

The Synoptic Problem and *The Gospel according to Matthew*

Catholic Bible Institute in the Diocese of Orange
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<http://catholic-resources.org>



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- 8:00** *Saturday Mass (optional)*
- 8:30** *Arrival & Setup*
- 8:45** *Opening Prayer / Initial Announcements*
- 9:00** **Session 1 – The Synoptic Problem: An Overview**
Historical & Literary Relationships between Matthew, Mark, and Luke
What’s the “Problem” with the Synoptic Gospels?
Various Solutions proposed for the “Synoptic Problem”
The Four-Source (or Two-Document) Hypothesis
Analyzing Gospel Parallels: esp. Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*
- 10:00** **Table Discussion:** *What differences does knowing the ORDER of the Gospels’ composition make to our understating of Matthew’s Gospel?*
- 10:15** *Break*
- 10:30** **Session 2 – The Gospel according to Matthew: Jesus the King and Teacher**
Matthew’s Gospel: Outline / Overview / Literary Features
Matthew’s Jesus: Son of David, Son of Abraham, Teacher/Lawgiver like Moses
Discipleship in Matthew: Learning and Living acc. to Jesus’ Teachings
Five Great Speeches of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel
The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7)
- 11:30** **Reflection on Matt 5** *(by Randy Lopez)*
- 11:45** **Table Discussions:** *What impresses/surprises you most about Matthew’s portrait of Jesus?*
- 12:00** *Lunch*
- 1:00** **Session 3 – The Parables of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels**
Definitions: What are “Parables”? (and what are they not?)
What is the “Purpose” of Jesus’ Parables?
Parables and Related Materials in the Four Gospels
Parables in Matthew, esp. Matt 13 and Matt 24–25
- 2:00** **Group Project:** *Analyzing a Matthean Parable: What’s the “strange twist” within the story?*
- 2:15** *Break*
- 2:30** **Session 4 – Miracles, Mission, and Church**
Miracle Stories in the Synoptic Gospels
Matt 8–9 – Jesus the Miracle-Worker
Matt 10 – Apostles “sent out” on a Mission
Matt 16 – Christology and Ecclesiology
Matt 18 – Community life of the “Church”
Matt 28 – Resurrection & Great Commission
- 3:30** *Concluding Q & A*
- 3:45** *Homework Instructions / Final Announcements / Closing Prayer*
- 4:00** *Clean-up & Departure*



The Gospel according to Matthew

Structural Outline:

Genealogy & Infancy Narrative: 1–2

Narrative: 3–4 *First Discourse: “Sermon on Mount”*: 5–7

Narrative: 8–9 *Second Discourse: “Missionary Instructions”*: 10

Narrative: 11–12 *Third Discourse: “Parables Collection”*: 13

Narrative: 14–17 *Fourth Discourse: “Community Instructions”*: 18

Narrative: 19–22 *Fifth Discourse: “Eschatological Sermon”*: 23–25

Passion & Resurrection Narrative: 26–28

Note: This structure was not invented by modern scholars, but is indicated by Matthew himself, who at the end of each of these five discourses writes, “When Jesus had finished saying these things...” (or something very similar; see 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1).

Material found only in Matthew:

- 1:1 – Introductory Verse
- 1:18-2:23 – The Infancy Narrative (incl. Dreams of Joseph, Birth of Jesus, Visit of the Magi, Flight into Egypt, Massacre of the Infants of Bethlehem, Return from Egypt)
- 5:17-20, 21-24, 27-29, 31, 33-38, 43 – Jesus Teaches about the Law, Anger, Adultery, and Oaths
- 6:1-8, 16-19 – Teaching about Almsgiving and about Fasting
- 7:6, 15-17 – Sayings about Pearls before Swine, and False Prophets
- 7:28-29 – Conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount
- 9:27-31 – The Healing of the Two Blind Men (cf. 20:29-34)
- 9:35-38 – A Summary of the Compassion of Jesus
- 10:22-23 – Part of Jesus’ Teaching about Upcoming Persecutions
- 11:1 – Narrator’s Conclusion to Jesus’ Missionary Discourse
- 11:28-30 – The Gentle Mastery of Christ
- 13:24-30 – The Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat
- 13:36-43 – The Explanation of the Parable of the Weeds
- 13:44-52 – Three More Parables and a Concluding Dialogue
- 14:28-31 – Peter Attempts to Walk on Water
- 16:17-19 – Jesus’ Response to Peter’s Confession
- 17:24-27 – Dialogue about Payment of the Temple Tax
- 18:15-20, 21-35 – A Brother Who Sins, and The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
- 19:10-12 – The Disciples React to Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce
- 20:1-16 – The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
- 21:28-32 – The Parable of the Two Sons
- Almost all of Ch. 23 – Prohibition of Titles, Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees
- 25:1-13 – The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids
- 25:31-46 – The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
- 27:3-10 – The Death of Judas
- 27:24-25 – Pilate Washes His Hands
- 27:52-53 – Resuscitation of the Saints
- 27:62-66 – The Guard Posted at the Tomb
- 28:11-15 – The Report of the Guard
- 28:16-20 – The Commissioning of the Disciples

