pleasing the judge, or hope of reward vs. fear of punishment, but because of an intrinsic attitude of being merciful (cf. Matt 5:7) and compassionate, which was lacking in the wicked.<sup>124</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

What results from this chapter is a couple of major conclusions. One of them is that the passage of Matthew 25:31-46 would not be considered a parable *de facto* but it has to do more with apocalyptic genre and its functions. Three major sections/themes have been distinguished within the text: the Son of Man, separation of the sheep and goats and the Judgement scene. The last one is the most developed and elaborate regarding the composition, which reveals an unusual skill of the author. It comprises two pairs of speeches, the repetitions of the particular words giving the impression of the great importance with which the author considered the narrative.

The prominent figure encountered in the text is the “Son of Man”. The general view is shared about the Son of Man’s special role in executing God’s plan, powerful and full of authority, not only royal but also divine. The presence of angels underlines the solemnity and gravity of the event. Son of Man could actually be

<sup>123</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 141,145.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. D. PAHLE, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 349.

considered here as Jesus Christ in his return/second coming, thus setting the whole scene in a definitely eschatological perspective.

We have examined a difficult discussion about the identity of the nations gathered for the judgement, as well as subjects of the judge's "vengeance" – the least/neediest. Scholars are divided into two major groups sharing either particularistic or universalistic view on the subject. The former claim that the meaning of "all the nations" refers to the Gentiles and non-Christians; consequently, "the least" would be the members of the Church/Matthean community. The latter speaks about "the nations" as the whole of humanity, including Christians and non-Christians; "the least" in that case would be all who need help, charity and a human approach. What is striking is that the judge/Son of Man/King/Lord identifies himself with "the least" and that the works of love are considered as the criteria for judgement. Both facts are surprising for the people being judged. Evidently, the judgement story served as an exhortative-ethical device spurring the audience to concrete action in times of crisis.

Lastly, it is impossible to miss some of the particularities emerging from the text itself. These are: a) dualistic imagery and language, present in the separation of the sheep and goats, existence of the two opposite worlds of life and condemnation, dualistic division of the angelic forces and the ones being judged as either wicked or righteous; and b) determinism which can easily be observed in God's ultimate and total intervention through God's agent, in favour of those who were suffering and oppressed, and to the doom of oppressors. All these elements contribute to the particular understanding of our text, and will help to situate it in the social venue of the Matthean community in the past as well as in our present world.

## **Chapter III**

### **Pastoral Application of the Text**

#### **1. Introduction**

To comprehend the importance of the Gospel of Matthew, and specifically the apocalyptic-eschatological scene of Matthew 25:31-46, it is necessary to study the factors which contributed to the composition of the text, as well as those which influence the reading of the text today. Therefore, in this chapter we shall try to define the general overview of apocalyptic eschatology as an environment in which the community of Matthew lived, pointing to some of the most important characteristics which may have influenced, or are prevalent in, our passage. The second step will consist of some social analysis of the conditions and dynamics of the Matthean community as situated in Antioch. To understand the relevance of the above it will be necessary to have at least some basic knowledge of the present living situation of many people in cities like Nairobi. The last point will be a personal sharing of the experience encountered in some of Nairobi's *vijiji*. In this chapter we shall attempt to bring to the fore, relevance of the apocalyptic-eschatological scene in the Matthean text.

## 2. Apocalyptic Eschatology

### 2.1 *Two Concepts of Apocalyptic Eschatology*

Here we shall deal with two crucial ideas which are sources of hope, perseverance and patience for many people whose lives were often filled with suffering; these are the dualistic view of the world and deterministic view of the future.

#### 2.1.1 *Dualism*

There would be no problem in identifying dualistic features in the text of the passage of Matthew 25:31-46, but the idea of dualism embraces much more than we can get from a superficial reading of the text. First of all, the important notion of apocalyptic eschatology is the division of history into two aeons; secondly, the cosmos is divided into two opposite forces of good (God and God's angels) and evil (fallen angels).<sup>125</sup> Let us recall the well-known verses: v. 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him"; v. 41 "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" etc. What is peculiar to Matthew is the special role which the angels play as the ones assigned for the service of Jesus, the Son of Man. Their counterparts opposed to Jesus are the devil and his angels. Now, this really looks like "a cosmic conflict between the heavenly forces and the powers of evil."<sup>126</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 35.

<sup>126</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 76-77.

“The Most High has made not one world but two” (2 Esdr. 7:50): there is a constant tension and opposition between the powers of good and evil – the present suffering of this age contrasts with the future salvation of the age to come.<sup>127</sup> Fuller asserts: “unlike prophecy, apocalyptic portrays that culmination not in this-worldly terms, but in a new heaven and a new earth. It envisages two ages, this age and the age to come. It is this transcendental element which makes the salient difference between prophecy and apocalyptic.”<sup>128</sup> According to von Rad, “the characteristic of apocalyptic theology is its eschatological dualism.”<sup>129</sup> Morris states:

Apocalyptic dualism is always seen within the framework of basic monotheism. This is plain enough where it is a question of this world and the world to come, but it is also the case when Satan or other evil spirits are referred to. These have no independent existence. Their activities are confined to the area determined by God. There is a real dualism, but it is never absolute.<sup>130</sup>

### 2.1.2 Determinism

When discussing apocalyptic eschatology, the term *determinism* has to be understood in the proper way. Here it signifies that God is in absolute control of history from the time of creation to the end. Sometimes God may reveal God’s plans through the prophecy and its fulfilment, but it is worth noting that global determinism of history does not necessarily dominate human will, which remains free.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. L. MORRIS, *Apocalyptic*, 47.

