

JOHN R. MARKLEY

# Peter – Apocalyptic Seer

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

348

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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John R. Markley

# Peter – Apocalyptic Seer

The Influence of the Apocalypse Genre  
on Matthew's Portrayal of Peter

Mohr Siebeck

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*For Anna  
and Caroline*



## Preface

This book is a slightly revised version of my PhD thesis, submitted to the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh in 2012. I would like to thank my thesis examiners, Dr. John Dennis and Dr. Matthew Novenson, for their helpful comments about my work. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Jörg Frey and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki for accepting this monograph into the WUNT II series. I am grateful for the editorial work of the late Prof. Dr. Friedrich Avemarie, who read the manuscript and recommended it for acceptance into the series.

Translations of Scripture generally follow the NRSV, but are sometimes slightly modified from the NRSV; sometimes they are my own. Translations of the apocalypses are from “The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” edited by James H. Charlesworth. However, translations of *1 Enoch*, when different, follow those found in “1 Enoch 1,” by George W. E. Nickelsburg. For the *Shepherd of Hermas*, translations and versification follow “The Apostolic Fathers, 3rd ed.,” edited by Michael W. Holmes.

During my time in Edinburgh, I enjoyed the hospitality of Scotty and Rebecca Manor, Sean and Leah Turchin, and Jeremy and Katy Kidwell. I am very thankful for their willingness to open their homes and share their lives with me. I am especially indebted to Scotty, whose encouragement and camaraderie kept me going at points.

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She has waited patiently for our journey to finally arrive at this point, and now that we are here, I take delight in thanking my wife Anna for all that she is to me and all that she has done to support my work. She has spent many evenings, weekends, and entire months alone while I was away working on this project. Her encouragement has fueled my work from the beginning and helped it to its completion. Her own work has made this research possible. I

love you Anna! I would also like to thank my parents, Robert and Janet Markley, whose love cultivated within me a desire to learn from Scripture and to pursue wisdom and understanding.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to God, who has filled my life with purpose, and whose word gives meaning to all things.

John R. Markley  
Wheaton, Illinois  
May, 2013

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The present study endeavors to make a contribution to one of the most thoroughly covered subjects in the field of New Testament Studies: Peter in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>1</sup> This study will approach the evidence from a different direction than has normally been taken – from the angle of Jewish and early-Christian apocalypticism. This approach arises from the conviction that the apocalypses, as a prime literary genre for expressions of apocalypticism and apocalyptic eschatology, were a substantial component of the literary milieu in which Matthew and his sources wrote. For this reason, it is valid to investigate the influence that the apocalypses might have had on Matthew’s portrayal of Peter. When the evidence is approached from this angle, the portrait of Peter in the Gospel of Matthew is seen through somewhat different eyes than in previous studies, and so confronts its admirers with unfamiliar lucidity. In this way, the present study will provide a constructive critique of the predominant conclusions of recent scholarship, which have not sufficiently accounted for the influence of the apocalypse genre on Matthew’s portrayal of Peter. The thesis of this research is that the portrayal of Peter in the Gospel of Matthew has been shaped by the generic portrayal of apocalyptic seers.

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<sup>1</sup> That Burgess could compile an 82 page *selective* bibliography on Matt 16:17–19 alone – which could be greatly extended since its compilation – indicates both the high interest in the figure of Simon Peter and the centrality of this passage (and the Gospel of Matthew) for questions about him (Joseph A. Burgess, *A History of the Exegesis of Matthew 16:17–19 from 1781 to 1965* [Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1976]). Scholarly focus on this passage is justified on account of its significance since the Reformation, its uniqueness to Matthew, and the importance of the Gospel of Matthew in early Christianity. On the last point, Massaux says, “Of all the New Testament writings, the Gospel of Mt. was the one whose literary influence was the most widespread and the most profound in the Christian literature that extended to the last decades of the second century...Until the end of the second century, the first gospel remained the gospel par excellence...The Gospel of Matthew was, therefore, the normative fact of Christian life. It created the background for ordinary Christianity” (Édouard Massaux, *The Apologists and the Didache* [ed. Arthur J. Bellinzoni; vol. 3 of *The Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew on Christian Literature Before Saint Irenaeus*; trans. Norman J. Belval and Suzanne Hecht; New Gospel Studies 5/3; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993], 186–87). See also Wolf-Dietrich Köhler, *Die Rezeption des Matthäus-evangeliums in der Zeit vor Irenäus* (WUNT 2.24; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987).