Material in other Gospels but significantly different in Matthew:

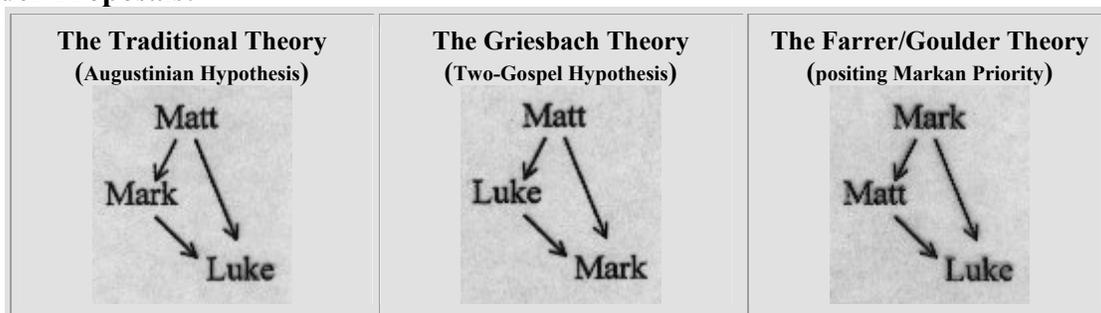
- 1:2-17 – The Genealogy of Jesus
- Most of Ch. 5–7 – The Sermon on the Mount (esp. 5:3-12; 6:9-15; 7:15-20)
- Most of Ch. 10 – The Missionary Discourse
- 12:33-37 – The Tree and Its Fruit
- 16:13-23 – Peter’s Confession about Jesus
- Much of Ch. 18 – The Community Discourse
- 22:1-14 – The Parable of the Wedding Feast
- 25:14-30 – The Parable of the Talents

The Synoptic Problem

The “Synoptic Gospels”- The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so similar to each other that, in a sense, they view Jesus “with the same eye” (*syn-optic*), in contrast to the very different picture of Jesus presented in the Fourth Gospel (John) or the non-canonical Gospels. Yet there are also many significant differences among the three Synoptic Gospels.

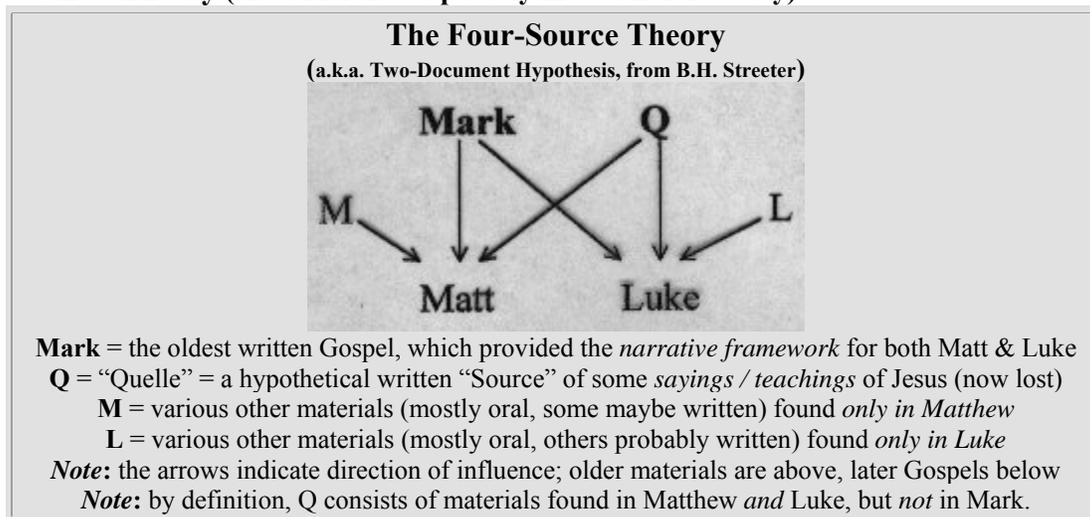
The “Synoptic Problem” - The similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke are so numerous and so close, both in the order of the material and in the exact wording of long stretches of text, that it is insufficient to explain the similarities on the basis of common *oral tradition* alone. Rather, some type of *literary dependence* must be assumed. That is, someone copied from someone else’s text; several of the evangelists must have used one or more of the earlier Gospels as sources for their own works. The situation is complicated because some of the material is common to all three Synoptics, while other material is in only two out of these three Gospels (see the color analysis suggested below). Moreover, the common material is not always presented in the same order in the various Gospels. So, the questions remain: who wrote first? and who copied from whom?

