

Summary Statements in the Gospel of Matthew

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the summary statements in the first gospel. The investigation aims to establish a precise set of Matthean texts belonging to this literary genre. Following a presentation of a variety of solutions (R. Schnackenburg, J. Gnilka, E. Schweizer, D.A. Hagner, R.H. Gundry, J. Nolland, A. Paciorek, U. Luz, R.T. France, W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, C.S. Keener, G.R. Osborne, C.A. Evans, S. Grasso, W. Egger, B. Gerhardsson, L. Novakovic), literary considerations are examined against the background of various scholarly propositions, giving precise criteria to denote a given gospel text as a summary. On this basis, eight Matthean texts are proposed as summaries – (1) 4:23–25, (2) 8:16–17, (3) 9:35–36, (4) 12:15–21, (5) 14:13–14, (6) 14:34–36, (7) 15:29–31, and (8) 19:1–2 – while showing their thematic interpenetration and mutual dependence.

KEYWORDS: summary statements, literary genre, Matt 4:23–25, Jesus' healing activity

This article aims to answer the question of which texts in the first gospel can be considered summaries?¹ This literary form is widespread in the Bible, both in the Old Testament (OT) and in the New Testament (NT). The *Bibel-Lexikon* distinguishes between their character in the OT, where they function as a retrospection on the action of YHWH (e.g. Deut 6:21–23; 26:5–10; Josh 24:2b–13) and in the NT, where their role is to generalise what has been told in single episodes (e.g. Mark 6:54–56; Acts 4:32–35; John 2:23–25).²

Scholars do not pay much attention to summary statements in the NT. If they deal with them, it is usually only from the perspective of the gospel of Mark.³ No single article or book has been devoted to summaries of the gospel of Matthew. One can find only some remarks

¹ The terms “summary” and “summary statement” will be used interchangeably.

² Cf. H. Mölle, “Summarien,” *Bibel-Lexikon*, 2 ed. (ed. H. Haag) (Einsiedeln – Zürich – Köln: Benziger 1968) 751. The author also points to the summarising character of the professions of faith (e.g. 1 Cor 15:3f; 2 Cor 5:15; Rom 4:25; 1 Thess 4:14); *ibidem*. For more on this issue with respect to the OT, see G. von Rad, *Weisheit in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1970) 347–349.

³ Cf. W. Egger, *Frohbotschaft und Lehre. Die Sammelberichte des Wirkens Jesu im Markus-evangelium* (Frankfurter Theologische Studien 19; Frankfurt am Main: Knecht 1976); E.-M. Becker, “Die markinischen Summarien – ein literarischer und theologischer Schlüssel zu Markus 1–2,” *NTS* 56 (2010) 452–474; J. Delorme, “Les sommaires en Marc. Problèmes de méthode et de sens,” *Mysterium regni ministerium verbi* (Mc 4,11; At 6,4). *Scritti in onore di mons. Vittorio Fusco* (ed. E. Franco) (Bologna: Dehoniane 2001) 119–136; C.W. Hedrick, “The Role of ‘Summary Statements’ in the Composition of the Gospel of Mark. A Dialog with Karl Schmidt and Norman Perrin,” *NovT* 26 (1984) 289–311.

in the commentaries or occasionally commenting on Markan summaries, but without further explanation why a given text should be regarded as a summary. Ultimately almost every scholar proposes another set of texts. Thus, the nature of our study is exploratory.

In order to answer the initial question of which texts are summaries, first, what has already been published on this subject will be presented. After examining the commentaries, monographs and articles, it will be determined which texts are classified by scholars as “summary statements” and how they understand this term in itself. Then, on the basis of the proposed criteria, specific texts from the gospel of Matthew will be selected. In the end, conclusions will be drawn. The text of the first gospel will be investigated in its final form (synchronic analysis) with reference to the sources used by the author when needed (diachronic analysis).

1. *Status Quaestionis*

The works presented below show the variety of solutions in the classification of Matthean texts as summaries. Commentaries on the gospel will be presented first, followed by other works. Their order is determined by the date of publication.⁴

1.1. Commentaries

Dealing with the summary statements, Rudolf Schnackenburg begins with 4:23–25, calling it “Sammelbericht” (summary).⁵ He points to the three main activities of Jesus and their repetition in 9:35.⁶ Then, analysing 12:15–21, the author does not directly call it a “summary” but points to its Markan basis, which is called “Sammelbericht”. Consequently, according to Schnackenburg, it is legitimate to assign the term “summary” to Matthew’s reworked version of Mark 3:7–12 as well.⁷ The last passage classified as a summary is 15:29–31.⁸

Joachim Gnilka begins his discussion of summaries with 4:12–16, stating, however, that this text cannot be classified as such. For him, the first summary is 4:17, which he calls “Kurzsummarium.”⁹ The next summary, according to Gnilka, is 4:23–5:1. The author emphasises its essential role in the narrative by linking the passage with 9:35.¹⁰ Then, with some

⁴ In the case of multi-volume works, the date of issue of the first volume is decisive.

⁵ R. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*. I. 1,1–16,20 (NEchtB I; Würzburg: Echter 1985) 43.

⁶ Cf. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 43. Later, Schnackenburg (*ibidem*, 90) determines Matt 9:35 as “die Zusammenfassung des Wirken Jesu.”

⁷ Cf. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 108.

⁸ Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 145. However, in the second volume of his commentary, Schnackenburg points to the links between 19:1–2 and 4:24–25, as well as between 21:14 and 4:23; 9:35; 14:14, 35; and 15:30, without labelling it a “summary”; cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*. II. 16,21–28,20 (NEchtB 2; Würzburg: Echter 1987) 178, 198.

⁹ J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*. I. Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1–13,58 (HThKNT; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1986) 99.

