

2. Questions for Reflection (Borchert, p 43)

- a. How would you summarize the main aspects of the portrait of Jesus in Matthew? What aspects are most in line with the Jewish expectation of the Messiah? Why do you think most Jews have rejected Jesus as their Messiah?
- b. What aspects of this portrait do you think might speak most forcefully to a biblically illiterate generation?
- c. What do you think is the role of apologetics (using arguments to prove your case) in sharing your faith (witnessing, preaching, and teaching)? Does this presentation of Matthew offer clues for better proclaiming Jesus? What clues can you identify specifically?

Homework

1. Read Hebrews at least once and in one-sitting, if possible.
2. Read Borchert chapter 4, pp 43-51.
3. Think about your response to the *Questions for Reflection* on pp 51-52.
 - a. How would you summarize the main message of Hebrews?
 - b. When have you struggled to proclaim this message?
 - c. How seriously do you take the writer's affirmations of the superiority of Christ? What does that message of Christ's superiority mean in a world obsessed with struggles for power and wealth?
 - d. For people today, how can you communicate in a meaningful manner the Preacher's thinking concerning Jewish ritual, covenant, and sacrifice?
 - e. In your understanding, how do you handle the severe warnings of Hebrews?

Portraits of Jesus

A Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew

A. Gospel - Review

1. Jesus did not write any of the gospel accounts.
2. The gospels are not biographies.
3. The gospels did not record everything that Jesus did or said.
4. The four gospels have similarities and differences.
5. There have been many efforts to harmonize the gospels.
6. There are two main types of material in each gospel.
 - a. Direct teachings by Jesus
 - b. Narrative about Jesus
7. Each gospel was written to persuade people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - a. Mark was trying to persuade Romans.
 - b. Matthew was trying to persuade Jews.
 - 1) Writer – The Apostle Matthew is named in the title, but the title was added later when the gospels were collected together. Nothing in the actual text specifically names the author. “Matthew wrote a first draft of Jesus’ teachings, possibly also including certain narratives, which either he or someone else later revised in light of Mark” (Blomberg, 40).
 - 2) Date – “The most common modern reconstruction of the relationship among the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) identifies Mark as the earliest of the three, with Matthew and Luke both utilizing Mark’s Gospel extensively as one of their sources.” (Blomberg, *Matthew* in NAC, 37) Matthew was almost certainly written before AD 100, since it is quoted by Ignatius around AD 110. It was most likely written after Mark, but the date of Mark (ca. AD 60-62) is uncertain. It is also unclear if Matthew was written before or after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. So, a possible date range for the writing of Matthew is somewhere between AD 40 and AD 100. Scholarly opinion narrows this to AD 58-69 as the most likely period for its writing.

B. The Portrait of Jesus in Matthew

1. Images of Jesus (Borchert, pp 19-26)

a. Jesus is the Son of David.

- 1) **Read Mt 1:1.** Jesus was a descendant of David and Abraham. He was a Jew.
- 2) The title “Son of David” is used eight times (1:1, 9:27, 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9,15; 22:42) in Matthew to refer to Jesus.
- 3) Borchert writes, “Jesus was descended from Abraham and from the historic royal line of David. . . . the Davidic line is not purely Israelite” (Borchert, 36).
 - a) Jesus’ Gentile blood is made clear in his genealogy (Mt. 1:3,5,6) with references to Tamar, a Canaanite, Rahab, a harlot of Jericho, Ruth, a Moabitess, and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
 - b) He was a care-giver to Gentiles, outcasts, and sinners.
 - i. A Roman Centurion (8:5-13)
 - ii. Matthew, a hated tax collector, and sinners (9:9-13)
 - iii. A Canaanite woman (15:21-28)
- 4) He was human as evidenced by his birth as the son of Mary (1:25), his physical death (27:50), and his burial (27:59-60).