Some Older Proposals:



Note: Many other solutions have been proposed over the years, but most are variations of one of these three basic theories.

The Four-Source Theory (the solution accepted by most scholars today):



“Markan Priority” - For most of Christian history, people thought that Matthew was the first and oldest Gospel, and that Mark was a later, shorter version of the same basic message. Today, however, most scholars are convinced that Mark is the oldest Gospel (at least its final version, as we have it today), and that Matthew and Luke are later expansions of Mark. Why?

1. Mark’s Gospel contains several grammatical, literary, historical, and geographical difficulties (minor errors) that are not found in Matthew and/or Luke. If Matthew was first, it is harder to understand how Mark could have introduced these errors; but if Mark was first, it is easy to see how Matthew and/or Luke wanted to and were able to correct Mark’s minor mistakes.
2. Mark’s Gospel contains several episodes that are obscure (4:26-29; 14:51-52) or make Jesus look crazy (3:19-21), magical (7:32-37), or weak (8:22-26). If Matthew was first, it is harder to explain why Mark added these strange episodes; but if Mark was first, it is easy to understand why both Matthew and Luke omitted them.
3. Mark’s basic chronological/geographical structure is the same as in the other two Synoptics; but the material found in both Matthew and Luke (but not in Mark) is in very different orders in these two Gospels. If Matthew was first and Mark second, it is hard to understand why Luke would have kept the same order for all the material found in both Matthew and Mark, but substantially rearranged all the other material found in Matthew but not in Mark. If Mark was first, however, then it is easy to explain how Matthew and Luke inserted the extra material they have in common (from the Q source?) into Mark’s overall outline, although in significantly different ways.

Note that scholars who believe Mark was historically first do not suggest that the order of the four Gospels in the New Testament should be changed; there is no reason why the traditional order (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) cannot be retained in printed Bibles. However, in textbooks and academic works, many scholars treat Mark first, followed by Matthew and Luke, with John usually still last.

Objections against the “Q-Hypothesis” - Some scholars object to the hypothesis of a lost collection the teachings of Jesus (as the “Q-document” is thought to have been) for various reasons; but each of these objections can easily be countered:

1. *Objection:* The “Q-document” no longer exists, if it ever did. *Response:* If almost all of the material in “Q” was incorporated into Matthew’s and/or Luke’s Gospels, then early Christians would have had little need or desire to preserve “Q” as a separate document. When people find a “revised and expanded edition” of a work, they don’t always keep the older, shorter edition. Rather than wondering why “Q” was lost, it would be more important to ask why Mark was preserved! (see the next section below)
2. *Objection:* No early Christians would have composed a collection of the sayings and teachings of Jesus, as “Q” supposedly was (like the “Sayings of Confucius” or the “Sayings of Chairman Mao”), without also including some stories of his miracles and other actions, and his passion, death, and resurrection. *Response:* The non-canonical “Gospel of Thomas,” rediscovered in 1948, is a collection of 114 sayings, parables, and short teachings of Jesus that does not include any miracles or other stories about events in Jesus’ life. Although the Gospel of Thomas is not the same as “Q” (its contents are significantly different), it is proof that early Christians did indeed compose the same type or genre of literature that the Q-document seems to have been.
3. *Objection:* The “Q-hypothesis” is not necessary for explaining the relationships among the three Synoptic Gospels. *Response:* All the other solutions that try to solve the Synoptic Problem without positing a “Q-document” (see the charts above) have their own significant problems. [The details are too complex to be discussed on this webpage, but are available in many textbooks and scholarly works.] Although we should remember that the past existence of a Q-document is only a hypothesis, not a proven fact, it does seem to provide the best solution for explaining the “Synoptic Problem.”