## A. The Problem of Peter in Matthew

In 1979, Jack Kingsbury argued that the figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel had become a theological problem.<sup>2</sup> He based this judgment on the fact that redaction critics had arrived at two divergent estimations of the Matthean Peter. One view, associated primarily with Reinhart Hummel, held that Matthew portrayed Peter as "supreme Rabbi," who functioned as guarantor of the claim that Matthew's community practiced halakah originating from Jesus himself:

Die Kirche als ganze ist Bewahrerin der Tradition und Inhaberin der Lehr- und Disziplinargewalt; darüber hinaus ist Petrus beides in besonderer und einmaliger Weise, als "supreme Rabbi." Dabei liegt auf dem Amt des Petrus das ungleich größere Gewicht. Denn er ist für Matthäus der Garant der in seinem Evangelium schriftlich fixierten Tradition, die damit bleibende Gültigkeit erhält.<sup>3</sup>

The other view, associated primarily with Georg Strecker, held that Matthew portrayed Peter as a "typical disciple," with the result that Peter is a type of the individual disciple in Matthew's community:

Die Gestalt des Petrus sprengt den Rahmen der historischen Einmaligkeit der Leben-Jesu-Situation; sie hat primär nicht historische, sondern typologische Bedeutung; in ihr konkretisiert sich das Christsein des einzelnen in der Gemeinde, für das demnach das Nebeneinander von "negativen" und "positiven" Elementen charakteristisch zu sein scheint.<sup>4</sup>

As Kingsbury saw it, these divergent views indicated a methodological flaw in redaction criticism, because both views had failed to fully integrate their reconstructed portraits of Peter with Matthew's larger theological concerns – hence his identification of Peter in Matthew as a "theological problem." Pro-

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<sup>2</sup>Jack D. Kingsbury, "The Figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel as a Theological Problem," *JBL* 98 (1979): 67–83.

<sup>3</sup>Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium* (BEvT 33; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1963), 63, who was followed by Günther Bornkamm, "The Authority to 'Bind' and 'Loose' in the Church in Matthew's Gospel," in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (ed. Graham Stanton; IRT 3; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 92–95. The *supreme rabbi* view is scarcely maintained in more recent scholarship. Notably, this is the position of William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2 (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 2:647–52. Though they clarify that "Peter's prominence seems to be a function of ecclesiology" on account of his concentrated prominence in 13:53–17:27 (*ibid.*, 2:649), and that "there is a sense in which Peter's primacy reflects his rôle in salvation-history," which is analogous to that of Abraham (*ibid.*, 2:651). Jesper Svartvik, "Matthew and Mark," in *Matthew and His Christian Contemporaries* (ed. David C. Sim and Boris Repschinski; LNTS 333; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 43–45, has more recently espoused the *supreme rabbi* view.

<sup>4</sup>Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (3rd ed.; FRLANT 82; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 205.

viding an initial attempt at such integration, Kingsbury concluded that the *supreme rabbi* view attributed too weighty a role to Peter, as uniquely distinct from the other disciples, and also ignored Jesus' statements elsewhere that seemed to impinge upon this view;<sup>5</sup> at the same time, he concluded that the *typical disciple* view neglected an apparent special focus on Peter in Matthew's Gospel. He argued for a position somewhere between the two: Peter was indeed portrayed as a typical disciple, yet he was also portrayed as having unique salvation-historical primacy. The significance of this for Matthew's community is captured when Kingsbury says,

For them [i.e., Matthew's church], Peter is of course a man of the past. His place is with the earthly disciples of Jesus, whose ministry, like that of John and of Jesus, was to Israel...He was the "first" one called by Jesus to be his disciple, and hence enjoyed a primacy among the Twelve that is salvation-historical in character. As such, he was the "spokesman" of the disciples and can be regarded as "typical," positively and negatively, both of them and of subsequent followers of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

Kingsbury states that the typical aspect of Peter's portrayal had an exemplary function for Matthew's church:

[S]ince it is common knowledge that the disciples in the first gospel are representative of the members of Matthew's church, we recognize that Strecker is correct in asserting that the figure of Peter in Matthew's gospel provides the Christians of Matthew's church with an example of what it means, either positively or negatively, to be a follower of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

In Kingsbury's judgment, then, Matthew's church viewed Peter as a positive and negative example of discipleship, but also as unique in that he retained a position of salvation-historical primacy, being the first to follow Jesus, thus representing their tradition-historical link to him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> However, Hummel does acknowledge that Peter can be conceived of as "supreme Rabbi" only in view of the qualifications of 23:8–12: "Das gilt freilich nur mit der in 23, 8–12 genannten Einschränkung" (Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung*, 63). Further, Hummel seems to recognize a degree of typicality in Matthew's portrayal of Peter: "Wie bei Markus und Lukas ist er der Repräsentant und Sprecher der Zwölf" (ibid., 59).

