

## The Sabbath Law Controversy between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism (Matt 11:28-12:14 and 24:20)<sup>1)</sup>

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### Introduction

This paper studies the view of the law in the Matthean Community as reflected in the passages containing the Sabbath laws (Matt 11:28-12:14 and 24:20), and in the social conflicts between similar groups. The important factors of the Matthean Community and its development were “the competition and conflict with so-called formative Judaism.”<sup>2)</sup> After the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (70 C.E), while the Matthean community and formative Judaism were reinterpreting

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- 1) This paper is an updated excerpt of my unpublished Th. M. thesis that was submitted to Yonsei University United Graduate School of Theology. I thank Dr. Donald Kinder for polishing my English.
- 2) J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 2; here formative Judaism was a precursor of rabbinic Judaism that appeared in around 200 C.E and made “the statement that Israel had lost its land by reason of sin but could regain it by means of atonement and reconciliation, so restoring Adam to the place that the Creator had prepared for him and her.” Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Types of Authority in Formative Christianity and Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1999), 11.

the law,<sup>3)</sup> they “most actively ordered and defined their life and beliefs.”<sup>4)</sup> Because they regarded the temple and law as primary in their religious life, they shared “the same cultural context, and, in short, inhabit the same world.”<sup>5)</sup>

Although the Sabbath law as a central part of Jewish faith is important for the understanding of the Matthean Community and its social context, the law has received less attention than the laws in the sermon on the mountain (5:17-18). The attitude of Jesus toward the Sabbath law shows the social situation of the Matthean Community that was struggling with formative Judaism.<sup>6)</sup> In fact, many scholars indicated that it became a more crucial part in Judaism after the Jerusalem temple was destroyed.<sup>7)</sup> Therefore, instead of investigating how historical Jesus interpreted the Sabbath law, I will argue how the Matthean community interprets the Sabbath law and how its viewpoint functions for establishing the community’s identity.

## 1. The Sabbath Law and Labor (Matt 11:28-12:8)

While the contents of Matthew 12:1-8 are also shared in Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5, Matthew 11:28-30 appear only

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3) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 69.

4) *Ibid.*, 2.

5) *Ibid.*, 4.

6) This paper does not focus the law interpreted by historical Jesus, but that of the Matthean Community.

7) J. Morgenstern, “Sabbath,” in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 141; Yong-Eui Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel*, vol. 139, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 140; B. E. Shafer, “Sabbath,” in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 762.

in Matthew. This section is broadly placed in Jesus' preaching between chapters 10 and 13 of Matthew. Furthermore, there is a dualistic theme circulated in Matthew chapter 11 and 12. On the one hand, the subject is Israel's unbelief and rejection of Jesus; on the other hand is Jesus' invitation and acceptance of the Gentiles.

Through the structural analysis of 11:28-30, Stephenson H. Brooks sees that 11:28-30 is separated from 12:1-8.<sup>8)</sup> However, because of his focus on 11:28-30 as Matthew's special material, he does not analyze Matthew's redactional work. Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is closely related to the Sabbath law and 11:29-30 seems to present the correct interpretation of the Sabbath law by Jesus which is compared to that of the Pharisees' interpretation that burdened the people. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus does not bind heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders (Matt 23:4), but rather gives an eschatological gift as a true rest to those who follow him. Although this interpretation is valid, when this passage is associated with the Sabbath controversy, it does not take into account the struggle of the Matthean Community with formative Judaism's interpretation of the Sabbath law. Because they acknowledged the importance of the law for their daily life, the conflict stories between the Pharisees and Jesus reflect the Matthean interpretation of the Sabbath law over against that of formative Judaism.<sup>9)</sup>

E. Schweizer compares this passage (11:28-30) to Ecclesiasticus 51:23-27 by saying that "In both texts the yoke of wisdom is associated with the promise of rest" and "It is

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8) Stephenson H. Brooks, *Matthew's Community: The Evidence of His Special Sayings Material*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 94.

9) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 70.

only Matthew who records this identification [of] Jesus with wisdom.”<sup>10)</sup> According to Schweizer, while Matthew’ Jesus gives people a true rest, “the individual commandments of Pharisaic legalism” give people burdens.<sup>11)</sup> Thus, as Richard A. Edwards indicated, if the yoke of 11:30 is the law, 12:1-8 explains what the easy and light yoke is.<sup>12)</sup> Robert K. Mciver also points out that 11:28-30 is linked to 12:1-4 in three ways:

(a) Matt 12:1-14 follows immediately on 11:28-30, (b) the rest Jesus promises in 11:28 fits thematically with the “rest” of the Sabbath, and (c) the phrase  $\nu\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota, \nu\omega\tau\omega\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\omega\tau\omega\varsigma$  (12:1a), unique to Matthew, underlines the connection between the saying and the incident following.<sup>13)</sup>

By placing the true rest and Jesus’ interpretation of the Sabbath together, Schweitzer, Edwards, and Mciver suggest that 11:28-30 and 12:1-14 are closely connected. As Matthew’s special material, 11:28-30 functions to not only introduce the following Sabbath controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees, but also to explain the true interpretation of the Sabbath law in the Matthean Community.<sup>14)</sup> Therefore, both passages (11:28-30 and 12:1-14) can be read in the Sabbath law controversy.

Like Luke, Matthew takes 12:1-8 from Mark’s story, but modifies it according to the need of the Matthean Community. Matthew’s attitude toward the Sabbath law is interesting when

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10) Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 272.

11) Ibid.

12) Richard A. Edward, *Matthew’s Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 42.

13) Robert K. Mciver, "The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew: A Paradigm for Understanding the Law in Matthew?," *Andrew University Seminary Studies* 33, no. 2 (Autumn 1995), 234.

14) Ibid., see 235.

I compare these three Gospels' texts (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew explains the reason for the disciples' eating heads of grain on the Sabbath. They were hungry so they ate the heads of grain on the Sabbath. In Luke and Mark, however, there is no explanation for the actions of the disciples (Luke 6:1, Mark 2:23). In Matthew, when the Pharisees blame Jesus for the disciples' cutting the heads of grain, Jesus defends the acts of his disciples with the examples of David who ate the bread of the Presence. Although it was originally not lawful for David nor for those who were with him to eat, David and his companions were not blamed because of their hunger. By doing so, Jesus claims the innocence of his disciples' eating the heads of grain because they were hungry as were David and his companions (Matt 12:2-4). Matthew must have known David's story in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. In Samuel's story, however, there is no allusion to the Sabbath day when David and his companions ate the bread of the Presence. Here, the matter was related to the purity law, not the Sabbath law. Mark reports the name of the high priest as Abiathar (2:26), but Matthew, who knows well the Old Testament, modifies Mark's mistake.<sup>15)</sup> In Mark, there is no specific explanation of the relationship between the breaking of the Sabbath law and eating the bread of the Presence, so in order to aid Mark's insufficient explanation, Matthew inserts, "have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless?" (12:5). This verse parallels "something greater than the temple is here"(12:6).<sup>16)</sup> Indeed, Matthew quotes this verse from Numbers 28:9-10 where priests offer the burnt offering of every Sabbath,

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15) Pan-Im Kim, "A Comparison between Qumran Community and Jesus regarding the Sabbath Law," *Theological Studies* 58 (2011), 54.

16) Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 223.

which justifies the disciples' acts on the Sabbath. Furthermore, Matthew reinterprets the Pharisees' Sabbath law in the perspective of Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." Based on this interpretation, the disciples' acts do not profane the Sabbath law. As the priests are guiltless, the disciples are also innocent. This view indicates that the Matthean Community observed the Sabbath law, which is clear if one may compare Matthew's story with that of Mark.