b. **Jesus is King of the Jews.**

- 1) Jesus is referred to by this title five times (2:2; 27:11; 27:29,37,42) in Matthew.
- 2) The first ones to call him “king of the Jews” are the Gentile Magi, who come to worship him at his birth (2:2).
- 3) This title flows naturally from the fact that he is descended from King David.
- 4) It is used most often near the end of Matthew’s gospel as a means for convicting and crucifying him: Trial before Pilate (27:11), mocking of soldiers (27:29), placard affixed to the cross (27:37), and mocking of Jewish leaders (27:42 – King of Israel).
- 5) As the king, he revealed the arrival and nature of the kingdom of heaven.
- 6) “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near” was a major theme of his preaching (4:17) and teaching (5:3,19(2x),20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11,12).
 - a) Kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God refer to the same kingdom.
 - b) Mark and Luke used the term kingdom of God. Matthew preferred kingdom of heaven (28x) and only used kingdom of God five times (6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:31, 21:43).
- 7) Jesus taught in parables about the kingdom of heaven.
 - a) “The disciples came to him and asked, ‘Why do you speak to the people in parables?’ He replied, ‘Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them’” (13:10-11).
 - b) There are 36 parables of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. Matthew begins sharing Jesus’ parables in chapter 13 which itself contains 7 parables. In total, Matthew shares 17 parables of which 9 are unique to his gospel.
 - i. Tares (13:24-53)
 - ii. Hidden Treasure (13:44)
 - iii. Pearl of Great Price (13:45)
 - iv. Drawing Net (13:47-53)
 - v. Unforgiving Servant (18:23-35)
 - vi. Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-16)
 - vii. Two Sons (21:28-32)
 - viii. Ten Virgins (25:1-13)
 - ix. Sheep and Goats (25:31-46)

c. **Jesus is the Son of Man.**

- 1) This is a favorite name that Jesus used 32x to refer to himself (8:20, 9:6, 10:23; 11:19; 12:8; 12:32; 12:40; 13:37,41; 6:13,27,28; 17:9,12,22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18; 20:28; 24:27,30(2x),37,39,44; 25:13,31; 26:2; 26:24(2x); 26:45; 26:64).
 - a) It is a reference also cited by the other synoptic gospel writers and points to the humanity and suffering of Jesus but more importantly to his exalted and powerful position in the end-times.
 - b) The reference to the “Son of Man” in Daniel 7:13 would be clear to a Jewish reader.
- 2) Jesus is the coming, powerful judge and king of creation. **Read Dan 7:13-14.**
 - a) John the Baptist said of Jesus, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (3:11-12)
 - b) Jesus said, “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Mt 10:34).

- 3) Jesus is the righteous judge (3:11-12; 7:21-23, 11:20-24; 12:36-37; 13:40-43; 25:31-46)
- 4) Jesus is the wise one who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart and confronts hypocrisy.
 - a) Notice his skill in dealing with the Jewish leaders who sought to trap and judge him (21:23-27; 22:15-22; 22:23-33; 22:34-40; 22:41-46).
 - b) “The disposition of this antagonistic relationship between Jesus and his opponents is summarized in the conclusion to the Olivet discourse when Jesus indicates that upon his return in power, the Son of Man will separate the sheep from the goats” (Borchert, 41).

