

MATTHEW'S USE OF *SKANDALON* / *SKANDALIZŌ*: A PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Abstract. This study examines Matthew's distinctive use of *skandalizō/skandalon* terminology as a narrative motif that structures both christology and ecclesiology. While earlier scholarship has treated these lexemes lexically or thematically, their role as a coherent motif has remained underexplored. By analyzing twelve passages, the project shows how Matthew intensifies inherited traditions from Mark, Q, and Sondergut material, weaving "scandalization" into moments of crisis and decision. On the christological level, the motif highlights paradoxical aspects of Jesus' identity: Judge, Compassionate Shepherd, therapeutic Son of David, suffering Messiah, and prophet rejected in his hometown. On the ecclesiological level, it portrays disciples and other characters as either rejecting Jesus outright or faltering under persecution, thereby becoming *skandala*. Grouping the passages into three clusters reveals Matthew's literary artistry and theological depth, demonstrating that "scandalization" functions as a hinge of narrative tension and a lens for understanding faith, failure, and discipleship.

Keywords: *skandalizō*, *skandalon*, christology, ecclesiology, paradox, tension, discipleship.

Matthew's Gospel repeatedly deploys *skandalizō/skandalon* as a hinge for narrative tension, yet its role has rarely been examined in depth. Moreover, scholarship has seldom treated it as a coherent motif warranting synchronic analysis. In response, this article traces the trajectory of my doctoral research, which approaches *skandalizō/skandalon* as a concept developed consistently within Matthew's narrative. The first section surveys the most significant contributions to the study of this motif within Matthew and argues for the methodological fruitfulness of a synchronic approach in uncovering its full exegetical potential. The second section advances a new hypothesis concerning the function of the *skandalizō/skandalon* passages in Matthew's narrative and delineates the framework of the proposed doctoral study. I contend that Matthew employs this terminology not merely as a metaphor for offense or sin, but as a narrative device that shapes the Gospel's portrayal of Christological paradox and structures the disciples' evolving (self-)understanding within that paradox.