By adding 12:5-7, Matthew vindicates the disciples' acts on the Sabbath, but this is more proper in Mark's case than that of Matthew. By adding Mark 2:25-26, Mark clearly suggests the justification of breaking the Sabbath law, and Matthew seems to follow Mark's attitude toward it. Although investigating the context of the disciples' hunger, it is hard to explain why Matthew deletes Mark's affirmation in nullifying the Sabbath law in 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." In this regard, J. D. Kingsbury indicates the different position toward the Jewish law between Mark and Matthew. For Mark's community, whatever Mark's written place, Mark's community is free from the law and the Pharisees traditions, so Jesus in the Gospel of Mark abolishes the Sabbath law as he does other Jewish law. The law is no longer a matter of faith for Mark's community. Therefore, while Jesus declares that "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" in Mark, Matthew omits this affirmation because it is too radical for the Matthean Community. As Overman, Kingsbury, and Schweizer agreed, the Matthean Community contains the validity of the law in the community life.<sup>17)</sup> Schweizer explains the reason that Matthew deletes Mark 2:27 which attributes to Mark's free interpretation of God's law. According to him, in the Matthean Community, "the Sabbath is still strictly kept or at least was kept for a long time."<sup>18)</sup>

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17) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 82.

Through Schweitzer's point, I argue that the Matthean Community observes the Sabbath law rather than makes a disposal of it. Matthew declares that his community is a true interpreter of the law. Overman also emphasizes this fact: "Matthew stresses that the disciples of Jesus are guiltless and have not violated the law. The problem is that the Pharisees do not understand the law properly."<sup>19)</sup> In fact, Jesus and his disciples do not breach the Sabbath law because they observe the prescribed walking distance on the Sabbath law. Thus, the Pharisees do not challenge the fact that Jesus and his disciples were walking through the fields of grain on the Sabbath. According to Deuteronomy 23:25, when people go into their neighbor's standing grain, they may pluck the ears with their hand. Maurice Casey points out that "There was no generally accepted regulation prohibiting the plucking of corn on the Sabbath."<sup>20)</sup>

Although Casey's research mainly focuses on Mark and does not exactly apply for the context of Matthew, it provides general information of the Sabbath law in the first century. Based on this, he concludes that Jesus observed the Sabbath.<sup>21)</sup> He, however, disregards the fact of the disciples being hungry coming up more clearly in Matthew than in Mark. Furthermore, he does not notice the unique theological perspective on the Sabbath between the two gospels and simply concludes that Matthew copied Mark's version. In Mark, Jesus abandons the Sabbath law by saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not

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18) Eduard Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham Stanton, Issues in Religion and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 129.

19) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 81.

20) Maurice Casey, "Culture and Historicity: The Plucking of the Grain (Mark 2.23-28)," *New Testament Studies* 34, no. 1 (1988), 8.

21) *Ibid.*, 7.

man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath,” but in Matthew, the Sabbath law is still observed in his community because Matthew believed that formative Judaism did not understand it correctly.<sup>22)</sup>

## 2. The Sabbath Law and Healing (Matt 12:9-14)

As I discussed in the previous section, many scholars place 12:9-14 on the Sabbath controversy related to 12:1-8, which is an important interpretation of this story.<sup>23)</sup> In Mark, the incident in the grain field (2:23-28) and the healing of a man with a withered hand is separated. It is unclear that these two incidents occur on the same Sabbath day. In Matthew, however, the two incidents are more clearly connected. In Luke, the first case (Luke 6:1-5) and the second case (6:6-11) are clearly separated. Luke reports that Jesus cured a man with a withered hand on another Sabbath (6:6). This attitude of Mark and Luke indicate that the connection of two incidents is an unimportant matter. Indirectly Mark deals with the Sabbath observance that is not an important issue for the community. Matthew, however, is closely associating the two events.

In 12:9, Jesus’ “going on from that place” reminds the reader of the same time and place, which links the two incidents. Thus, Mciver states that “Matt. 12:9 underlines a linkage between the two Sabbath incidents; the healing took place as the next occurrence in the flow of [the] event.”<sup>24)</sup> Here, John P. Meier

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22) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 81.

23) Ibid., 80-82; John Mark Hicks, "The Sabbath Controversy in Matthew: An Exegesis of Matthew 12:1-14," *Restoration Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1984), 79-91; Mciver, "The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew," 231-43.