¹⁰ Cf. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I, 106.

reserve, he points to the two texts connected with the OT quotations – 8:16, “Sammelbericht,”¹¹ “summative Bedeutung”¹² and 12:15–21. Like Schnackenburg, Gnllka considers it from the perspective of the Markan *Vorlage* and calls it “etwas Vergleichbares.”¹³ Three more texts discussed in vol. II classified as summaries are 14:34–36; 15:29–31 and 19:1–2.¹⁴ All three passages are directly called a “Sammelbericht.”

In his commentary, Eduard Schweizer begins with 4:23–25 while indicating a close relationship between 4:23 and 9:35.¹⁵ Then, he points to the dependence of each verse on Mark, explaining at the same time the purpose of Matthean redactional changes. Focusing on 9:35, he links it with the beginning of 9:36, at the same time observing its close connection with 4:23 and 5:1.¹⁶ Schweizer also identifies 14:29–31¹⁷ and 15:29–31¹⁸ as summaries while emphasising the healing activity of Jesus.

Like Gnllka, Donald A. Hagner considers 4:17 the first summary, calling it precisely “the summarizing rubric.”¹⁹ Then, he points to 4:23–25 and 9:35.²⁰ Three texts are categorised as “transitional summaries”: 11:1, 13:53–54 and 19:1–2.²¹ Dealing with 14:14, the author introduces another category – “miracle summaries”²² – which also includes 4:23–24; 8:16; 12:15; 15:30; 19:2 and 21:14. The basis of this selection is the presence of the verb *θεραπεύω*. In effect, it creates inconsequence and confusion; since writing about 15:29–31, Hagner uses the term “miracle summaries” once again, this time, however, giving a different set of verses: 4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35–36; 14:13–14; 14:34–36 and so-called “brief note” in 19:2.²³ Dealing with 19:1–2, he calls v. 2 a “transitional passage” (as 12:15 and 15:29–30).²⁴

According to Robert H. Gundry, summaries are 4:23–25; 8:16–17 (described as summary + quotation); 9:35 and 14:34–36.²⁵ Moreover, dealing with 12:15(–16), the author terms it a “summarizing clause.”²⁶ In the case of 15:29–31, he notices the change from indi-

11 Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I, 306.

12 Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I, 307.

13 Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I, 450.

14 J. Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium. II. Kommentar zu Kap. 14, 1–28, 20* (HThKNT; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1992) 16–17, 33–34, 150.

15 Cf. E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 3 ed. (NTD 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1981) 43.

16 Cf. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium*, 150–151.

17 He describes it as “die summarische Notiz über die Wirksamkeit Jesu in Gennesaret”; Schweizer, *Das Evangelium*, 209.

18 The author describes 15:29–31 as “[...] ein zusammenfassender Bericht von Heilungen Jesu [...]”; Schweizer, *Das Evangelium*, 215.

19 D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33a; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1993) 79.

20 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 79, 259.

21 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 297.

22 Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 417.

23 Cf. D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33b; Dallas, TX: Word Books 1995) 444.

24 Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 543.

25 R.H. Gundry, *Matthew. A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1994) 63–65, 149, 180, 301.

26 Gundry, *Matthew*, 228.

vidual healing to mass healing,²⁷ and, finally, investigating 19:1–2, Gundry describes it as if it were a “summary,” avoiding, however, this precise term.²⁸

In his commentary, John Nolland enumerates 4:17, 4:23–25 and 9:35²⁹ as summaries. But, then, he deals also with another set of texts, without naming them “summaries,” taking into account: 12:15 with reference to 4:25;³⁰ 14:34–36 from the perspective of general healing,³¹ 15:29–31 by indicating connections with 4:24; 9:36; 12:15; 14:14 and 14:35;³² and, ultimately, 19:1–2, describing it as “a statement that reminds the reader of Jesus’ goal in Jerusalem.”³³

Dealing with summary statements, Antoni Paciorek begins with 4:23–25.³⁴ Afterwards, he points to 8:16 and links it with 4:23; 9:35 and 10:1.³⁵ According to the author, the following two summaries are found in 9:35 and 12:15–21.³⁶ In the second volume of his commentary, first, Paciorek lists six texts that he considers “summaries”: 4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35; 12:15–21; 14:34–36 and 15:29–31.³⁷ Then, dealing with 21:14, he terms it a “summary” and includes it with 4:23f; 9:35; 12:15; 14:14; 15:30 and 19:2.³⁸ In consequence, this creates ambiguity and confusion.

In his proposition of Matthean summaries, Ulrich Luz³⁹ is very clear. He enumerates six texts: 4:23–25; 8:1, 16; 9:35; 12:15–16; 14:35; 19:2, while consistently sticking to this division.

The next author – Richard T. France – is also very precise in his division. His summaries include 4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35–38; 12:15–21; 14:34–36; 15:29–31 and 19:1–2.⁴⁰

27 Gundry, *Matthew*, 317.

28 Gundry, *Matthew*, 375–376. This is also the case when dealing with 15:29–31.

29 J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2005) 175, 182, 406–407.

30 Nolland, *The Gospel*, 491.

31 Nolland, *The Gospel*, 604–605. As he explains, “The role of the present unit is to refresh the large-scale healing motif: there is continuity with 14:14, but the concern is also to make a stronger link back to the foundational description in 4:23–25 and its echo in 8:16” (*ibidem*, 604).

32 Nolland, *The Gospel*, 638–639.

33 Nolland, *The Gospel*, 763. At the same time, on the basis of the presence of ὅχλοι πολλοί, the author points to the links with 4:25; 8:1 and 12:15; *ibidem*, 764.

34 A. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza. I. Rozdziały 1–13* (NKB.NT 1/1; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2005) 181.

35 Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza*, I, 350.

36 Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza*, I, 395, 497.

37 A. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza. II. Rozdziały 14–28* (NKB.NT 1/2; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2008) 64.