<sup>128</sup> R.H. FULLER, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, 184, quoted in L. MORRIS, *Apocalyptic*, 48.

<sup>129</sup> G. VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, 301f, quoted in L. MORRIS, *Apocalyptic*, 48.

<sup>130</sup> L. MORRIS, *Apocalyptic*, 50.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 41.

In the apocalyptic, the idea of evil and connected with it persecution and tribulations, is predominant. But the realisation of overwhelming evil should not lead to defeatism, for the hope for the ultimate reversal and God's victory would always be stronger. For Israel, it took time to make a shift from the traditional mentality to the new one of understanding God's ultimate power over evil. Traditionally in Jewish mind, the righteous were rewarded and the wicked punished in this life and in this world. What if the righteous suffered innocently? Deterministic worldview safeguarded faith in God's ultimate control over whatever happened in the history of human endeavours. Even the tribulations of the righteous were placed in God's plan, but with a purpose. Ultimate triumph and vindication of the persecuted righteous would certainly come.<sup>132</sup> Connected to it, is God's partiality to the dispossessed, God's actions on their behalf was a source of hope for those who were in need, trouble and pain, and this particular feature of God was present and especially prominent in the actions of Jesus and even among his followers in the Christian community,<sup>133</sup> as it is evident in our passage of Matthew 25:31-46.

The prominent picture of the enthronement of the Son of Man as king (as witnessed in the here studied pericope of Matthew 25:31-46), and consequently, the establishment of his kingdom, seems to be an alternative to the present ruling of demonic powers. The two realms, although strictly distinct, are often confused and interwoven into history: the judgement serves as a disclosure, which one is the right one to follow; but the struggle of the two opposite powers is only temporary – ultimately it is God who is the king.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Cf. L. MORRIS, *Apocalyptic*, 45-46.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. B.C. BIRCH, *Let Justice Roll Down*, 122.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. M.E. BORING, "Matthew", 455-456.

## 2.2. *Functions of the Apocalyptic Eschatology*

Apocalyptic eschatology is of service to the group experiencing crisis, to strengthen, comfort and offer hope through the reversal of the present hostile circumstances, vengeance on the oppressors and promotion of the oppressed.<sup>135</sup> It is like the two were inseparably attached to each other in mutual fulfilment - “There is widespread agreement that a *direct correlation exists between the desperate situation of the author and his group and the embracement of the apocalyptic-eschatological perspective*” (*emphasis mine*).<sup>39</sup>

The encouragement to persevere and hope for future vindication is based on the belief in a history determined by God. Even if the present life might look gloomy and without prospects, there is always sure hope for reversal and compensation by God’s judgement in the imminent future.<sup>137</sup> Although it may sound harsh to our ears today, it was important for the group of the oppressed to know that the oppressors (those who made life unbearable) were punished in a most horrifying way. It was a kind of satisfaction in vengeance that every human being feels when brought to the limits of perseverance. God’s justice had to prevail in the end.<sup>138</sup>

Having all the above in mind, we can now look at the Matthean Community in Antioch with new insights. Everything that happened there was influenced by the particular view of life - apocalyptic eschatology.

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 63.

<sup>136</sup> D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 63.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. D.C. SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 66.

<sup>138</sup> D.C. C.F., SIM, *Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 67.

### 3. Situation of the Matthean Community

In the general introduction we have made a presumption about the audience of Matthew's Gospel as situated in the city of Antioch at the river Orontes, one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire in New Testament times and the capital of the Roman province of Syria.<sup>139</sup>

#### 3.1 Antioch – Ancient Greco-Roman City

The city of Antioch was of great magnificence and importance in the ancient world. However, we can surely state that urban disorder, social dislocation, misery and cultural chaos were the daily bread of the inhabitants of the city of Antioch.<sup>140</sup> How come? One of the major factors was its enormous density of population. In general, Greco-Roman cities were small fortresses for the purpose of defence in time of war; in the case of Antioch, the area would cover at most, two square miles (circa 5.15 km<sup>2</sup> · 515 ha). The total population would number about 150,000 inhabitants living within the walls. Therefore the density of the population could be calculated at about 117 per acre, but the real figure has to be raised to 205 if we consider that most of the space in the city was occupied by public buildings.<sup>141</sup> Stark describes the conditions of the inhabitants as follows:

<sup>139</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 189; R.E. BROWN J.P. MEIER, *Antioch and Rome*, 1.12.22.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 190.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 192. The author recalls the present population density in some of the modern cities for comparison e.g. New York having 37, Manhattan 100, Bombay 183 and Calcutta 122 per acre. The simple calculation of the density of the population in Antioch would give the average space of the area as 4.4 x 4.4 m per person. Note that most probably the area occupied by the poor was much smaller than that.