24) Mciver, "The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew," 240.

alleges that Jesus passed a field of grain and entered the synagogue on the same Sabbath.<sup>25)</sup> He indicates that Matthew modifies Mark's story into a more controversial discourse.<sup>26)</sup> By adding "their" to "synagogue"(12:9),<sup>27)</sup> Matthew indicates the social conflict between the Matthean Community and formative Judaism. Indeed, compared to Matthew, Mark and Luke mitigate the controversial features in their stories. While in Matthew the Pharisees ask Jesus whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath in order to accuse him, in Mark they just watch to see whether Jesus will heal the man with a withered hand, and they are silent after Jesus' question (3:6). According to Francis Wright Beare, Matthew significantly omits "Come here" (3:3) that Jesus stated to the man who had the withered hand and, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" which were words that challenged the Sabbath.<sup>28)</sup> Although Beare does not clearly explain why Matthew cuts out Mark's offensive words regarding the Sabbath, the reason that Matthew deletes Mark's words is crucial to interpreting this story. Uniquely, the Pharisees in Matthew ask Jesus "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" (12:9). In response to their question, Jesus heals the man by his word only, which may be compared to the healing of the blind man in John 9:6 where Jesus "spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay." In this regard, Mciver states, "Unlike the incident narrated in Matthew 9:6, he did not command the man to carry his pallet on the Sabbath."<sup>29)</sup> Therefore, Jesus' healing on the

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25) John P. Meier, *Matthew*, New Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1980), 130-31.

26) *Ibid.*, 130.

27) Gundry, *Matthew*, 225.

28) Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 273.

29) Mciver, "The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew," 240.

Sabbath (Matt 12:9-12) does not violate the Sabbath even in terms of “later Rabbinic strictures regarding the Sabbath.”<sup>30)</sup> Both in Mark and Luke, Jesus demonstrably asks the man with a withered hand to stand out in the middle of the crowd. Matthew omits this request. J. Gnilka states that after Jesus asks the man to step forward in order to be visible to many people, Jesus shows that he is free from the law and the Sabbath by healing the man.<sup>31)</sup> On the contrary, by deleting Mark’s description, Matthew retains the Sabbath in replying that “So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (12:12). Overman also insists that the Matthean Community observed the Sabbath in 12:1-14. He further states,

Jesus and his disciples do not break the law. They break with the Pharisees over interpretation of the law, but not with regard to its validity or importance. The law and its application in Matthew’s view, are to be understood primarily in terms of Jesus’ demand for compassion. It is this “core value” guides the application of the Sabbath laws. This is emphasized by Matthew in 12:9-14, which continues with the same theme. In this passage Jesus goes on to heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Verse 12 provides summary for the whole section starting in 12:1. That is, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath law are really not doing so. Their detractors fail to understand what the Lord really requires, as expressed in Hos. 6:6.<sup>32)</sup>

Eric Kun-Chun Wong also mentions that “The healing of the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath by Jesus (Matt 12.9-14) is an example of the primacy of mercy. So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt 12.2).<sup>33)</sup> On the other hand,

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30) Ibid.

31) Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus (Mk 1-8,26)*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommenar Zum Neuen Testament II/1 (Zürich: Benziger, 1978), 127.

32) Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 81.

Herman Waetjen argues that Jesus breaches the Sabbath law “for the sake of healing an individual with a withered hand” because “The insertion of the phrase, ‘whole as the other,’ in 12:13 indicates that the wholeness of the human being is the motivation for this teleological suspension of the Sabbath commandment.”<sup>34)</sup> As I investigated above, however, Waetjen’s point is more persuasive in Mark’s case than in Matthew’s. Therefore, it is necessary to compare Matthew’s attitude toward the Sabbath with that of formative Judaism in the late first century. According to the Jewish tradition, “the rabbis allowed aid for the sick on the Sabbath only if there was a danger of death.”<sup>35)</sup> How about saving a sheep on the Sabbath? According to Schweizer,

Jesus’ almost automatic assumption that the Law permits a man to rescue his sheep from a well contradicts the rabbis and Essenes (CD xi.13-14). They allow men to be rescued only when they are in peril of their lives; in the case of animals, the most that is allowed is assisting them to escape by themselves.<sup>36)</sup>

Unlike Schweizer, however, the Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel presents a different interpretation of the Sabbath by stating that “The Sabbath is given unto you, not you unto the Sabbath” and “There is nothing more important, according to the Torah, than to preserve human life. . . Even when there is the slightest possibility that a life may be at stake one may disregard every prohibition of the law.”<sup>37)</sup> His argument

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33) Eric Kun-Chun Wong, "The Matthean Understanding of the Sabbath: A Response to G. N. Stanton," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 44 (1991), 15.