<sup>6</sup> Kingsbury, "Figure of Peter," 80.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>8</sup> Kingsbury's middle-ground position was already anticipated in some ways by Kähler, who maintains a tension between the unique and typical aspects of Peter's portrayal: "Die kurze Analyse der Petrusgestalt im Matth.-ev. und die Bedeutung seiner Pendants im jüdhellenistischen Schrifttum erweisen, daß sich die typologische und die heilsgeschichtliche Stellung des Petrus in der Sicht des Matth. nicht gegeneinander ausspielen lassen. Der Protapostolos ist sicher einerseits Repräsentant der Jünger und damit auch Urbild des 'wider-spruchsvollen Seins des Christen', aber seine heilsgeschichtliche Funktion als Garant der treuen Überlieferung der Offenbarung darf deswegen nicht heruntergespielt werden" (Christoph Kähler, "Zur Form- und Traditionsgeschichte von Matth. xvi. 17–19," *NTS* 23 [1976–77]: 56). Note, however, Kingsbury's many points of contention with Kähler's thesis (Kingsbury, "Figure of Peter," 75 n. 26).

Kingsbury's appeal for greater theological synthesis marked a transition in studies of the Matthean Peter from redaction- to narrative-critical methodology.<sup>9</sup> This transition, however, has not left the essential questions posed by redaction criticism behind.<sup>10</sup> For example, reacting to the biographical approach of historical-criticism,<sup>11</sup> redaction critics recognized that the Evangelists had their own perceptions and understanding of Peter.<sup>12</sup> Their analyses of Matthew's *Tendenzen* entailed other questions about what significance or function this portrayal was meant to have for Matthew's church or community. Narrative studies of Peter in Matthew have likewise continued to address these questions, but have based their answers to them, following Kingsbury's lead, on a more holistic reading of Peter within the entire literary-theological work.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, narrative studies have followed Kingsbury's lead not only in their aims for integration and synthesis of Peter's portrait with the Gospel as a whole, but they have also generally concurred with his middle-ground conclusions – what will be referred to as the *modified typical disciple view*. The *modified typical disciple view*, which recognizes the tension between Peter's uniqueness, on the one hand, and his typicality (and exemplary function), on

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<sup>9</sup> The transition towards greater synthesis and integration of the portrait of Peter with the whole literary work was already evident, however, in Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Petri Merenlahti and Raimo Hakola, "Reconceiving Narrative Criticism," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (ed. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni; JSNTSup 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 22–23.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr* (trans. Floyd V. Filson; London: SCM, 1953). Following Cullmann, other noteworthy historical investigations have been: Brown, Donfried, and Reumann, *Peter in the New Testament*; Rudolf Pesch, *Simon Petrus: Geschichte und geschichtliche Bedeutung des ersten Jüngers Jesu Christi* (Päpste und Papstum 15; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1980); Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter: from Galilee to Rome* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986); PHEME Perkins, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (SPNT; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); John P. Meier, *Companions and Competitors* (vol. 3 of *A Marginal Jew*; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 221–45; James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (vol. 2 of *Christianity in the Making*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1058–76; Martin Hengel, *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle* (*Der unterschätzte Petrus. Zwei Studien*; trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Markus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter* (WUNT 262; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); idem, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> On the relationship of redaction criticism to historical questions pertaining to Peter, see Brown, Donfried, and Reumann, *Peter in the New Testament*, 8–11.

<sup>13</sup> Redaction criticism has remained a useful tool for many narrative studies of Peter in Matthew. E.g., Perkins, *Peter*, 52–80; Kari Syreeni, "Peter as a Character and Symbol in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (ed. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni; JSNTSup 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 108.

the other, has indeed achieved something of a consensus.<sup>14</sup> The consensus can be traced through the respective works of Michael J. Wilkins, Pheme Perkins, Kari Syreeni, and Timothy Wiarda.<sup>15</sup>

### 1. Michael J. Wilkins

Wilkins' work, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel*, includes a substantial chapter specifically focused on Matthew's theological understanding of Peter.<sup>16</sup> He affirms Kingsbury's conclusion that Peter's uniqueness for Matthew and Matthew's church is found in his place of salvation-historical primacy:

Peter is advanced as a salvation-historical model. He is the first disciple called (4:18), the first among the disciple[s]/apostles (10:2), and the first member of the church (16:17–19). He is the first to go through Jesus as the bridge from Israel to the church. He is, therefore, personally prominent as a link between the OT promises of the messianic kingdom and salvation, and their fulfillment in the New Testament. Peter is an illustrative Jewish individual who has made the salvation-historical transition from Israel to the church.<sup>17</sup>