Most people live in tiny cubicles in multistoried tenements, in conditions wherein privacy was [...] 'a hard thing to find'. Not only were people terribly crowded within these buildings, the streets were so narrow that if people leaned out their window they could chat with someone living across the street without having to raise their voices.<sup>142</sup>

### 3.2 *Urban Misery in Antioch*

The city of Antioch struggled with many everyday problems. One of the signs of extreme misery in the urban setting of Antioch was its problem with sanitation. As Stark describes in his article, the human and animal density in the city prevented any attempt to keep the city clean, therefore it "must have been extremely filthy."<sup>143</sup> There was nothing of the commodities of modern times, and the common folk depended in entirety on pots and open ditches.<sup>144</sup> Another problem was regular water supply. Even if ancient people are famous for building aqueducts, the distribution, shortage and storage of water was surely a problem.<sup>145</sup> This is quite a drastic description of the reality of urban environment but perhaps close to the truth. The state of health of the living was far from excellent; pestilences, plagues and epidemics were probably normal features: the average lifespan of people was rather short.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 192-193.

<sup>143</sup> R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 193.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 194.

<sup>145</sup> See Appendix V.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 194-195.

### *3.3 Social Dynamics in Antioch City*

For the purpose of this study we shall point out some of the important issues present in the social setup of Antioch city, which seem to be relevant to the situation of Nairobi's urbanisation. These are gender, ethnicity/immigration and Christianity.

#### *3.3.1 Gender Issue/Women*

There is a very interesting theory promoted by Stark about the role of the women and how Christianity changed women's social situation in the urban set up. Because of short life expectancy and high mortality (particularly infant mortality) in the overpopulated and unhealthy city, high fertility was expected, especially from women. Therefore, they suffered a lot from frequent pregnancies and childbirth complications. The second factor was abortion and infanticide. If "pagans" practiced both, especially female infanticide, it was forbidden in the Christian community (cf. Did. 2:2). Christian women, therefore, had been at least equal in number with men, and it was an influential factor to women's status, where it was not the case among the "pagans" with the male role as definitely dominant.<sup>147</sup>

#### *3.3.2 Ethnicity/Immigration*

There is a well-grounded presumption of social/ethnic/cultural diversity in Antioch due to the diversity of the Roman Empire stretching across the known world at that time. At its foundation by Seleucus I, the city of Antioch was divided

<sup>147</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 195-196.

between Syrians and Greeks. The whole kaleidoscope of various ethnic groups included Macedonians, Cretans, Cypriotes, Argives, Heraeidae, Athenians, Jews<sup>148</sup>, Syrians and Romans, who brought with them Gauls, Germans and others. The number of different groups occupying Antioch might have been 18 tribes with their own locations within the city. Another important factor in the social dynamics in Antioch city must have been its constant reception of immigrants due to the fact that the local population was not able to sustain the demographic equilibrium. Also, natural disasters like earthquakes, fires, famines and epidemics, as well as the unnatural, like wars and riots, often caused depopulation and repopulation of the city, increasing the ethnic and social diversity.<sup>149</sup>

If we try to read the Gospel of Matthew, and particularly the passage of Matthew 25:3-46, having in mind the above picture, the meaning of the words pronounced by the judge would obviously have more impact.

### 3.3.3 *Impact of Christianity*

The Christian idea of a God who loves all humanity, and who expects to be loved through people's loving of one another, was probably totally alien to the people surrounding the Matthean community. So more, the love which would surpass the boundaries of one's family or clan or tribe and extend to others, even beyond the Christian community, was unintelligible, because "Christianity taught that mercy is one of the primary virtues – that a merciful God requires humans to be

<sup>148</sup> Meier calls Antioch "a meeting place and melting pot of Jewish and Gentile influences. (...) a perfect location for this encounter and clash." R.E. BROWN – J.P. MEIER, *Antioch and Rome*, 23.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 196-197. For more information see Appendix V.

merciful. Nowhere were these new and revolutionary moral teachings of Christianity so fully and eloquently expressed as in Matthew.”<sup>159</sup>

Indeed, Christians responded to the message of the Gospel, forming efficacious competition to the “pagans”. For example, during the disastrous epidemics which occurred in Antioch, Christians made themselves available in caring for and nursing the sick. We can also presume that a highly demanding moral code with charity as the core of it, constantly mobilised Christians to respond to the social needs in Antioch, especially during the disasters leaving many at the mercy of others.<sup>161</sup>

#### **4. Application for the Urban Setting of Nairobi**

Researching the Gospel of Matthew and its social setting, gives us an astounding impression that the city of Antioch with all its problems, closely resembles the informal settlement in Nairobi, the so called “slums” or *vijiji*. It could appear that what Matthew wanted to communicate was possible only in one way -- reading and meditating upon the Gospel in the middle of iron sheet houses, open sewerage ditches, walking through the narrow paths/stones in the mud, between the little shops with food and other goods, and having a smell of all of it. In fact, the adoption of the apocalyptic-eschatological world view does not bring much surprise it is the only way to persevere in life ad faith.

<sup>159</sup> R. STARK, “Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew’s Gospel”, 199,201.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. R. STARK, “Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew’s Gospel”, 202-204,206-207.