d. **Jesus is the Son of God.**

- 1) This title was used 9x in Matthew’s gospel (4:3,6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40,43,54) by others to refer to Jesus’ divinity. It is not a title he used of himself, although he did refer to himself as the son and to God as his father.
 - a) Satan was the first one to use this title during the temptations (4:3,6).
 - b) Demons tormenting two Gadarene men knew who he was (9:29).
 - c) Peter eventually identified him as the “Son of the Living God” (16:16).
 - d) It was the charge by the high priest that Jesus claimed to be “the Messiah, the son of God” that led to charges of blasphemy and his crucifixion (26:63).
 - e) This title was used by passersby (27:40) and Jewish leaders (27:43) to mock him on the cross.
 - f) It was proclaimed to be true by a Gentile, a Roman centurion, who witnessed his crucifixion (27:54).
- 2) It was a fact affirmed by God, the Father, at Jesus’ baptism (3:17) and his transfiguration (17:5).
- 3) It was a fact affirmed by the actions of Jesus.
 - a) Jesus was tested by temptation but unlike every other human, he was without sin (4:1-11)
 - b) Jesus was a divine miracle worker with power over nature (8:23-27); demons (8:28-34); sickness (9:1-8,27-34); and even death (9:18-26).
 - c) He forgave sins (9:1-2)
 - d) He revealed the kingdom of God and the Father (11:25-30)
 - e) He was Lord of the Sabbath (12:1-14 (focal v. 8)
 - f) “Matthew believed Jesus had the divine authority to confront and reconfigure the legal and religious rules of the scribes and the Pharisees” (Borchert, 40).
 - g) He is the resurrected Lord and Son of God (28:6-7; 28:16-20).

e. **Jesus is the Messiah**

- 1) This was the first title given to him by Matthew (1:1).
 - a) Messiah = Hb., *mashiach* = “anointed one” – a special deliverer anointed and sent by God to rescue and redeem his people.
 - b) He was proclaimed to be the Savior of his people by an angel in Joseph’s dream (1:21).
 - c) Peter identified him as “Messiah” (16:16) in addition to being “Son of the Living God.”

- 2) Matthew appealed to and used the Old Testament more than any other gospel writer. Borchert writes, “Matthew . . . inserts into his Gospel story of Jesus . . . many fulfillment statements. These fulfillment statements are intended to support his overall thesis that Jesus is Israel’s promised Messiah” (Borchert, 36). There are **fourteen** Messianic fulfillment statements in Matthew.
- i. His birth – “*All this took place to fulfill* what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’)” (1:23, emphasis me). – Isa 7:14
 - ii. His place of birth (2:5-6) – Mic 5:2,4
 - iii. Called from Egypt (2:15) – Hos 11:1
 - iv. Suffering of mothers of infant sons in Bethlehem (2:17-18) – Jer 31:15
 - v. A Nazarene (2:23) – unknown quote
 - vi. Coming Lord: “Prepare the way of the Lord (3:3) – Isa 40:3
 - vii. Coming Lord: “. . . Daughter Zion, ‘See your king comes to you . . .’” (21:4-5) – Zec 9:9
 - viii. Light to Gentiles (4:15-16) – Isa 9:1-2
 - ix. Healer of our infirmities (8:17) – Isa 53:4
 - x. God’s chosen servant (12:18-21) – Isa 42:1-4
 - xi. Parable speaker (13:35) – Ps 78:2
 - xii. Shepherd who is struck (26:31) – Zec 13:7
 - xiii. His arrest (26:54,56) – general reference to OT prophecy
 - xiv. His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (27:9) – Zc 11:12,13
- 3) “Matthew organizes Jesus’ teaching into five sections Could the reason for five sections be that Matthew was indicating to the Jews that Jesus should be understood as bringing a New Torah or a new set of instructions from God? (Borchert, 38)
- a) “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (7:28-29).
 - b) Similar endings to teaching sections occur at 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1.
 - c) Borchert concludes, “Matthew, like Luke, was also eager for his readers to realize that authenticity with God involved care for other people. . . Jesus is patently opposed to all forms of inauthentic religious piety (6:1-7:23). . . . Jesus expects people to honor without hesitation the way of humbly walking (*halak*) with God while rejecting the picky rules and patterns (*halakah*) of the rabbis” (Borchert 39-40).
- 4) The nexus, gathering point or climax, of three of Matthew’s main portraits/titles for Jesus comes in his final confrontation with the high priest at his trial:

“The high priest said to him, ‘I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the **Messiah**, the **Son of God**,’ ‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied. ‘But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the **Son of Man** sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (26:63-64, emphasis mine).

C. Homework

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