Although Wilkins is primarily affirming Peter's uniqueness in the above quotation, his use of the phrase "salvation-historical *model*," and his statement that "Peter is an *illustrative* Jewish individual," perhaps indicate how closely he relates Peter's uniqueness and typicality.<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere, Wilkins more forcefully asserts the typical aspect of Peter's portrait in Matthew, arguing that Peter provides an individualized portrayal of what is true of the other disciples:

Jesus creates a new community where all disciples are brothers, and Jesus alone is their teacher and Master. This is why the strengths and weaknesses of Peter are portrayed. Just like all the other disciples, Peter has strengths and weaknesses and is instructed by Jesus so that he can progress and understand Jesus' mission.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Though within this general consensus view variation is present. For example, not all emphasize Peter's salvation-historical primacy. The label, *modified typical disciple view*, is being employed only as a heuristic term; this is not the name of a position that scholars have given themselves or ascribed to. It is the name being used to identify scholars who, following Kingsbury's article, maintain a tension between the unique and typical aspects of Peter's portrayal, and who see his function to be largely typical and exemplary for the experience of discipleship.

<sup>15</sup>Michael J. Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel: As Reflected in the Use of the Term μαθητής* (NovTSup 59; Leiden: Brill, 1988); Perkins, *Peter*; Syreeni, "Character and Symbol"; Timothy Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels: Pattern, Personality, and Relationship* (WUNT 2.127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). Kingsbury reaffirmed his conclusions in Jack D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 129–45.

<sup>16</sup>Wilkins, *Concept of Disciple*, 173–216.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>18</sup>Italics added.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 215.

Wilkins concludes that the typical aspect of Peter's portrait has an exemplary function for Matthew's church:

Peter also functions exemplarily in much the same way as do the group of disciples. In his strengths and in his weaknesses he can be an example to Matthew's church. This is why Matthew has accentuated the truly human element in Peter. The church would find much in common with Peter's typically human characteristics, and he would be the named example from among the disciples. He is much like any common believer with his highs and lows, and therefore, becomes an example from whom the church can learn.<sup>20</sup>

Wilkins, therefore, aligns himself very closely with Kingsbury in his conclusions.

## 2. *PHEME PERKINS*

Perkins' comprehensive study, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church*, includes a redaction- and narrative-critical analysis of Peter in Matthew. She understands Peter's uniqueness to be found in his place as "first" and in his function as guarantor of Jesus' teaching:

Peter is the primary figure whose understanding guarantees that the teaching preserved in the church represents what the Lord has commanded. Matthew designates him "first" in the list of Jesus' disciples (Matt. 10:2). He is the first to be called (Matt. 4:18) [citing Kingsbury]. His name "Peter" is associated with the solid foundation for the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

Perkins also underscores the typical aspect of Peter's portrait:

Despite the exalted role which Peter fills as spokesperson for the disciples and authoritative interpreter of the traditions handed down from Jesus, Matthew never separates him completely from the larger group of disciples. His persistent need for correction and instruction draws the reader's attention to his weaknesses as well as his strengths.<sup>22</sup>

Although her emphasis on Peter's function as guarantor of Jesus' teaching may seem to support the *supreme rabbi view*, she explicitly rejects that view; rather, she holds that "Peter is the basis for the tradition of Christian practice in the Matthean community," emphasizing that halakah is founded upon him, not doctrine.<sup>23</sup>

Perkins concludes that Matthew's portrayal of Peter is "complex and ambiguous," and that Peter in Matthew, as also in Mark, "always exemplifies

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Perkins, *Peter*, 66. She also thinks that Matthew's inclusion of his special material "has reinforced the positive picture of Peter suggested by his place as 'first' (Matt. 10:2) among the disciples" (ibid., 71).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 72. She further clarifies, "Peter's relationship to Jesus does not elevate him above the other disciples. Nor does it provide the basis for a hierarchical communal structure based on teachers and disciples" (ibid., 73).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 71.

what it means to be a follower of Jesus.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Perkins’ emphasis of both the unique and typical aspects of Peter’s portrait in Matthew<sup>25</sup> – seeing the typical aspect to have an exemplary function – places her firmly within the *modified typical disciple view*. Like Kingsbury and Wilkins, she sees Peter’s uniqueness as having a tradition-historical significance for Matthew’s community (based on his salvation-historical place as “first”). She distinguishes herself from them, however, with her emphasis on the tradition-historical significance of Peter’s authority in matters of halakah.