#### 4.1 Nairobi's Kijiji

Analysing the situation of the urban settlement of Nairobi, the resemblance to Antioch of old is astounding. One of the obvious similarities is poverty and scarcity of living space. In various parts of Nairobi city we witness informal settlement due to the rapidly growing urbanisation; connected to this is chronic poverty of about 70% of the urban-dwellers.<sup>152</sup> Nairobi city has a population of 4 million of which 60% live in 1.5% of the total land of Nairobi.<sup>153</sup> This figure shows enormous density of the population in the slums.<sup>154</sup> This description comes from Shorter, anthropologist and missionary:

If the huge influx of migrants makes the provision of adequate housing impossible, the supply of services is equally difficult. Squatter areas are densely populated and if the residents are politically organised, they can sometimes exert pressure on the authorities to provide a minimum of services. Water stand-pipes may be provided for people to buy a daily ration of water: the few public toilets that exist are poorly maintained, and the open drainage systems are rudimentary. Some desultory street lighting may be provided. Refuse collection is a problem. This is because many shanty towns are literary rubbish-tips and may actually be called such. This is the meaning of "Korokocho", for example. Shanty-dwellers literally live with rubbish and, to some extent, depend on it for building materials. Street children scavenge the refuse heaps for food or saleable items of scrap.<sup>155</sup>

The problem of housing and lack of basic infrastructure is one of the major, but it is accompanied by many other problems.<sup>156</sup> Mukuru-Kayaba women share about their disadvantages of living in *kijiji*, listing: insecurity, sexual abuse,

<sup>152</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, "Slums: A Social Analysis", 61-62. Although the data refers to African urban-dwellers in general, it might be true in case of Nairobi.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. A. ZANOFFILI, "A Grace Freely Given", 13. According to A. SHORTER in 1.6%, "Slums: A Social Analysis", 65. From the analysis of the figures presented in a long essay of E.S. MUSHI, "The Response of the Christian Community", 62 (see Appendix III), in the squatter areas of Nairobi the average of squatting comes to 9 m<sup>2</sup> person in 1999. Imaginatively it could be compared to the area of the room 3 m long and 3 m wide, but the account has to be taken for the roads and other public sectors as well as unequal distribution of the living space.

<sup>154</sup> For some more elaboration see Appendix IV.

<sup>155</sup> A. SHORTER, "Slums: A Social Analysis", 67.

<sup>156</sup> See Appendix IV.

substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of privacy, lack of basic infrastructures, economic disadvantages and environmental problems.<sup>157</sup> Such a situation demands immediate response: help is offered mainly through Christian organisations or projects. Rose Wambugu is a field worker of WRAP (Women's Rights Awareness Programme), and deals with all forms of violence and abuse against children and women, whether physical or emotional, mostly in Kibera slum. The programme helps in various ways, women and children from Kibera; for example, providing shelter for battered and violated women as well as legal, educational and counselling assistance.<sup>158</sup> The above-mentioned is one of the many responses of the Christian community to their brothers and sisters in dire need.

The state of health in *kijiji* is far from excellent, with HIV/AIDS as probably the most difficult to control due to the promotion of sexual promiscuity, crime and destitution in general.<sup>159</sup> "The incidence of HIV+ in Nairobi as a whole is estimated as 30% of the adult population. There must be a much higher percentage than this in the slums. AIDS hits hardest in the areas of deprivation and areas of conflict, war zones, and one can say *Korogocho* is both."<sup>160</sup> There is growing need for the AIDS counselling centres not only for the directly afflicted by the disease but also to fight stigmatising and despising of the sick in the society. One of the examples of direct help is Nyumbani house for HIV/AIDS positive children.

<sup>157</sup> It is a very nice subheading suggesting perhaps some warm-hearted love for green etc. the truth is that the sewage disposal system as well as garbage disposal does not exist. The drinking water is not treated, pollution is a norm. See N. MARIYA, "The Voice of the Women from the Slums", 53-56.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. R. WAMBUGU, "WRAP Outreach Programme in Kibera Slum", 28-29.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, *The Church in the African City*, 51.

<sup>160</sup> G. HORSEFIELD, "AIDS and Pastoral Care in the Slums", 20. See also A. SHORTER F. ONYANCHA, *The Church and AIDS in Africa*, 15-27.

The other factor not to be omitted is the multicultural milieu in which people live in *kijiji*:

The youth have lost their cultural identity. *Korogocho* is a cosmopolitan village and all tribes in Kenya are well represented. (...) It is a common saying that there are more churches in *Korogocho* than toilets and health facilities. (...) There are low economic activities in *Korogocho* and poverty is prevalent. The poverty is evident in poor housing conditions, unemployment, low and unreliable income, invisible health facilities, low level of education and literacy, insecurity and uncertain access to justice, high levels of inequality and misemployment, food shortages and malnutrition, dilapidated infrastructure and general isolation from the main stream of socio-economic development.<sup>161</sup>

The answer to the question: who are the least/neediest in Nairobi's *vijiji*? could be found perhaps in the following list: "sexually exploited girls, impregnated girls left alone to procure an abortion, raped girls, HIV/AIDS victims, substance abusers, insecure people and street families",<sup>162</sup> street children,<sup>163</sup> all those who come to town out of necessity, in hope for a better future,<sup>164</sup> and also those whose hard work is exploited by others.

How do Christian communities respond to the problems in Nairobi's *vijiji*? Through various projects run mainly by the religious congregations, for example, Bosco Boys in Kuwinda run by Salesians of Don Bosco, as well as many other. But most important to mention is the effort of Christian communities (Small Christian Communities) in a collective improvement of life within the *kijiji* itself. At first look insignificant, the neighbourhood relationships are of great importance in *kijiji*, where no one can survive alone. Such relationships are strengthened through celebrating the Eucharist together and visiting the sick, plus catechesis and mutual care for each other. In such an environment the vision of the Son of Man at the judgement in the

<sup>161</sup> J. OLOUCH, "The Lighter Side of Darkness", 44-45.

<sup>162</sup> J. OLOUCH, "The Lighter Side of Darkness", 45-48.