38 Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza*, II, 321.

39 U. Luz, *Matthew 1–7. A Commentary* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2007) 166.

40 R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans 2007) 148, 321, 371, 467, 572, 597, 788; cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew. An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1985) 166. In this previous work, the author proposes a slightly different set of verses: 4:23–25; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; 14:35–36; 15:30–31 and 19:1–2.

Dealing with 21:14, France observes some connections with the already mentioned summaries, but the identified differences do not let him consider this verse a “summary.”⁴¹

In the first volume of their commentary, W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison⁴² list the following summary statements: 4:23–25; 8:16(–17); 9:35(–38); 12:15–16(–21); 14:13–14; 14:(34–)36; 15:29–31; 19:1–2 and 21:14(–16). Additionally, they identify the two so-called “quasi-summaries” – 10:1(5–)7–8 and 11:(2–)4–6 – adopting them from Birger Gerhardsson.⁴³

Writing a commentary from a socio-rhetorical perspective, Craig S. Keener is not primarily interested in literary issues, only rarely assigning individual texts to specific literary genres. This procedure also applies to summaries, which are recorded only twice – 4:23–25 and 9:35.⁴⁴

According to Grant R. Osborne, 4:23–25; 8:16–17; 9:35–36; 11:1b; 15:29–31⁴⁵ and 19:2⁴⁶ should be considered summaries – these texts are labelled directly as such. Then, dealing with 12:15–21, Osborne analyses it in the following pattern: a “summary + fulfillment quotation.”⁴⁷ In turn, 14:34–36 is called a “summary transition” together with 4:23–25; 8:16–17 and 9:35.⁴⁸

As regards summary statements, Craig A. Evans initially proposes the following: 4:23–25; 9:35–38; 14:13–14; 14:34–36 and 15:29–31.⁴⁹ However, dealing with 15:29–31 in the context of Jesus’ healing activity, as well as also taking into account the previously mentioned summaries, he expands the summary statements to include 4:23–24; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; 14:14; 19:2 and 21:14.⁵⁰

41 France (*The Gospel of Matthew*, 788) concludes, “Its brevity recalls the summaries of healing activity in Galilee and around [...], but whereas such summaries have typically been in quite general terms (‘all who were ill’, ‘the sick’, etc.), the specific identification of the patients here as only the blind and the lame draws attention.”

42 W.D. Davies – D.C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; London – New York: Clark 2004) I, 412.

43 B. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (SMRSHLL; Lund: CWK Gleerup 1979) 20–21. The position of Gerhardsson will be discussed in the next paragraph.

44 C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans 2009) 308.

45 G.R. Osborne, *Matthew* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 1; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2010) 153, 298–299, 364, 401, 594.

46 Osborne, *Matthew*, 703. In this case, Osborne underlines the relationship with 4:23–25; 9:35–36; 12:15 and 15:29–30.

47 Osborne, *Matthew*, 463.

48 Osborne, *Matthew*, 579.

49 C.A. Evans, *Matthew* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge, UK – New York: Cambridge University Press 2012) 93, 211, 293, 297, 305.

50 Evans, *Matthew*, 305.

In turn, Santi Grasso only indicates 4:23–25;⁵¹ 8:16;⁵² 9:35–38⁵³ and 12:15–21 while noticing the intrinsic relationship between this last summary and the OT quotation.⁵⁴

1.2. Other Works

Wilhelm Egger dedicated his doctoral thesis to summary statements in the gospel of Mark. So far, this is the only such comprehensive discussion of the issue. Dealing with this subject, the author devoted three pages to investigate the specificity of Matthean summaries. He enumerates thirteen texts: 4:12–17; 4:23–25; 7:28f; 8:16f; 9:35; 11:1; 12:15–21; 13:1f; 14:13f; 14:34–36; 15:29–31; 19:1f and 21:14.⁵⁵ Egger proposes and also analyses Matthean summary characteristics, usually in relation to Mark.⁵⁶

In his book published in 1979, Gerhardsson proposed a set of Matthean summaries, and he is the scholar who has commented on them most extensively so far. However, this is not the main subject of his work. He lists the following texts: 4:23; 4:24–25; 8:16(–17); 9:35(–38); 12:15–16(–21); 14:13–14; 14:(34–)35–36; 15:29–31; 19:1–2 and 21:14(–16).⁵⁷ Then, he introduces an original category of so-called “quasi-summaries,” which are 10:1, (5–)7–8 and 11:(2–)4–6.⁵⁸ For Gerhardsson, the decisive criterion for whether a given text represents the category of summaries is its testimony to the healing activity of Jesus. He also proposes a more detailed division of summaries; he distinguishes between (1) “individual summaries,” which are “programmatic summaries” (4:23–25 and 9:35); (2) “summaries with formula quotations” (8:16[–17] and 12:15–16[–21]); (3) “preludes to the feeding stories” (14:13–14 and 15:29–31); (4) “remaining summaries” (14:[34–]35–36, 19:1–2

51 S. Grasso, *Il Vangelo di Matteo. Commento esegetico e teologico* (Roma: Città Nuova 2014) 131.

52 Grasso (*Il Vangelo*, 268) justifies it as follows: “Una nuova cornice contestuale data da un genitivo assoluto segna l’inizio di un breve quadro che assume la funzione di un sommario.”

53 Commenting on this unit, Grasso (*Il Vangelo*, 318) shows how he identifies the summary genre. He writes, “La presentazione dell’attività di Gesù sotto forma di sommario fa eco al primo testo che descrive l’avvio vero e proprio del suo ministero (4,23–25) e nel quale egli viene presentato nei suoi compiti d’insegnare e di guarire. L’indizio che il testo sia un sommario sta nei verbi durativi, quali l’imperfetto (*periegon*), il participio presente (*didaskōn*, *kēryssōn*, *therapeuōn*, *idōn*), l’indicativo presente (*legei*).”