### 3. Kari Syreeni

Syreeni’s essay, “Peter as a Character and Symbol in the Gospel of Matthew,” is a detailed narrative-critical study<sup>26</sup> that distinguishes three levels on which the characterization of Peter in Matthew’s Gospel should be analyzed: aesthetic, ideological, and representational. Analysis of the aesthetic level is concerned with the narrative world wherein Peter is a character in the cohesive story of Matthew’s Gospel, giving attention to the *intratextual* elements of his portrayal such as characterization, temporal sequences, and plot development.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, Syreeni maintains that attention must also be devoted to the *intertextual* connections between Peter’s portrayal in Matthew’s narrative world, and in that of Matthew’s predecessor, Mark’s Gospel.<sup>28</sup> In this way, Peter has meaning not only as a character in Matthew’s Gospel, but as a Gospel character in relation to the Markan story.<sup>29</sup> The ideological level of analysis is concerned with the symbolic world wherein Peter is “a symbol for ethical values, doctrinal options, social and religious commitments, party strifes, or the like” in authorial, traditional, or readerly ideology.<sup>30</sup> The representational level of analysis is concerned with the “concrete world of everyday reality” wherein Peter was “a historical person, whose contribution to the Matthean character is indirect but vital; he is the *sine qua non* of all subsequent historical developments.”<sup>31</sup>

As a character in the narrative world of Matthew’s Gospel, Peter’s uniqueness is found in his place as the first of Jesus’ disciples, and in his role as spokesman, which “only highlights his prominence as the first and closest dis-

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. esp. *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>26</sup> While Syreeni’s primary methodology is narrative criticism, he employs other methods so as to assist in answering the questions posed by narrative criticism. Syreeni, “Character and Symbol,” 108 n. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 113–14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

principle of Jesus.”<sup>32</sup> This then becomes the basis for Peter’s uniqueness in the symbolic world of the Gospel:

As a symbol, Matthew’s Peter embodies both positive and negative values. The positive symbolism is mostly attached to the narrative notion of Peter as Jesus’ first and closest disciple. The transfiguration scene is an instructive point of departure in assessing these brighter sides of Peter’s symbolic value. As eyewitness and hearer of the heavenly voice, as guarantor of salvation-historical continuity, and as the historical seal of the trustworthiness of the Christian proclamation, Matthew’s Peter is an unwavering uniting, pan-Christian symbol, much as he is in 2 Peter (cf. 2 Pet. 1.16–21). Also, his christological confession remains valid for all time. This aspect of Peter the symbol coheres with the ‘historicized’ Peter the character whose status as the first disciple was fully appreciated by the narrator. Yet there is much more to Peter’s positive symbol than his historicity. Not a mere historical person, Peter is a revelation-historical symbol with abiding theological value.<sup>33</sup>

At the end of the above excerpt, Syreeni says in a footnote that “[o]ne might indeed speak of Peter’s ‘salvation-historical primacy’ in Matthew, as does J. D. Kingsbury.”<sup>34</sup>

Syreeni also discerns typicality in the portrayal of Peter in both the narrative world and the symbolic world:

More ambiguously, but with unmistakably positive connotations, the Matthean Peter illustrates the brighter as well as the darker sides of Christians of all times. The ‘first’ disciple is the archetypal Christian in his eagerness to follow Christ and in his weakness, his little faith, and his defective understanding of God’s ways. These are the facets of Peter that Christian interpreters best recognize. Understandably so, for such paradigmatic traits can be deduced rather simply from the narrative. Here aesthetic and ideological aspects converge.<sup>35</sup>

However, like Nau,<sup>36</sup> Syreeni detects a subtle polemic directed towards Peter at points where the symbolic world no longer corresponds to the narrative world:

There [i.e., in the places where the symbolic world lacks any counterpart in the narrative world], the ‘first’ disciple’s historical and theological primacy, which Matthew seemingly

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 149–50 n. 80.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>36</sup> Nau’s redaction-critical study argues that Matthew attempts to neutralize an exalted view of Peter held among the Antiochene Christians by placing him among the other disciples (Arlo J. Nau, *Peter in Matthew: Discipleship, Diplomacy, and Dispraise – with an Assessment of Power and Privilege in the Petrine Office* [GNS 36.; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992], esp. 36–37). Smith, on the other hand, in his study of the polemical utilization of the Peter figure in early Christian controversies, notes that Matthew exhibits a pro-Petrine stance, but does not discern polemical reasons underlying this, nor does he sense any polemical undertones against the figure of Peter (Terence V. Smith, *Petrine Controversies in Early Christianity: Attitudes towards Peter in Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries* [WUNT 15; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985], 156–60). Bockmuehl discerns no overt pro- or anti-Petrine agenda in Matthew’s Gospel (Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter*, 84–88).

took for granted and aptly exploited for a general paradigm, ceases to pass unquestioned. Peter is only in part an all-Christian symbol. He also embodies the traditions and values of a Jewish-Christian group in Matthew's community. . . . The narrator suggests to the reader that not all of what was said of Peter concerning his leadership and authority should be taken at face value.<sup>37</sup>