<sup>163</sup> See A. SHORTER - E. ONYANCHA, *Street Children in Africa*.

<sup>164</sup> See N. MARENYA, "The Voice of the Women from the Slums", 57.

Gospel of Matthew brings new colours to life of the people. Whatsoever good they do to each other will not be forgotten but is a service done to Jesus himself. The Christian faith *believed* becomes a life-project to *be lived*.

#### 4.2 *My Experience of Kijiji*

I have had some personal experience of *kijiji* in Nairobi. First, I have taken the opportunity to visit Kibera at Katwikeru side. Later, I had an opportunity to experience, at least as an outsider, how life is in Mukuru, especially Lunga Lunga.

In Kibera I have visited the houses of some youth with whom I have been friends, and who belonged to the Salesian youth group. In *kijiji* I have encountered some well-organised parish groups of committed Christians in so-called “outstations”. Next to those I have seen well off estates with St. Michael’s parish in Otiende. A deep valley separating the two settlements was like a symbol of not only geographical but also social disparity.

One of my next encounters happened to be in Mukuru. This is an industrial area along Mombasa Road, divided into the parts of Lunga Lunga, Reuben, and Kwa Njenga. The industrial area has some wealthy (or middle class) neighbours in the surrounding estates; for example, South B, Imara Daima etc. During lunch time, I used to take meals with the families of youth of Lunga Lunga, in their homes. I had a chance to get an idea of how people could manage to live in their small cubicles with little or no privacy; how they managed to survive with one meal a day worth 20 Ksh (0.25 US\$);<sup>165</sup> how they tried their best to keep the house clean and neat and make it home. And although every family was happy for me when I came visiting,

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<sup>165</sup> Such lunch consists of some *ugali*, cooking oil, *sukuma wiki* and tomato.

and surprised at seeing me capable of eating simple food with everyone around, I wonder for whom it was a greater honour.

My experience of the social environment reached out also to knowing some of the rich people in Nairobi. Some parishioners are committed in their Church groups with the aim of helping those who are disadvantaged in many and various ways, for example, collections for the poor, drug addicts meeting, etc.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, a couple of the most significant and important issues for the study have been touched. These are: understanding of apocalyptic eschatology, analysis of the situation of the Matthean community in Antioch, and the application for the contemporary living conditions in Nairobi urban settlement.

One of the above-mentioned points is the extraction of the kernel of the message of the text of Matthew 25:31-46, which is apocalyptic eschatology with its dualistic and deterministic world view. This particular world view has been adopted by the community (specifically the Matthean community) as a response to the crisis and unbearable living situation in which it found itself. This world view, so prominent in the passage of judgement, has spurred the Christian community to live its Christian vocation to the full, and this means living with love for each other and for the Lord, and at the end, attaining life eternal.

Secondly, we have analysed the urban situation of the Matthean community in the city of Antioch, together with its physical and social factors. If the living conditions of the Christians (and of the author of the Gospel) presumably influenced the shape and content of the Gospel (according to Matthew, and especially the

passage of Matt 25:31-46), so we can make a statement that the Gospel text formed, shaped and influenced the life of the people themselves.

Thirdly, we come to the point where the Gospel message remains relevant after nearly 2000 years. As the words of the judge from the judgement scene did not sound comforting in the ears of the people who were well off two millennia ago, so they do not sound comforting today either. And a quick look at the society of Kenya, divided by the abyss of the socio-economic situation, proves that history likes repeating itself. As people lived in Antioch in misery and some in an excessive abundance twenty centuries ago, so they do in Nairobi today. Therefore, the Gospel remains a challenge for living the authentic Christian life today. It means that the love of God, as expressed in the love for all around, has to be a priority and a life project. The challenge to live a truly Christian vocation has been taken by many in Nairobi's *vijiji*, as we have seen in the examples of counselling centres, social projects etc.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Word of God remains dynamic and active over the centuries and surpasses the borders of countries and cultures. God's Word does not return until it reaches its purpose and fulfils its task. The words spoken by the judge: "I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me" (Matt 25:45, NLT), sound harsh and vengeful, especially when they are backed by, "Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons!" (Matt 25:41, NLT). These words bother many Christian believers of today as they have disturbed many throughout the centuries.

The whole story may have sounded exhortative and moralistic, too simple and perhaps not realistic. The features, like a clear line put between good and evil, rewarding of the righteous and punishment of the wicked ones, may classify the story as fantasy. But is it not the very core of Christian belief that God is almighty and has power over all evil? If life around becomes unbearable because of suffering beyond limits, God becomes the only focus of awaiting in hope. God becomes the

most precious principle and a point of reference. The thought is precisely expressed by Dunn:

The apocalyptic hope brings the believer *a new sense of responsibility towards the world*. [S/]He ceases to be dependent on the world for value and hope, but [s/]he becomes more responsible for it – to live and work *in* the world for the hastening of God's purposed End. (...) The role of apocalyptic within Christianity is therefore to resist any temptation to abandon hope for the 'realities' of the present, or to abandon the present for the vision of the future, but instead to relate the two to each other, *to understand the present in the light of the future in the relation to the present (Dunn's emphasis)*.<sup>160</sup>

The present study on the apocalyptic eschatology in Matthew 25:31-46, is showing only a part of the whole dynamism which can be observed when analysing the Gospel of Matthew in its social context. The Judgement scene is the true apocalyptic-eschatological image of the reality to come, with its centre, Jesus Christ as *eschaton*. For the Matthean community it was a source of inspiration and motivation. Although the passage does not explicitly crown the Gospel of Matthew (but it is placed directly before the Passion narrative), the Church truly recognised its eschatological value, placing the reading on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, on the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King (Year A).