54 Grasso, *Il Vangelo*, 385.

55 Egger, *Frohbotschaft*, 34–36. Egger is not primarily interested in the specific texts; as such, he presents his proposition of the set of summaries only in footnote no. 42; cf. *ibidem*, 34.

56 Egger states, “Im Wesentlichen enthalten diese Sammelberichte zwar auch die drei Elemente, die in den Sammelberichten des Mk zu finden sind: geographische Notiz (in allen Sammelberichten des Mt), Erwähnung der Menge, Tätigkeit Jesu. Doch ist die Struktur bei Mt differenzierter: Eine Reihe von Sammelberichten ist nach dem Schema von Heilungsgeschichten gestaltet: Bringen der Kranken – Heilen – Chorschluß (manchmal mit Prophetenzitat). Die Schilderung des Volksandrangs ist nicht so breit wie bei Mk. Überhaupt tritt das Motiv, daß das Volk sich bei Jesus sammelt, bei Mt in seiner Bedeutung zurück, da Mt das Volk wohl einige Male erwähnt, doch nur, weil es von Jesus geheilt wird”; Egger, *Frohbotschaft*, 34–35.

57 Cf. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 20–21.

58 Gerhardsson (*The Mighty Acts*, 21) justifies this division as follows: “[...] I shall also devote a certain limited amount of attention to two passages which do not have the character of summaries in the same sense as those above but which still in a general and comprehensive manner treat of Jesus’ acts of healing.”

and 21:14[–17]); and, finally, “quasi summaries” (10:1[5–]7–8 and 11:[2–]4–6).⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Gerhardsson does not give precise criteria on how he selected these texts.

Like Gerhardsson, Lidija Novakovic sees Matthean summaries of Jesus’ healing activity as a key. In the book dedicated to this aspect of Jesus’ mission, she briefly discusses the following texts as summaries: 4:23–24; 8:16–17; 9:35–36; 11:2–6; 12:15–21; 14:13–14; 15:29–31 and 19:1–2.⁶⁰ Subsequently, Novakovic draws some general conclusions.⁶¹

1.3. Conclusions

Based on the above commentaries and other works, the following conclusions may be formulated:

- Scholars are not interested in summaries as such; they do not dedicate separate works to them; they only discuss them in a wider context of other content.
- Authors do not investigate summaries from the perspective of a separate literary genre and do not specify criteria leading to the classification of a given text as a summary. This procedure sometimes even leads to inconsistency within the same work.
- Clear criteria should be set for classifying specific gospel texts as summaries. There is also a need to examine whether one can speak of a separate literary genre in the case of Matthean summaries.

2. Summary as a Literary Genre

As shown above, exegetes differ in their understanding of the category of summary, which, in turn, results in their choice of different sets of texts. Similarly, literary theorists of the Bible do not fully agree on the specific features of this form. Therefore, it seems appropriate to present and evaluate selected scholars’ opinions and then propose criteria for summaries in the first gospel using their research results.

2.1. The Variety of Scholars’ Propositions

In “Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums,” a fundamental work for the form criticism of the gospels, Martin Dibelius dedicates a part of chapter eight to the form of summary (*Sammelbericht*). He investigates Markan summaries while pointing to certain features that

⁵⁹ Cf. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 22–32.

⁶⁰ Cf. L. Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick. A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (WUNT 2/170; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2003) 118–120. Dealing with 11:2–6, Novakovic notes that this unit “differs from other summaries because it is not the narrator but Jesus himself who makes it” (*ibidem*, 119).

⁶¹ Novakovic (*Messiah*, 120) states, “The most striking feature of these summaries, however, is that they do not merely describe what Jesus does and how he feels, but in two cases (Matt 8:16–17 and Matt 12:15–21), they contain distinct comments of the narrator which explain to the reader the necessity and meaning of Jesus’ cures. In both instances, Jesus’ healings are presented as a direct fulfillment of Scripture. In two other cases (Matt 11:2–6 and Matt 15:29–31), the summaries are formulated in such a way that the reader is reminded, though in an allusive way, of certain prophecies about future blessings from the Book of Isaiah.”

go beyond the concept of the second evangelist and may be considered appropriate for summaries as such. According to Dibelius, a summary is a generalisation which creates a transition from a detailed story (narrating something as a single event) to an unspecific narrative about the same, involving a number of similar instances without any details. The role of this generalisation is to show that Jesus continues his mission in the manner already described. It lacks vividness and pointedness (characteristic of Paradigms and Tales).⁶²

Charles H. Dodd⁶³ was the first scholar who tried to determine in detail the characteristics of a summary (being, however, limited only to the gospel of Mark). According to him, summaries are texts which (1) have a tendency to generalisation; (2) punctuate the narrative; (3) help the transition from one pericope to another; (4) remind the reader that detailed stories are episodes of an extensive activity; (5) contrast with the traditional narrative units (because of the contrast of the content); (6) lack the concreteness and particularity; (7) do not narrate anything which indicates one point of space and time; (8) more often have verbs in the imperfect, the tense of continuous or habitual action, than in the aorist; and (9) function as a framework, not contributing to the knowledge of the course of Jesus' ministry.⁶⁴

Klaus Berger describes a summary as *Basis-Bericht*. According to him, its role is to present successful missionary activity. For this reason, summaries have an unspecified scene and audience. They are characterised by a high degree of generality, emphasised by such expressions as "a lot," "all," "nobody," "from everywhere." However, some specific information is also presented, such as the place or area of activity, the proclamation of the word, signs and final success.⁶⁵ Unlike M. Dibelius and C.H. Dodd, K. Berger's considerations are not limited to the second gospel but encompass the entire New Testament.