According to Syreeni, the Jewish-Christians in Matthew's community, whom Peter symbolizes, were apparently threatening to withdraw from the community over disputes with Gentile newcomers. Matthew, therefore, admonishes the Petrine front (Jewish-Christians) to forgive a sinful brother (Gentile-Christians). Moreover, "Peter's lack of understanding in halachic and disciplinary matters suggests that the author indirectly questions the Jewish-Christian understanding and application of the law. Matthew also warns that the 'first' may become the last and the 'last' – the Gentile newcomers – may become first."<sup>38</sup> The purpose of this subtle polemic directed towards Peter, then, is to rein in the presumed authority of the Jewish-Christian group, and maintain the unity between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the community. The typical aspect of Peter's symbolic value is thus two-fold in Syreeni's estimation: on the one hand, Peter is typical for all Christians, but on the other hand, he is typical for a Jewish-Christian group in Matthew's community.

Although Syreeni diverges from Kingsbury, Wilkins, and Perkins in that he perceives a polemic directed towards Peter at points, he nevertheless affirms their general conclusions. Like the others, Syreeni argues that Matthew indeed portrays Peter as having a unique place of salvation-historical primacy, but that Peter also illustrates typical characteristics of all Christians at many points in the Gospel. Much of Peter's typicality – his eagerness to follow Jesus, weakness, little faith, and incorrect understanding – provides a "pan-Christian paradigm of discipleship,"<sup>39</sup> and so has an exemplary function. Despite Syreeni's questionable division of the typical aspect of Peter's portrayal, he nevertheless holds the unique and typical elements in tension, which is the primary characteristic of the *modified typical disciple view*.

#### 4. Timothy Wiarda

Wiarda's work, *Peter in the Gospels: Pattern, Personality and Relationship*, examines a pattern of *positive intentions followed by reversed expectations* in the combination of positive and negative features in Peter's portrait. Wiarda describes the pattern as follows: "Peter is portrayed as saying or doing something in relation to Jesus based on a certain understanding of what is appropriate or with a certain expectation of what will result, only to receive correction

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<sup>37</sup> Syreeni, "Character and Symbol," 150.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

or be proven wrong.<sup>40</sup> This pattern brings focus to Jesus, frequently occasioning his teaching, and often has an illustrative or exemplary function, modelling discipleship at the life-related level of the narrative (i.e., the level of Matthew's audience).<sup>41</sup>

Wiarda's evaluation of the typical aspect of Peter's portrait is considerably different from that of Kingsbury, Wilkins, Perkins, or Syreeni. He draws more of a distinction between Peter and the disciples, which has the effect of minimizing the typical aspect of Peter's portrait at the story-related level of the narrative, and accentuating Peter's unique characterization.<sup>42</sup> For instance, he holds that "only in 15:15 and 19:27 can he [Peter] safely be described as a spokesman for the others,"<sup>43</sup> but he does concede that Peter's frequent misunderstanding is a typical trait exhibited by the disciples generally.<sup>44</sup>

His reticence towards the typical aspect of the Matthean Peter is closely related to his conclusions that Peter is not, in fact, primarily typical of the disciples in Mark's Gospel, as the consensus states.<sup>45</sup> But it should be noted that while making this argument with reference to the Markan Peter, Wiarda still upholds the view that Peter serves a typical or exemplary function at the life-related level of Mark's narrative:

While I have argued that Peter is not primarily a type of the Twelve, this does not mean that his portrait lacks strong relevance for readers facing issues typical to disciples...As an individualized figure the Markan Peter serves to exemplify the personal dynamics of discipleship.

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<sup>40</sup> Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 34.

<sup>41</sup> Wiarda makes a helpful distinction between the story-related level of the narrative and the life-related level. Peter's function at the story-related level refers to how he, as a character, advances the plot towards its conclusion, and also how he relates to the other characters in the narrative. Peter's function at the life-related level refers to his significance for Matthew's audience. For a full discussion, see *ibid.*, 145–49.

<sup>42</sup> Wiarda sees the following as distinctive aspects of Peter's characterization: "*outspokenness/boldness of expression*," "*quick initiative*," "*overfunctioning*," "*being an opinion leader*," "*concern for Jesus*," "*desire to honour and serve Jesus*," "*determination to be loyal to Jesus*," "*a distinctive sense of self-confidence in his discipleship*," "*a measure of courage*," "*grief at awareness of disloyalty*" (*ibid.*, 90–91, italics original), "*incautious readiness to venture an opinion*," "*distinctive enthusiasm for Jesus*," "*faith-inspiring daring*," and "*confidence in his alignment with Jesus' standards*" (*ibid.*, 98–99, italics original).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 167. It is important to note that in the context of this quotation, Wiarda is discussing Peter's role as spokesman for the disciples in the sense that what he says, he says in behalf of all the disciples. So in this sense, Peter's role as spokesman would be classified as typical. However, Peter's role as spokesman can be viewed as a unique element of his portrayal in the sense that he alone uniquely functions as such. Thus, the other scholars in the *modified typical disciple view* seem to view his spokesman role as an effect of his unique place as 'first'.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 42–43, cf. 99.

