

## **A Biblical-Theological Reading of Matthew's First Four Chapters**

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### **Objectives**

- 1.) Develop a framework for reading the gospels from a redemptive-historical perspective.
- 2.) Understand the book of Matthew within the larger context of Scripture.
- 3.) Understand the theological or redemptive composition of Matthew's gospel.
- 4.) Recognize the typological relationship between Matthew and the Old Testament.
- 5.) Recognize how Matthew introduces redemptive truths and then develops them later.
- 6.) Understand the practical implications of Christ as the true Israel and new Lawgiver.
- 7.) Recognize Jesus as the theme and goal of all of Scripture so we might rightly glorify him.

### **How to read the Gospels**

- 1.) Redemptive-history.
- 2.) Christotelic and Ecclesiotelic.
- 3.) Textual, Epochal, and Canonical Horizons.

### **The genealogy, conception, and birth of Jesus (Matt 1:1-25)**

- 1.) Matthew's genealogy states from the very beginning that Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1-2, 6).
- 2.) Matthew is careful to highlight the inclusion of four Gentile women into his genealogy (Matt 1:3, 5-6; Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba).
- 3.) The mention of Judah and his brothers and Jeconiah and his brothers testifies to God's work in redemptive history with all of Israel and now his new work with a new Israel (Matt 1:2, 11).
- 4.) God is the principle character in salvation-history who brings about redemption (Matt 1:18-25).
  - a.) Jesus will take away the sins of the people (Matt 1:20-21).
  - b.) Jesus' birth means God will be with his people (Matt 1:22-23).

## **Jesus the king of the nations, the true Israel, the end of exile, and the Nazarene (Matt 2:1-23)**

1.) Jesus is the king of the nations (Matt 2:1-12).

a.) It signifies the nations coming to recognize God's reign in the last days (Psa 72:10-11; Isa 2:1-4; 19:24-25; 43:5-10; 45:14; 49:23; 56:7; 60:3-6; 66:20-23; Amos 9:12; Obad 1:16-17; Micah 4:1-3; Hagg 2:7-9; Zech 2:10-11; 8:3-16; 14:16-19).

b.) The magi serve as an anti-type to Balaam, who prophesied of a coming ruler for Israel (Num 24:7, 17).

2.) Jesus is the true Israel (Matt 2:13-15).

3.) The true son brings the end of exile (Matt 2:16-18).

4.) Jesus the Nazarene (Matt 2:19-23).

## **John the Baptist (Matt 3:1-12; 11:1-19; 17:1-13)**

There are three significant points to understand about John's preaching concerning heart change.

1.) God is free to create a new people if he wants and those in Israel who do not bear fruit are cut off (Matt 3:9).

2.) Only the true people of God will receive the promised Spirit, which is associated with the Messianic or eschatological age to come, whereas those who do not bear fruit will face judgment (Matt 3:11-12).

3.) The church—the true Israel, which Christ will institute, will bear the fruits keeping with repentance (Matt 16:13ff). They are the true children of Abraham (cf., Rom 2:28-29; Gal 3:7).

Jesus goes on to explain at his transfiguration that John is Elijah (Matt 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13). It is important to recognize Jesus' logic in this passage.

1.) The disciples ask if in fact Elijah must come first before the Lord's anointed (Matt 17:10)

2.) Jesus states that Elijah will come and restore all things (Matt 17:11). In other words, the scribes have taught you correctly.

3.) However, know and recognize that Elijah has already come and the scribes did not recognize him, but killed him, just as they will kill the Son of Man (Matt 17:12).

4.) Thus, the three disciples understood that John was the messenger sent in the spirit of Elijah (Matt 17:13).

### **Jesus' baptism, temptation, beginning of his ministry, and the twelve (Matt 3:13-4:22)**

1.) Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:13-17). Jesus comes to John to be baptized. The refusal of John to baptize Jesus is because of his inferior baptism (i.e., water). Two things become clear with his refusal.

a.) John recognizes that Jesus' baptism is far superior to his baptism; thus, understanding Jesus as the promised Messiah.

b.) John understands that Jesus' baptism involves the Holy Spirit, which signifies his belief, and recognition that only Jesus, as the Messiah, can usher in the promised eschatological age of deliverance and restoration, which is chiefly characterized by the presence of the Spirit.

Jesus as God's Son is baptized as the Spirit descends upon him and the heavenly voice declares, "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well-pleased" (cf., Psa 2:7; Isa 42:1). Two things become clear with this declaration.

a.) The significance of divine announcement is clear. Unlike Israel, he is the faithful son.

b.) With the opening of the heavens, God now begins his promise in Christ to come down and do a great work among men where he will do awesome things (cf., Isa 64:1-3).

2.) Jesus' temptation (Matt 4:1-11).

For Matthew the triumph of Christ over sin and temptation in the wilderness signifies two things.

a.) Jesus is the true Israel.

b.) Jesus vanquishes Satan and signifies that he alone is able to defeat the powers of darkness and set people free from sin.

3.) The beginning of Jesus' ministry (Matt 4:12-22).

4.) To begin this new Israel, Jesus selects twelve disciples (Matt 4:18-22; 10:1-15; cf., Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; John 1:35-51).

### **Jesus the new lawgiver (Matt 4:23-7:29)**