The passage of Matthew 25:31-46, speaks about very important problems encountered in human life. In fact, the story about the Judgement is more realistic than one would imagine. Because it is a reality of everyday life that society is divided, for sometimes the difference between the well off and disadvantaged ones is visible even too clearly. There will always be reasons for separation, be it economic, cultural or religious. But Matthew 25:31-46 warns and prophesies that there will be a separation beyond this realm with only one criterion – abundance or lack of love shown to others.

<sup>160</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, 339-340.

Here we can distinguish exhortative/paraenetic function of the passage in the two fold manner: spurring towards the action on one side and offering hope and courage on the other. The former targets by all means the command of love directed to God through service to the least/needly. It does not matter so much the identity and/or status of the least needy, but it is their identification with Jesus Christ, the King. In this way, the exhortation remains very down to earth, avoiding empty religious pietism. As we have seen in the third chapter, the situation of fellow Christians and non-Christians (examples of Antioch and Nairobi), is far from excellent, and no one can claim having done enough to improve the social or living conditions in the slums. There is a consistent need for service and improvement. The above statement is aptly supported by the following way of reasoning:

According to the discourse in Matthew 25:31-46, is not charitable action, sympathy for one's fellow-man[woman], the sole essence of Christianity? [Or] is Christianity simply humanitarian? (...) according to New Testament human submission or humanitarian conduct is an essential condition of the gospel. But the commandment of love is a new commandment (John 13:34), because it has its basis and possibility in the revelation of God's love for men[women] in Christ (...).<sup>167</sup>

The latter paraenetic function provides the philosophy of life for the disadvantaged. It is far from escapism and defeatism. It is encouraging to persevere, have strength and hope for the reversal in the future. Even the least/needly/poor have responsibilities in society and a firm role to play in it. The eschatological hope can shape their lives in a way which will contribute to their personal and communitarian growth and development. But the most important factor is to have faith and remember that God is Almighty and author of all life, and never abandons those in need.

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<sup>167</sup> K.H SCHULKE, *Theology of the New Testament*, 309.

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## APPENDIX I: GREEK AND ENGLISH TEXT OF MATHEW 25:31-46

31 Ὄταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ·

32 καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων,

33 καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων.

34 τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

35 ἐπέινασα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην καὶ συνηγάγετέ με,

36 γυμνὸς καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἠσθένησα καὶ ἐπισκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην καὶ ἦλθατε πρὸς με.

37 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν;

38 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ξένοι καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν;

39 πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενοῦντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἦλθομεν πρὸς σε;

31 When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

32 Before him will he gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,

33 and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

34 Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink?

38 And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee?'

39 And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?'

40 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ  
αὐτοῖς, Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον  
ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν  
μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.  
41 Τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἐωνύμων.  
Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι  
εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ  
ἠτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς  
ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.  
42 ἐπείνασα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκάτε μοι  
φαγεῖν. ἐδίψησα καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με,  
43 ξένος ἦμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με,  
γυμνὸς καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενῆς  
καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ  
με.  
44 τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ  
λέγοντες, Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν  
πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν  
ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐ  
διηκοιήσαμεν σοι;  
45 τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων,  
Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ  
ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων,  
οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.  
46 καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν  
αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν  
αἰώνιον. (GNT)<sup>165</sup>

40 And the King will answer them,  
'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to  
one of the least of these my brethren,  
you did it to me.'  
41 Then he will say to those at his left  
hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed,  
into the eternal fire prepared for the  
devil and his angels:  
42 for I was hungry and you gave me  
no food, I was thirsty and you gave me  
no drink,  
43 I was a stranger and you did not  
welcome me, naked and you did not  
clothe me, sick and in prison and you  
did not visit me.'  
44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord,  
when did we see thee hungry or thirsty  
or a stranger or naked or sick or in  
prison, and did not minister to thee?'  
45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I  
say to you, as you did it not to one of  
the least of these, you did it not to me.'  
46 And they will go away into eternal  
punishment, but the righteous into  
eternal life. (RSV)<sup>166</sup>

<sup>165</sup> BW.

<sup>166</sup> BW.

## APPENDIX II: ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL VARIATIONS

Although this textual analysis does not contribute significantly to the exegesis of text of Matthew 25:31-46, after Nestle-Aland who indicates the following variations in some manuscripts, I found it interesting and worth to place it here.

v. 31 an insertion of ἅγιοι (“the holy ones”, BAGD 10) before ἄγγελοι (“angels, messengers of God”, BAGD 7) supported by A W <sup>f</sup>13 M <sup>f</sup>sy<sup>p</sup>1 bo<sup>m</sup>; omission is supported by κ B D L Θ 074 <sup>f</sup>1 33.565 pc lat sa mae bo<sup>m</sup>; or Eus Cyr. (Cf. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). It would vaguely suggest saints of Christians as consecrated to God (BAGD 10) accompanying the Son of Man.

v. 32 a variation of a single word συναχθήσεται (verb indicative future passive 3rd person singular of συναάγω “assemble, gather together”, BW) A W Γ Δ <sup>f</sup>1 700. 892. 1241. 1424 pm; as an alternative to συναχθήσονται (verb indicative future passive 3rd person plural of συναάγω, BW).