So far, as a literary genre, summary statements have been most widely analysed by Eve-Marie Becker⁶⁶ in an article about summaries in Mark's gospel. The author postulates to introduce a distinction between summaries (Mark 1:32–34; 3:7–12; 6:54–56), *epitome* (e.g. Mark 1:14f; 8:1) and so-called *Geschichtsabris* (cf. Acts).⁶⁷ Then, in the course of analysis, one can specify features that Becker gives to the summaries: (1) anaphoric function;⁶⁸ (2) a multitude of healings and exorcisms; (3) universalism and generalisation often stressed through the presence of πάντα, πολλοί, etc.⁶⁹ (4) independent literary form,⁷⁰ a place

62 Cf. M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 6 ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1971) 226.

63 C.H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," *ExpTim* 43 (1931–1932) 396–400.

64 Cf. Dodd, "The Framework," 396.

65 Cf. K. Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer 1984) 331.

66 Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 452–474.

67 Cf. Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 452. This division, however, creates some confusion since *Geschichtsabris* is, in principle, a longer form of expression dealing with events occurring throughout history (e.g. confession of Israel's faith in Deut 26:5–9 or Stephen's speech addressed to the council in Acts 7:2–53). In turn, the *epitome* was a literary form not widespread in antiquity, and the biblical author may not have been aware of it.

68 Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 453.

69 Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 455.

70 Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 458.

of theological reflection;⁷¹ and (5) redactional function thanks to combining larger parts of material.⁷² Then, the author introduces further distinctions arguing for the division into summary, summary note (e.g. Mark 1:39; 2:13; 6:6b), *epitomai* (e.g. Mark 1:14f), *periochai* and *Geschichtsabriss*.⁷³ Becker also notes that Matthew's summaries follow the Markan *Vorlage* introducing, however, a number of editorial changes.⁷⁴ Becker concludes the investigation by stating that the *Sitz im Leben* of the Markan summaries is the reading of the gospel in itself.⁷⁵

From the narrative method's perspective, according to Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, a summary is an acceleration of the narrative in which a few terms tell a relatively long story.⁷⁶ They also emphasise the function of summaries as synthesis and re-epilogue.⁷⁷ In turn, another representative of biblical narrative analysis, Luciano Zappella, highlights, in addition, that very long periods of time are told in a few words while underlining "fenomeno di durata per effetto del quale il tempo della storia avanza più velocemente rispetto al tempo del racconto."⁷⁸

2.2. Conclusions

Although scholars report different research results (pointing to diverse characteristics of summaries), there are many common features for selecting specific texts. Therefore, summaries can be regarded as texts characterised by (1) lack of individual scenes; (2) extension in time; (3) undefined audience; (4) generalising and exaggerating terms, such as "many," "all," "from everywhere," "great," etc. (5) texts containing information about Jesus' activity in deeds and/or words; (6) texts lacking concreteness and particularity of the pericope; (7) geographical indications; and (8) independent literary units. These criteria, taken together with the results of the investigation of the scholars presented above, allow us to point to the following texts from the first gospel as summaries: (1) 4:23–25; (2) 8:16–17; (3) 9:35–36; (4) 12:15–21; (5) 14:13–14; (6) 14:34–36; (7) 15:29–31; and (8) 19:1–2.

At the same time, one should exclude texts that also appear in the propositions of various authors but do not meet the above-mentioned criteria:

- 4:12–17 – lack of audience and generalising and exaggerating terms, no information about Jesus' activity in words or deeds (the verb ἡρξάτο in v. 17 points to a specific moment in time without its extension, while opening the perspective to the future).
- 7:28f – the presence of the imperfect tense (ἐξεπλήσσοντο, ἦν) indicates extension in time, but there are no geographical indications, no generalising and exaggerating terms.

⁷¹ Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 460.

⁷² Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 464.

⁷³ Cf. Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 465–466.

⁷⁴ Cf. Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 472.

⁷⁵ Cf. Becker, "Die markinischen Summarien," 474.

⁷⁶ D. Marguerat – Y. Bourquin, *Per leggere i racconti biblici. La Bibbia si racconta. Iniziazione all'analisi narrativa* (trans. M. Zappella) (Roma: Borla 2001) 178.

⁷⁷ Marguerat – Bourquin, *Per leggere*, 93.

⁷⁸ Cf. L. Zappella, *Manuale di analisi narrativa biblica* (Strumenti 65; Torino: Claudiana 2014) 205.

- 10:1(5–)7–8 – the audience is specified (the Twelve), the tenses used by Matthew do not indicate the extension in time, there are no generalising or exaggerating terms, and the text contains specific indications.
- 11:1, 2–6 – in v. 1, there are the same excluding features as in the previous text. The same applies to vv. 2–6. Additionally, this passage can be considered an individual scene. There is also a lack of geographical indications.
- 13:1f – it is not an independent literary unit but an introduction to the teaching in parables. The tenses do not indicate the extension in time. The text is very concrete. Matthew briefly describes the actions of Jesus as a background for a long specific teaching.
- 13:53–54 – it is not an independent literary unit, but it should be read together with vv. 55–58, which comprise specific words of the defined audience – inhabitants of Nazareth who know relatives of Jesus.
- 21:14 – it is not an independent literary unit, but it prepares the reason for Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees (vv. 15–17). There is no extension in time, no generalising terms and no geographical indications.

3. Characteristics of Matthean Summary Statements

The following presentation of Matthean summaries focuses on their convergence with the criteria listed above while at the same time avoiding detailed analysis of each text as ultimately unnecessary for our goals. The discussion of the summaries aims to show their thematic coherence and similarities.