<sup>45</sup> Wiarda is followed by Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 165–80.

Peter's experience with Jesus as this is portrayed in Mark involves emotions, thoughts, learning, deliverances, fears, devotion, tension, growing self-awareness, and more. Such aspects of the disciple-Jesus relationship are more effectively modelled by an individual than a group, and by a realistic rather than a stylized character.<sup>46</sup>

Wiarda therefore views the Markan Peter as mostly unique (or individualized) at the story-related level of the narrative, but as typical, serving an exemplary function, at the life-related level. Although he does ascribe more typical aspects to the characterization of the Matthean Peter than the Markan Peter, his conclusions remain essentially the same: "Is Peter then a typical disciple? Through much of the Gospel's [i.e., Matthew's] narrative he does serve to illustrate aspects of Christian experience... He does so, however, as a character who stands out from the disciple group and in part reflects distinctive traits."<sup>47</sup>

Wiarda is somewhat distinct in both his approach and conclusions concerning the portrayal of Peter in Matthew.<sup>48</sup> He perceives a difference between the degree to which Peter is typical for discipleship at the life-related level of the narrative, and the degree to which he is typical for the disciples at the story-related level of the narrative, which is not entirely convincing. Despite this, he still espouses a *modified typical disciple view* since he maintains a tension between the unique and typical aspects of Peter's portrait, understanding the typical aspects to have an exemplary function. Indeed, Wiarda affirms both Matthew's escalated emphasis on the prominence and role of Peter, on the one hand, and his typical trait of misunderstanding, on the other:

It may be observed that, compared to Mark, Matthew does place a heightened emphasis on Peter's prominence and role. This is seen especially in 16:17–19, but also in the reference to Peter as 'first' in the listing of the twelve (10:2), and the promise concerning the disciples' shared role of judging the tribes of Israel (19:28). Though there is a tendency among interpreters to discern Peter's predicted role as church leader and teacher already operative within several Matthean episodes, notably 14:28–31; 15:15; 17:24–27 and 18:21–22, his typical disciple trait of misunderstanding speaks against this. Nowhere in Matthew (apart from 16:17–19) is Peter characterized as an ideal student of Jesus. The details and narrative shaping in these episodes move in quite a different direction. In each case Peter is found wanting and has to be corrected or rebuked. The reader is thus shown the painful process of discipleship, not assured concerning a trustworthy recipient of tradition.<sup>49</sup>

Wiarda's affirmation of both the unique and typical aspects of Peter's characterization, along with the exemplary function of the typical aspect, aligns him with the other scholars holding the *modified typical disciple view*. In contrast with Kingsbury, Perkins, and Syreeni, however, Wiarda does not discern in

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<sup>46</sup> Timothy Wiarda, "Peter as Peter in the Gospel of Mark," *NTS* 45 (1999): 35–36.

<sup>47</sup> Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 167.

<sup>48</sup> Wiarda's use of narrative criticism is distinct in that he focuses primarily on the episodal level of the story's individual units.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

the Matthean Peter any unique status as guarantor of the community's tradition or teaching.

## B. Peter in Matthew as a Persisting Problem

Kingsbury proposed what has been termed a *modified typical disciple view* as a solution to the theological problem created by redaction criticism's divergent estimations of the Matthean Peter. The above review of literature has demonstrated that this view, as a middle-ground position, has achieved something of a consensus in the important works of Wilkins, Perkins, Syreeni, and Wiarda. These works all recognize three things: 1) Peter has a unique and prominent role in Matthew's Gospel; 2) Peter's uniqueness must be held in tension with the typical aspects of his portrayal; 3) The typical aspects of his portrayal – that is, his strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures – function to exemplify discipleship, in all of its ambivalence, for Matthew's audience.<sup>50</sup> It would appear, then, that the *modified typical disciple view*, in its pluriformity, has effectively mitigated the theological problem to which Kingsbury originally directed it.