34) Herman C. Waetjen, *The Origin and Destiny of Humanness: An Interpretation of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Corte Madera: Omega Books, 1976), 143-44.

35) Meier, *Matthew*, 131.

36) Schweizer, *Good News According to Matthew*, 280.

demonstrates that there were various interpretations of the Sabbath in Judaism. The Pharisees' and Jesus' interpretation of the Sabbath reflected in Matthew emphasize each group's social situation. Two groups were competing for the authority of the interpretation of the law.<sup>38)</sup> Here Matthew describes that while Jesus interprets the Sabbath in the perspective of love and mercy, the Pharisees' interpretation of the Sabbath is "a deification of the law."<sup>39)</sup> The Pharisees are merciless and hypocritical because they disregard "the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith" (Matt 23:23). For them, to observe the strict Sabbath law is just to perform their righteousness before human beings. Waetjen reports that Matthew 27:62-66 indicts their hypocrisy in that they transgressed the Sabbath. According to Waetjen:

"On the following day which is after their preparation" the chief priests and the Pharisees approach Pilate in order to request that the tomb in which Jesus has been buried be sealed and guarded. . . . The Pharisees, by conducting this business with Gentiles, are transgressing the same commandment they accused Jesus of breaking when he restored a withered arm on the Sabbath and they in reaction began to plot his destruction (12:14). Furthermore, in addressing Pilate, the representative of Rome and Roman oppression, as "Lord," the title which the Jews reserved for God alone, they reveal their alienation.<sup>40)</sup>

Therefore, the Matthean Community defends that Jesus did not breach the Sabbath. Instead he restored the original meaning of the Sabbath focusing on mercy that formative Judaism had

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37) Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984; repr., 10th), 17.

38) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 89.

39) Heschel, *Sabbath*, 17.

40) Waetjen, *Origin and Destiny of Humanness*, 250-51.

not applied to the law. As Overman indicated, “both groups laid claim to the law and accused the other of distorting it.”<sup>41)</sup>

### 3. The Sabbath and Flight (Matthew 24:20)

Many scholars agree that Matthew 24 is dealing with the persecution of Christians and the last judgment.<sup>42)</sup> Matthew chapter 24 and 25 follow the structure of Mark chapter 13. The story of Matthew 24:15-28 almost restates Mark 13:14-23. Matthew 24:20 encourages Christians to pray their escape may not be “in winter or on a Sabbath.” Unlike Mark, however, Matthew adds Sabbath” into Mark’s “Pray that it may not happen in winter” (Mark 13:18). This proves Mark’s free attitude toward the Sabbath and also Matthew’s position for observing the Sabbath. Based on Matthew 24:20, G. Barth, Schweizer, and Daniel Patte conclude that the Matthean Community observes the Sabbath, though it is “no longer as strictly as in the Rabbinate.”<sup>43)</sup> Contrary to them, K. R. Snodgrass, Meier, and Yong-Eui Yang argue that Matthew 24:20 emphasize the situation of persecution rather than the sensibility toward the law.<sup>44)</sup> For whether majority of non-Christians or minority Christian, both winter season and the Sabbath day may “cause extreme difficulties in their flight because of “lack

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41) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 89.

42) Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 461-73; Meier, *Matthew*, 276-90; Schweizer, *Good News According to Matthew*, 449-58; Gundry, *Matthew*, 483.

43) G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 91-92; see Schweizer, *Good News According to Matthew*, 452 and Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 339.