After the call of the first four disciples (4:18–22) and before the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount (5:1–2), Matthew provides the first summary of Jesus' activity in Galilee in 4:23–25. This procedure has a dual function; on the one hand, it looks back at Jesus' mission (*analepsis*), and on the other, it opens the perspective to further events (proleptic function). Thus, this pericope has a connecting character and can be described as transitional. The summary itself has its background in the Markan source – v. 23 is based on Mark 1:39 and 6:6b; v. 24 depends on Mark 1:28, 32, 34; and v. 25 reveals a strong influence of Mark 3:7–8. The summary opens with the imperfect tense (*περιῆγεν*), which presents Jesus' activity as being in progress, pointing to the repeated aspect.⁷⁹ The area of his activity is concretised by the geographical specification *ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ*. The adjective *ὅλος* (vv. 23, 24) designates the totality, especially for temporal and geographical spaces (cf. 20:6). Note also the generalising *πᾶς* (vv. 23[2x]). Both these adjectives indicate a Matthean tendency to exaggerate and generalise, which creates an image of great missionary success. Three following participles *διδάσκων*, *κηρύσσων* and *θεραπεύων* are

⁷⁹ Some manuscripts add the subject of the main verb, adding *ὁ Ἰησοῦς* after *περιῆγεν* (Σ* Σ^c D C*) or after *ὅλην τὴν Γαλιλαίαν* (C^c 28 K M U W Δ Π).

related to the main verb, specifying Jesus' actions as being simultaneous and extended in time. The verb ἡκολούθησαν (complexive aorist) at the beginning of v. 25 corresponds to the opening of v. 23 while emphasising once again the extension over time of actions performed (cf. Matt 14:36; 15:29–30). This summarising style of reporting the past is additionally strengthened by the accumulation of the καί conjunction (up to 15 times), which gives the narrative a light form and transparent construction. The first Matthean summary is marked by typical Matthew-style features, such as (1) combining θεραπεύω,⁸⁰ νόσος and μαλακία with πᾶς; (2) usage of the construction ἡκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί (cf. 8:1; 19:1. See also 12:15; 14:13; 20:29; 21:9) and ἐν τῷ λαῷ; and (3) application of the generalising adjectives ὅλος, πᾶς and πολὺς. Through the repetitions of Γαλιλαία, θεραπεύω and νόσος, the author calls attention to the region of Jesus' activity and its significant component – healings – along with the oratorical activity stressed by the use of nearly synonymous expressions διδάσκω and κηρύσσω.⁸¹ This juxtaposition of Jesus' words and deeds corresponds to the material contained in chs. 5–7 (teaching) and 8–9 (healings). This is further enhanced by the inclusion created by the almost verbatim repetition of Matt 4:23 in 9:35.

The second summary is found in Matt 8:16–17, and it performs a dual function. First, after three individual healings (vv. 1–15), Jesus performs many healings. Through this, the author of the first gospel shows that the ministry of healing is an integral part of Jesus' activity and not just an addition to his teaching. Second, Matthew points out that Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 53:4) concerning the Messiah who would take on human infirmities and bears their diseases is fulfilled in Jesus. In v. 16, the author uses material from Mark 1:32, 34 (see above on Matt 4:24); in the following v. 17, the introduction to the quotation is redactional. Sometimes commentators put vv. 16–17 together with vv. 14–15, emphasising their coherence.⁸² However, vv. 16–17 may be separated as an independent unit due to the change in time and recipients. At the same time, it should be noted that the tenses of the verbs found in this summary do not indicate the extension in time of Jesus' actions. There is also no geographical indication. On the other hand, however, all other features listed above are present. Moreover, Matt 8:16–17 has strong connections to 4:23–25, i.e. the presence of generalising πᾶς and πολὺς, νόσος, πάντες οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες, θεραπεύω, δαιμονιζόμενοι and προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ. The second summary constitutes a redactional comment on Jesus' mission so far and opens the perspective for further activity of Jesus (8:17–9:34).⁸³ Matthew likes to present various events in the life of Jesus, placing them in

⁸⁰ The verb plays a very important role in Matthean theology (Matthew uses it 16 times, while Mark only 5). It denotes the effect of a saving act, not a therapeutic process in the modern sense. Jesus uses it only once (Matt 8:7); all other occurrences are the reflection of the editor on the actions of Jesus (cf. 4:24; 8:16; 12:22; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2). See J.C. Comber, "The Verb *Therapeuō* in Matthew's Gospel," *JBL* 97/3 (1978) 431–434.

⁸¹ Matthew focuses on Jesus' proclaiming, teaching and healing, while Mark on his teaching and exorcisms.

⁸² Cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, 147; Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 80; Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I, 306.

⁸³ Cf. D.C. Duling, "The Therapeutic Son of David: An Element in Matthew's Christological Apologetic," *NTS* 24 (1978) 396.

a specific time and/or space. In this case, the expression ὁψίαις δὲ γενομένης (v. 16) separates the individual healing of Peter's mother-in-law from the summary narrating many healings. As in 4:24, referring to the bringing of the demoniacs to Jesus, the author uses προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ. This time, however, he focuses on the demon-possessed without any juxtaposition (note the generalising πολλύς). The expression πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν is taken (in an abbreviated version) from 4:24. This is to re-emphasise the healing activity of Jesus, its size (πᾶς) and universalism (οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες – because of its generality can refer to any disease or discomfort).

The third Matthean summary is Matt 9:35–36. Together with 4:23–25, it creates a frame for chapters 5–9 (9:35 is almost a verbatim repetition of 4:23). By means of the first summary, Matthew firstly states in a general way that Jesus was teaching and healing, and then, in detail and with specific examples, he develops these themes, pointing to Jesus' teaching – chs. 5–7 – and healing – chs. 8–9. While 9:35 indicates the end of this section. Then Matthew introduces a new theme concerning discipleship; Jesus' disciples, like their master, are to teach, preach and heal (ch. 10).⁸⁴ Therefore, this brief summary functions as a recapitulation of Jesus' activities already presented, as well as leads the narrative forward (transitional function). For the redactional and linguistic-syntactic features together with the summary characteristics of v. 35, see the comment on 4:23. As to v. 36, it is based on Mark 6:34 and explains Jesus' motivation for his healing activity which is compassion for the crowds.