v. 33 a transposition of a single word αὐτου (“his”) after ἐωνύμων (“left, opposite of right” BW) κ; no transposition A pc.

v. 39 an alternative reading of a single word ἀσθενῆ (adjective accusative masculine singular of ἀσθενής, ἐς “sick, weak, ill”, BW) κ A L W 067. 074.0135 <sup>f</sup>1<sup>13</sup> M; ἀσθενοῦσα (verb participle present active accusative masculine 2nd person singular of ἀσθεύω, BW) B D Θ pc; Cl.

v. 40 τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου ("of my brothers", BW) is omitted in B\* 1424 ff<sup>1</sup> ff<sup>2</sup>; C1 Eus GrNy; compare with v. 45 τῶν ἐλαχίστων (adjective pronoun superlative genitive masculine plural of ἐλάχιστος (superl. of μικρός) "least, smallest", BW).

v. 41 an omission with a single word οἱ κ B L 0128. 0135. 33 *pc*; without omission A D W Θ 067<sup>m</sup>. 074 *f*<sup>1,13</sup> M; alternative reading: 1) το ἠτοιμάσμευ (verb participle perfect passive dative masculine, neuter singular ἠτοιμάζω, "prepare, make ready" BW) *F pc*; 2) ὁ ἠτοιμάσει ὁ πᾶτερ μου (verb indicative aorist active 3rd person singular ἠτοιμάζω; "my father", BW) *D f* it mae; Ir<sup>1</sup> Cyp; 3) το ἠτοιμασμένοι (verb participle perfect passive accusative neuter singular ἠτοιμάζω, BW) as in the text *P<sup>45</sup> κ A B L W Θ 067. 074. 0128. 0135. 0136 f<sup>1</sup> M lat sys a bo*. It is God as the one who prepares (BAGD 316) in either case, it confirms the deterministic outlook of the author, although the second alternative is even more explicit.

v. 42 an insertion of καὶ B\* L; an alternative reading ἐδώκατέ μοι πίνειν (verb indicative aorist active 2nd person plural of δίδωμι "give, grant"; "to me"; verb infinitive aorist active πίνω "drink", BW) is witnessed only in Blass *cf*;

v. 43 an insertion of καὶ *P<sup>45</sup> Θ*; and ἦμην (verb indicative imperfect middle 1st person singular εἰμί of "be", BW) *P<sup>45</sup> h*.

v. 46 an alternative reading of κόλασιν αἰώνιον (noun accusative feminine singular κόλασις; "punishment"; adjective accusative feminine singular αἰώνιος "eternal [of quality rather than of time]; unending, everlasting, for all time", BW) *ignem it*; Cyp. Punishment would have the notion of divine retribution (BAGD 441). Compare with v. 41 πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον ("eternal fire", BW). "Fire appears mostly as a means used by God to execute punishment (...), quite predominantly in connection with the Last Judgement" (BAGD 730).

<sup>13</sup> E. NESLE - K. ALAND, *Greek English New Testament*, 73-74.

APPENDIX III: INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN NAIROBI<sup>170</sup>

Administrative division	Individual Settlement	Area covered by Informal Settlement (Hectares)	Estimated population	
			1993	1999
Makadara	Matiguni	14.2	17,040	25,930
	Express	16.8	20,160	30,677
	Mukuru	54.4	65,280	99,336
		85.4	102,480	155,943
Langata	Kibera	225.6	248,160	377,624
	Mitumba	1.5	1,200	1,826
	Bomas	2.1	1,680	2,556
		229.2	251,040	382,006
Kasarani	Mathare	73.7	58,960	89,719
	Korogocho/Kinyago	49.2	56,580	86,098
	Ihome	7.3	2,190	3,333
	Njathini	8.8	2,625	3,994
	Garba	13.8	4,125	6,227
	Githurai	21.8	6,540	9,952
	Kahawa	30.5	9,150	13,924
	Kamae	10	2,985	4,542
Dagoretti		215	143,155	217,838
	Ngando	12	6,000	9,130
	Riruta	15	7,500	11,413
	Karandini	23	11,500	17,499
	Karangware	111	55,000	83,693
	Muslim Village	37	18,500	28,151
	Kangemi	75	37,500	57,064
	Dagoretti	14.5	7,250	11,032
	Waithaka	41	20,500	31,195
	Mutuini	45	22,500	34,238
	373.5	186,250	283,416	

<sup>170</sup> F.S., Mt Sisi, "The Response of the Christian Community to Growing Poverty in Urban Settlement", 62.