44) Meier, *Matthew*, 284.

of operating their regular services.”<sup>45)</sup> Accordingly, in their estimation, although the Matthean Community did not observe the Sabbath, because of the Sabbath observance of the majority of his society, Matthew encourages his members to pray for their flight not on Sabbath or in winter. Here, both are the same obstacles for people’s flight.<sup>46)</sup> Likewise, G. N. Stanton interprets that Matthew inserts “your flight” and “on a Sabbath” in 24:20 to avoid Jewish persecution. He further states:

So it seems likely that in the immediate aftermath of the Jewish war the Matthean community feared (rightly or wrong) that since flight on the Sabbath would provoke further hostility from some Jewish leaders, it was to be avoided if at all possible. Sociological studies have shown that it is common for a minority group which has parted company with its parent body to exaggerate the threat posed by its rival. This may well have happened in the Matthean Community.<sup>47)</sup>

He attempts to explain the social situation of the Matthean Community in 24:20, which describes the Jewish persecution. However, Stanton overlooks Matthew’s interpretation of the Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-12, in which I have already discussed the legitimization of the Sabbath. By responding to Stanton, Wong argues that in Matthew 24:15-22, the persecutors are not the Jewish leaders, but the Gentile Romans.<sup>48)</sup> After investigating the historical situation of Mark 13:14-20 and Matthew 24:15-22, he insists that Mark and Matthew did not

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45) Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel*, 240.

46) Davies, *Matthew*, 168.

47) Graham N. Stanton, "'Pray That Your Flight May Not Be in Winter or on a Sabbath' (Matthew 24:20)," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37 (1989), 26.

48) Eric Kun-Chun Wong, "The Matthean Understanding of the Sabbath: A Response to G. N. Stanton," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 44 (1991), 13.

experience persecution from the Jewish leaders and they did not expect their future persecution from the Jews. According to him, the author of Mark knew the persecution of Caligula (AD 36-41) and in his reflection of it, he wrote Mark before the destruction of Jerusalem by Romans. Thus, “The Jews were by no means the persecutors in Mk. 13:14-20.”<sup>49)</sup> Likewise, Matthew knew the destruction of Jerusalem temple by Romans and that their members were confronting serious persecution by Domitian (AD 81-96). In addition, Wong states that because “The Jewish religious leaders lost their political power after the Jewish war,” they had no power to persecute Christians who observe the Sabbath in the Matthean Community.<sup>50)</sup> Thus, Matthew 24:20 does not reflect the Jewish persecution, but Matthew’s observance on the Sabbath. Therefore, Wong concludes that although in the Matthean Community the central ethics of Matthew are “to do the will of God” (Matt 7.21-27), “The double commandments of love (Matt 22.34-40) and the golden rule (7.2)” and “notion of mercy (Matt 12.7),”<sup>51)</sup> the Sabbath law is kept because “Matthew wants to keep the community intact by taking care of the ‘weak’ ones (who might hesitate to flee even at the critical time), as Paul in 1 Cor. 9.22.”<sup>52)</sup>

However, although Wong’s arguments provide insights for understanding the social situation of Matthew 24:20 and the role of the Sabbath in the Matthean Community, he disregards an important transition of formative Judaism in the post-70 period. Overman points out that by describing Jesus’ hostility towards the Jewish leadership, Matthew reflects the conflict between formative Judaism and the Matthean Community.<sup>53)</sup>

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49) Ibid., 12.

50) Ibid., 13-14.

51) Ibid., 16.

52) Ibid., 17.

As a minority group in Judaism, the Matthean Community may confront persecution from formative Judaism and Romans for “Throughout the Gospel the contention with and response to formative Judaism...are clear.”<sup>54)</sup>

## Conclusion

In the Sabbath law, Matthew describes Jesus as an ideal interpreter and observer of the law who can understand its original meanings. By this, the Matthean Community demonstrates its superior authority in interpreting the law to that of formative Judaism. For this, first, Matthew construes that the Sabbath day is 'the rest day' and claims that the Pharisees distort the true meaning of the Sabbath day to be another heavy laden day (Matt 11:28-30). Matthew, unlike Luke, also interprets that grain-eating-act and healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day are not transgressions from the view of love as written in Hosea 6:6. The writer of Matthew insists that healing on the Sabbath is, rather, the essence of the law because it is the act of love. Further evidence that the Matthean Community observes the Sabbath day is reflected in Matthew 24:20, which says "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath."

In Matthew, what Jesus opposes is not the law of Moses and the tradition of the elders, but the interpretation on the law of the Pharisees. Jesus refers to the tradition of Moses and the elders with positive, or at least neutral terms, but he calls the tradition of Pharisees 'your tradition' implying his hostile attitude. This evidences the conflict between the Matthean

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53) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 3-5.