Matt 12:15–21 is the fourth summary found in the first gospel. It consists of two main parts; vv. 15–16 summarise the healing activity of Jesus. At the same time, it is an introduction to the citation from the OT, which forms the second part (vv. 17–21). The basis for vv. 15–16 is a Markan summary found in Mark 3:7–12.⁸⁵ Matthew, however, in fact, only partly employs vv. 7, 10 and 12. Matt 12:15–21, which narrates many healings by Jesus and interprets them as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, is located between two scenes of individual healings: 12:9–14 and 12:22–23. Therefore, it can be considered an independent literary unit. At the same time, it should be noted that the text has no geographical indication except that all the features listed in paragraph 2.2 are present here. The extension in time may be debatable, but the meaning of the verb of movement ἀκολουθέω itself implies that. As in 4:24–25, many crowds follow Jesus. The text suggests that everyone that constitutes this large group of Jesus' followers has been healed. With his custom, Matthew uses here the generalising and exaggerating πολλύς and πᾶς. As in 8:17, Matthew introduces the OT quotation from Isa 42:1–4 with his favourite ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος formula (this time replacing ὅπως with the synonymous ἵνα) emphasising

84 Therefore, 9:35 opens at the same time a new section (9:35–11:1), where the mission of the disciples will be emphasised; cf. S. Brown, "The Mission to Israel in Matthew's Central Section (Mt 9,35–11,1)," *ZNW* 69 (1978) 73–90.

85 This is Mark's longest summary, which has already partially appeared in Matt 4:23–25; see T.A. Burkill, "Mark 3:7–12 and the Alleged Dualism in the Evangelist's Miracle Material," *JBL* 87/4 (1968) 409–417; L.E. Keck, "Mark 3:7–12 and Mark's Christology," *JBL* 84/4 (1965) 341–358.

the connection between Jesus' activity and the prophecies of Isaiah (already established in Matt 8:17).⁸⁶ The citation has links with both MT and LXX versions of Isaiah. Matthew's text, however, is closer to the Hebrew version, which was probably the basis for translation. The author, nevertheless, made several changes, reinterpreting Isaiah's prophecy and adapting it to his editorial assumptions and the present narrative context, among others, by underlining the universal perspective of Jesus' mission and opening the perspective towards the future – Jesus as the future foundation of the hope of nations.

In the case of Matt 14:13–14 as the next summary, it is difficult to speak of an independent literary unit because the text is strongly related to 14:15–21. Matt 14:13–14 would be more of a transitional passage (also with respect to 14:12).⁸⁷ On the other hand, almost all the features are listed in paragraph 2.2 – no individual scene, an extension in time (implied by the meaning of v. 13b), undefined audience and generalising terms. There is information about mass healing which creates at the same time the lack of concreteness and particularity. Additionally, it introduces the feeding of the five thousand (14:15–21), presenting the miracle recipients and explaining the circumstances of Jesus' miraculous activity.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the redactional changes applied by Matthew to Mark 6:32–34, especially the omission of the disciples' presence and an emphasis on Jesus' healings (instead of his teaching), are another argument in favour of Matt 14:13–14 as a summary. In vv. 13–14, the author follows the pattern already used in 12:15 – Jesus' knowledge about events + ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν + the crowds follow him + ἐθεράπευσεν. There is also a connection to 9:36 through the verb ἐσπλαγχνίσθη,⁸⁹ as a motive of Jesus' action towards the crowds. In consequence, for the second time, Matthew combines the healings done by Jesus with compassion for the crowds (which are specified, as usual, by the generalising πολλόν). In contrast, however, to 9:36, where the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι follows the information about healing people, here it functions as a direct purpose. Moreover, the Matthean report about mass healings found in 14:13–14 is complementary with Jesus' discourse from ch. 13, balancing Jesus' words and deeds.

The sixth summary in Matt 14:34–36 is an independent literary unit, clearly separated from its previous and following context. After the confession of the disciples in the boat (14:33), it confirms the divine prerogatives of Jesus (expressed by many healings) while pointing to his authority over tradition (15:1–20).⁹⁰ Matthew reworks Mark 6:53–56 here, creatively adapting it to his editorial goals. As in Mark, Matthew begins the summary

⁸⁶ Both summaries – Matt 8:16–17 and 12:15–21 – are structurally connected as follows: summary of Jesus' healings + fulfilment quotation from Isaiah + reference to the suffering of God's servant.

⁸⁷ The same transitional function, however, has already been ascribed to 4:23–25.

⁸⁸ Cf. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 27.

⁸⁹ This verb occurs only in these two verses. Therefore, it is intrinsically linked to summary accounts of Jesus' healings.

⁹⁰ The text is considered a summary because of the presence of all features listed in paragraph 2.2. Initially, the extension in time results not from the tenses of the verbs but from their meaning – to send and bring (v. 35) – those actions require a time span, which is additionally reinforced by the actions from v. 34. At the end, in v. 36, the imperfect tense itself implies the extension in time.

with a geographical indication (Gennesaret). Jesus was well-known in the area (Gennesaret was close to Capernaum), so the local men recognised him. The unusual use of ἀποστέλλω along with ὅλος and περίχωρος in the context of Jesus' healing activity additionally reinforces the wide range and effect of his actions. The verb προσφέρω is used in a complexive aorist form to designate repeated actions in the past. It goes well with the imperfect of the next verse (παρεκάλουν), extending the narrative in time. Once again, the author describes the sick as πάντες οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες linking this summary to 4:24. The motif of healing by touching Jesus' garment has already appeared in 9:20–21. This time, however, Jesus shows neither indignation nor emphasis on faith. One gets the impression that the healings occurred automatically, supported by the generalising ὅσοι (cf. Acts 5:15 and 19:12).⁹¹ This is the only summary without the verb θεραπεύω. Instead, Matthew uses an unusual term for healing – διασώζω. This compound verb derives from σώζω, “to save, deliver,” and is strengthened by the prefix δι-. Through this procedure, the author emphasises the totality of the healings and their lasting effects.