But another problem has been created in the establishment of the *modified typical disciple view*. This problem is found in the widespread neglect of the apocalypses as an informing background for understanding the Matthean portrait of Peter.<sup>51</sup> The problem is theological insofar as it handicaps any assess-

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<sup>50</sup>The *modified typical disciple view* is also held by Luz: "On the one hand, he [i.e., Peter] is in different ways a model of every disciple or of the disciples as a whole. On the other hand, he is a unique historical figure and plays a singular role" (Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001], 366). Luz continues, "Peter is important precisely here [i.e., 16:17–19] where the church originates from Israel. Thus it is not enough to speak of Peter as 'Rabbi supremus,' for in the Matthean story Peter is obviously a singular and unique figure. However, it also is not enough to speak of a 'salvation-history' priority of Peter, for his uniqueness is precisely that the 'unique' Peter has a typical *function* in the present" (ibid., 367, italics original; cf. Ulrich Luz, "The Disciples in the Gospel according to Matthew," in *The Interpretation of Matthew* [ed. Graham Stanton; IRT 3; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 105, where Luz places more stress on Peter's typicality, apart from his uniqueness). Burnett is another that affirms the *modified typical disciple view* (Fred W. Burnett, "Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gospels," *Semeia* 63 [1992]: 20–23). Hengel emphasizes Peter's uniqueness, though he also draws attention to the exemplary function of his portrayal: "Instead of being a 'typical' disciple, one ought rather to speak of Peter as a unique example, which – in the dual sense of what is positive and what is negative – elevates him far above the other disciples" (Hengel, *Saint Peter*, 25 n. 76). Bockmuehl affirms the *modified typical disciple view* (Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter*, esp. 76–78), though he emphasizes Peter's uniqueness and does not stress Peter's exemplary role to the degree that others do (ibid., esp. 87–88).

<sup>51</sup>This is also a problem in studies of the disciples. E.g., Luz, "The Disciples in the Gospel according to Matthew," 98–128; Jeannine K. Brown, *The Disciples in Narrative Per-*

ment of the theological significance that the portrait of Peter had for Matthew and his audience, and how this portrait is connected with Matthew's larger theological concerns; the problem is historical insofar as it entirely disconnects the Matthean Peter (and so Matthew and his audience) from one of the salient strands of first-century Judaism – one that Matthew apparently connected with strongly in the formulation of at least his eschatology.<sup>52</sup> This problem is an especially surprising one given the ample acknowledgement that Matthew alone depicts Jesus as attributing Peter's confession of Jesus' identity to revelation from the Father (Matt 16:17).<sup>53</sup> Noting this fact, however, has not usually provoked more than passing comment about the background for this concept (i.e., revelation) in the apocalypses or apocalypticism more generally. Perhaps the neglect of the apocalypses as an informing background for studies of Peter in Matthew is a lingering effect of what Klaus Koch identified as the general "mistrust and discomfort" with which New Testament scholarship viewed 'apocalyptic' from 1920 to 1960.<sup>54</sup>

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*spective: The Portrayal and Function of the Matthean Disciples* (SBLABib 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

<sup>52</sup>David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (SNTSMS 88; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175–77, 248–49.

<sup>53</sup>Kingsbury, "Figure of Peter," 69, 75; Wilkins, *Concept of Disciple*, 187–89; Perkins, *Peter*, 68; Wiarda, *Peter in the Gospels*, 97.

<sup>54</sup>Koch says that the voices of scholars in this period who did consider the connection between 'apocalyptic' and the New Testament "are lost in the great chorus of New Testament scholars who view apocalyptic of every kind with mistrust and discomfort, even when it appears in Christian guise, within the canon, in the book of Revelation" (Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic [Ratlos vor der Apokalypitik]*; trans. Margaret Kohl; SBT 2.22; Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1970], 63). He continues, "This mood among New Testament scholars between 1920 and 1960 cannot be explained as being due to particular research results. For there was little, all too little, research into the history of New Testament times in those years, let alone into the apocalyptic texts" (ibid., 63–64). Likewise, Collins says, "Theologians of a more rational bent are often reluctant to admit that such material [i.e., apocalyptic] played a formative role in early Christianity. There is consequently a prejudice against the apocalyptic literature which is deeply ingrained in biblical scholarship" (John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [2nd ed.; The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 1). However, as a notable exception to the general neglect of 'apocalyptic' in New Testament Studies, Käsemann famously argued that "[a]pocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology," basing this claim primarily on an analysis of certain passages in Matthew's Gospel that reflected the 'apocalyptic' outlook of the post-Easter "enthusiastic" Christians (Ernst Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," in *New Testament Questions of Today* [idem; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969], 102). Yet, even while making this argument, Käsemann does not provide any close analysis of apocalypses or apocalyptic texts (apart from a few references to the book of Revelation) to support his claims, and his use of the term 'apocalyptic' is not very clear. Over time, scholarly interest in 'apocalyptic' has indeed surged to the point that, with regard to Paul, Matlock says, "'Apocalyptic' interpretation of Paul is, if not a consensus, then certainly a commonplace" (R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the*