Embakasi	Mali Saba	39.7	11,910	18,123
	Kayole	23.3	13,980	21,273
	Soweto	10	6,000	9,130
		73	31,890	48,527
Pumwani	Buru Buru	4.5	1,890	2,876
	Carton Kitui Pumwani Village	10	10,000	15,217
		14.5	11,890	18,093
Parklands	Runda	11.5	3,450	5,250
	Kitisuru	11.3	3,375	5,136
	Spring Valley	1.7	501	762
		24.4	7,326	11,148
All Divisions		<b>1,015.0</b>	<b>734,031</b>	<b>1,116,971</b>

## APPENDIX IV: CITATIONS ABOUT NAIROBI'S SLUMS/*VIJJI*

This is how Korogocho, one of the *vijji* is described by one of the youth living there:

From a distance, you see thousands of them. The old iron sheets that are the roofing attract you closer. You are introduced to structures made of anything available. Old "mahati," mud, wood, boxes, nylon papers, you name it. Some are bending and one would hardly stand inside them. Basic infrastructure is a rare commodity. No sign of service provision by the authorities is visible. The toilets have wings. The dumping sites go along the rugged streets which also serve as the toilets' nests. People from all parts of the country converge here. They are not recognised by the government. They are partners in suffering. They are the majority in most of our urban areas. This is the story of slums. *Korogocho* is one of them.<sup>17</sup>

Another description definition is given by Moschetti, a missionary who ministered in Nairobi's *vijji*:

(...) the common elements [of the slums *vijji*] (...) are: groups of irregular construction put together with crude materials, e.g. flattened metal drums, unplanned structures, lacking even a minimum of preliminary infrastructures, a dense population living in over-crowded hovels which are very temporary because they are illegally built in unhealthy outlying land areas unsuited for house-construction purposes, people who live from day-to-day without steady work or simply survive in informal and illegal earning methods.<sup>18</sup>

In fact the overwhelming insecurity has some ethnic background:

After weeks marked by tension, violent clashes, killings, rioting and looting, residents of Kenya's biggest slum, Kibera, have slowly begun rebuilding their lives. But even as an anxious calm returned this week, deep-rooted tensions remain in the sprawling suburb, home to hundreds of thousands of people. 'Much as fighting has stopped, we are still afraid that violence might rear its ugly neck again.' Rajab

<sup>17</sup> J. OLOUCHI, "The Lighter Side of Darkness", 43.

<sup>18</sup> D. MOSCHETTI, *Urban Ministry in Africa*, 18.

Karim, one of the residents, told IRIN on Wednesday. 'The issue of house rents, which was at the centre of the clashes, has not found a lasting solution,' he added. Early this week, riot police could be seen patrolling sections of the slum's 10 villages: Soweto, Mashimoni, Silanga, Makina, Lindi, Kisumu Ndogo, Kianda, Laini Saba, Gatuikira and Gatekera. The violence which rocked Kibera was triggered by a feud between landlords and tenants over uncontrolled rents for slum dwellings in an overpopulated suburb with few services and amenities, and wholly inadequate water and sanitation.<sup>4</sup>

The present situation of Nairobi's informal settlements is described in the following article:

Nairobi's informal settlements (...) reflect the end result of the unjust land distribution (...). According to Jane Weru, executive director of Pamoja Trust, a non-profit trust organization that advocates for the rights of slum dwellers, 55 percent of Nairobi's population lives in informal settlements found on one percent of the residential land area. In a city of approximately 2.5 million, that amounts to just over one million people who live in places such as Mathare, Korogocho, and Kibera. The United Nations estimates that residential densities can reach 250 units per hectare in these areas as opposed to 15 units per hectare in Karen, Loresho, and other high-income suburbs. Because they are largely squatters, people living in these areas are constantly vulnerable to being chased away from their homes by the government, which owns the land. Weru estimates that, between 1995 and 2000, 23 communities in Nairobi were faced with evictions. 'Evictions are very violent,' says Weru. 'People have gotten killed and injured. Social networks are broken, because people have to move away... Children stop going to school, and often move to a place where there is no school. People lose their jobs... You are out in the rain and the cold.' She says that many times, people return from work to find their homes bulldozed and their remaining possessions, three-quarters of which would have been stolen, scattered about on the streets.

<sup>4</sup> IRINNEWS.ORG, "Focus on Clashes in Kibera Slum, Nairobi". 1.

<sup>5</sup> C. MAJTENYI, "Poor Stewardship Leads to Human Rights Abuses". 1.

## APPENDIX V: CITATIONS ABOUT ANTIOCH GRAECO- ROMAN CITY

### Living conditions in Antioch:

Some [water] was also piped to the homes of the very rich. But, for the rest of the residents, water had to be carried home in jugs. This necessarily greatly limited the use of water. There could have been very little for scrubbing floors or washing clothes. Nor could there have been much for bathing, and [...] [doubtingly] public baths truly served the public in the inclusive sense.<sup>176</sup>

Given limited water and means of sanitation, and incredible density of humans and animals, most people in Greco-Roman cities [like Antioch] must have lived in filth beyond our imagining. Tenement cubicles were smoky, dark, often damp, and always dirty. The smell of sweat, urine, feces, and decay permeated everything. Outside, on the street it was little better – mud, open sewers, manure, and crowds. In fact human corpses – adult as well as infant – were sometimes just pushed into the street and abandoned.<sup>177</sup>

### Social conditions in Antioch:

Any accurate portrait of Antioch in New Testament times must depict a city filled with misery, danger, fear, despair, and hatred. Antioch was a city where the average family lived squalid a life in filthy and cramped quarters, where at least half of the children died at birth or during infancy, and where most of the children who lived lost at least one parent before reaching maturity. This city was filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers. This city was so lacking in stable networks of attachments that petty incidents could prompt mob violence. Crime flourished and the streets were dangerous at night. And, perhaps above all, Antioch was repeatedly smashed by cataclysmic catastrophes. A resident could expect literally to be homeless from time to time, providing that he or she was among the survivors.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>176</sup> R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 193.

<sup>177</sup> R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 194.

<sup>178</sup> R. STARK, "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel", 198.