54) *Ibid.*, 141.

Community and formative Judaism. The conflict might begin with inner-group conflict and then change into inter-group conflicts. After all, the two communities also made certain of the groups' boundaries and clearly defined their identities by using the interpretation of the Sabbath law. Therefore, in conflicting with formative Judaism, the Matthean Community validates the Sabbath law by claiming that it possesses the true authority to interpret the law, and identifying itself as “the true Israel.”<sup>55)</sup>

**<Key Words>**

Sabbath Law, the Matthean Community, Formative Judaism, Matthew 11:28-12:14, Matthew 24:20, Interpretation of the Law

**<주요어>**

안식일법, 마태공동체, 형성기의 유대교, 마태복음 11:28-12:14, 마태복음 24:20, 율법의 해석

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55) Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 148; In addition, this Matthean attitude to the Sabbath indicates that the main audience of Matthew was Jews who had strong affinity to the Jewish law and culture.

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<Abstract>

## The Sabbath Law Controversy between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism (Matt 11:28-12:14 and 24:20)

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In Matthew 11:28-12:14 and 24:20, the Sabbath law controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees reflect the community's social situation. While the Matthean community competes and conflicts with formative Judaism, it interprets the Sabbath day as 'the rest day' and claims that formative Judaism misinterprets the true meanings of the Sabbath day as another heavy laden day (Matt 11:28-30). Matthew, unlike Luke, also interprets grain-eating-act and healing with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath day in the view of love as written in Hosea 6:6 by arguing that healing on Sabbath is the essence of the law. Further evidence that the Matthean Community observes the Sabbath day appears in Matthew 24:20, "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath." In Matthew, Jesus does not oppose the law of Moses and the tradition of the elders, but the interpretation of the law of the Pharisees. In this regard, Jesus shows his hostile attitude toward the Pharisees which represent formative Judaism. This evidences that the conflicts between the Matthean Community and formative Judaism begin with inner-group conflicts and then change into inter-group conflicts. When the two communities make the groups' boundaries and define their identities, both use the

interpretation of the Sabbath law. Therefore, by claiming the true authority to interpret the law, and identifying itself as “the true Israel,” the Matthean Community validates the Sabbath law.

<초록>

## 마태공동체와 형성기의 유대교의 안식일 논쟁 (마 11:28-12:14, 24:20)

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마태복음 11장 28절-12장 14절과 24장 20절에 나오는 예수와 바리새인들 사이의 안식일 논쟁은 마태공동체가 형성기의 유대교와 투쟁 하는 사회적 정황을 보여준다. 마태는 안식일이 참된 ‘쉽의 날’이라고 규정하고, 바리새인들이 안식일의 참된 의미를 무거운 고역의 날로 바꿨다고 주장한다(마 11:28-30). 누가와는 달리 마태는 밀 이삭을 먹는 행위와 안식일에 손 마른 사람을 고치는 행위는 호세아 6장 6절에 근거한 사랑의 관점에서 보면 안식일을 범한 것이 아니라고 해석한다. 마태는 안식일에 치유하는 것은 사랑의 행위이기 때문에 정확하게 율법의 본질을 실천한 것이라고 주장한다. 마태공동체가 안식일을 준수했다는 또 다른 증거는 안식일에 도망가지 않도록 기도 하라는 마태복음 24장 20절에 반영되어 있다. 마태가 반대한 것은 모세의 율법과 장로들의 전통이 아니라 형성기의 유대교의 율법 해석이다. 그래서 마태의 예수는 형성기의 유대교를 대표하는 바리새인들에 대해서는 적대적인 태도를 취한다. 이것은 마태공동체와 형성기의 바리새파 공동체 사이의

갈등이 내부 갈등에서 외부 갈등으로 시작되는 것을 보여주는 증거이다. 결국에 두 공동체는 안식일에 대한 해석을 통해서 자신들이 속한 공동체의 경계와 정체성을 확립한다. 그러므로 형성기의 유대교와의 갈등 속에서 마태 공동체는 자기를 참된 이스라엘로 규정하고 마태공동체가 율법을 해석하는 참된 권위를 가졌음을 주장함으로써 안식일 법 준수의 정당성을 확인한다.