The seventh summary is found in Matt 15:29–31.⁹² It serves as an introduction to the feeding of the four thousand (15:32–39). It can, however, be considered an independent literary unit, separated from the preceding context by the change of place (v. 29) and from the following action by the direct speech of Jesus to the apostles (v. 32). The basis for v. 29 is Mark 7:31 while vv. 30–31 are loosely based on Mark 7:32–37. Matthew, however, transforms the Markan story about the individual healing of a deaf man into a mass healing. Only in this summary a subordinating sentence, introduced by ὥστε, can be found (which explains the verb θαυμάζω caused by θεραπεύω). The last verse accumulates the most verbal forms juxtaposed in one verse throughout the whole first gospel – infinitive + four participles + finite verb, making the narrative vivid and moving it forward. Only in this summary (and the whole NT in general) an expression ἐτέρους πολλούς as a distinctive category of the sick can be found (note the repetition of the generalising πολλούς in v. 30). In the long list of the sick, Matthew presents various types of diseases, being so detailed in his summaries for the first time.⁹³ One can identify here a direct link with 11:5, where Jesus responds to the messengers of John the Baptist who came with a question about his messianic identity. The detailed healings are presented here as a confirmation of Jesus' divine prerogatives.

91 This behaviour of Jesus is thought-provoking not only in the context of 9:20 but also in the light of the entire text of the first gospel; Matthew is opposed to anything that might resemble any magical practices (here resulting from automatism); cf. Paciorek, *Evangelia*, II, 65. The author links this inconsistent attitude of Jesus with his compassion towards people in need, but such an explanation seems not to be exhaustive, especially since Matthew, even when using the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι with Jesus as a subject (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34), consistently avoids any magical suggestions and connections.

92 Matt 15:29–31 comprises all the features listed in paragraph 2.2. The extension in time results from the number of activities expressed by the verbs.

93 This detailed list can be interpreted as a specification of the expression πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας from 14:35 and 4:24 (where Matthew adds ποικίλαι νόσοι καὶ βασάναι συνεχομένους).

The last summary is Matt 19:1–2. The text may be considered an independent literary unit. It is placed after ch. 18, which comprises Jesus' teaching. The Matthean report at the beginning of ch. 19 on healings functions therefore as a balance; from 19:3, another teaching begins.⁹⁴ In contrast to 7:28–29; 11:1; 13:53 and 26:1 – where a similar concluding formula occurs as in 19:1 – only 19:1–2 may be considered a summary due to the intrinsic connection of v. 2 with v. 1 by a conjunction *καί*. Note also the presence of the crowds⁹⁵ who are recipients of the healing activity of Jesus. Matt 19:1–2 contains the geographical indications and all the rest of the features listed in paragraph 2.2.⁹⁶ As to the Matthean source, the concluding formula from v. 1a is redactional. In turn, in v. 1b, Matthew reworks Mark 10:1. The second verse is made exclusively of Mattheanisms typical of his summaries: *ἀκολουθέω* with an indirect object *αὐτός* (Jesus) + *ἄλλος* with generalising adjective *πολύς* + *θεραπεύω* with a direct object *αὐτός* + geographical indication *ἐκεῖ*. The vocabulary of this last summary is strongly related to the first one in 4:23–25. In consequence, it creates an *inclusio*.

Final Conclusions

In the case of the gospel of Matthew, it is legitimate to specify summary statements as a separate literary genre. Summaries are represented in the first gospel eight times: (1) 4:23–25; (2) 8:16–17; (3) 9:35–36; (4) 12:15–21; (5) 14:13–14; (6) 14:34–36; (7) 15:29–31; and (8) 19:1–2. These texts are closely interrelated. They have similar structure, vocabulary and features while functioning as independent literary units. In each, one can find generalisation and exaggeration in relation to the recipients of Jesus' ministry (which creates an image of the massive success of his activity) and the presence of the verb *θεραπεύω* (with only one exception in 14:36 – *διασώζω*). Therefore, Matthean summaries are a testimony to the healing activity of Jesus, which is a kind of balance to the rest of the gospel, in which the author focuses primarily on Jesus' teaching, presenting him against the background of his five great discourses.

Every Matthean summary has its background in Markan material. In the case of certain texts, this relationship is even stronger, for they depend in some way on Markan summaries: (1) Mark 1:32–34 is a basis for Matt 8:16(–17); (2) Mark 3:7–12 remains in the background of Matt 4:23–25 and 12:15–16(–21); (3) Mark 6:53–56 was an inspiration for Matt 14:34–36.

All the summaries concern Jesus' activity in Galilee; the last one – 19:1–2 – informs the reader about Jesus leaving this region. The internal relationship of summaries is

⁹⁴ The author of the first gospel presents Jesus, first of all, as the one who teaches. This motif is widely investigated in J.Y.-H. Yieh, *One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel Report* (BZNW 124; Berlin: De Gruyter 2004). Matthean summaries are to show that Jesus is more than just an itinerant instructor.

⁹⁵ In 7:28–29, the crowds are also present, but without the healing context.

⁹⁶ The extension in time is expressed by Jesus' journey from Galilee into Transjordan.

especially noticeable between 4:23–25 and 9:35(–36), as well as between 12:15–16(–21) and 14:13–14. Furthermore, the first summary statement found in 4:23–25 influences all remaining summaries by setting the programme of the entire missionary activity of Jesus. The subsequent summary statements only repeat the threads already mentioned at the beginning (4:23–25).

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