The Preservation and Canonization of Mark - Given that Mark’s Gospel is so short and has several difficulties (see above), it is interesting to ask why Mark was not lost, but rather was accepted into the NT canon. There are at least three reasons why Mark was preserved and canonized, despite its shortcomings:

1. Mark was the secretary or “interpreter” of **Peter** (see **Papias**, as quoted by Eusebius); so in a way, the Gospel according to Mark could be thought of as “Peter’s Gospel.” And since Peter was the leader among the apostles, early Christians would have had good reason to preserve what they considered to be a written record of Peter’s preaching.
2. Mark’s Gospel was thought to have been written in **Rome** and/or for the early Christians in Rome (see **Clement of Alexandria**, also quoted by Eusebius); so in a sense, Mark’s Gospel could be considered the “Gospel of/from Rome.” Not only was Rome the capital and largest city of the Roman empire, but the two most important Christian apostles, Peter and Paul, both preached, were martyred, and are buried there. Thus, the Christian community in Rome became prominent and influential very early in Christian history, and it is easy to understand why “their” Gospel would have been preserved and accepted into the NT canon.
3. If “Markan priority” is correct and Mark’s was indeed the **first** Gospel to have been written, then it would be the oldest available record of the words and deeds of Jesus, yet another reason why early Christians might have preserved and continued to use it, despite its brevity and shortcomings.

Color Analysis of Synoptic Materials:

When analyzing biblical passages that are common to two or three Gospels, biblical students often highlight the texts using commonly available colored pens. The following color scheme is very easy to remember, if you recall what most children learn in kindergarten about combining the primary colors. This coloration scheme is also used on the pages of this website.

Single Traditions:

Use the following colors to highlight words, phrases, or longer passages that occur in *only one Gospel*, but *not in the others*:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Matthew red | Mark yellow | Luke blue |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|

Double Traditions:

Use the following colors to highlight materials that occur in *two* of the Synoptic Gospels, but *not in the third*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Matt & Mark red + yellow = orange | Mark & Luke yellow + blue = green |
| Matt & Luke (Q) red + blue = purple | |

Triple Traditions:

Use a pencil or black pen to underline materials that are identical in *all three* of the Synoptic Gospels:

| |
|---|
| Matt & Mark & Luke (black or gray pencil) |
|---|

The Gospel according to Matthew: Literary Features & Theological Emphases

I) Composition and History of the Gospel according to Matthew:

- **Attributed Author:**
 - Matthew was a tax collector, one of the twelve apostles (see Matt 9:9; 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).
 - Although not all the apostles could read and write, tax collectors like Matthew certainly could.
 - The apostle Matthew himself may have written an early collection of Jesus' sayings in Hebrew or Aramaic, but probably not the full 28-chapter Gospel written in Greek as found in the New Testament (the "canonical Gospel").
- **Actual Author:**
 - Anonymous 2nd-generation Jewish-Christian teacher used various sources to create Gospel acc. to Matthew.
 - Author was a trained "scribe" (cf. Matt 13:52), very familiar with Hebrew Bible and fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
 - Just as for the other Gospels, the title "Gospel according to Matthew" was not added to the text until the second century.
- **Original Readers / Intended Audience:**
 - Mostly Jews who had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment of biblical prophecies.
 - Matthew teaches them about the significance of Jesus, but without abandoning their Jewish heritage (Matt 5:17-20).
 - Matthew challenges them to put their faith into action (not just words, but also deeds).
 - Matthew's community was evidently opposed to/by the Pharisees (Jewish leaders who denied that Jesus was Messiah).
- **Date of Composition:**
 - For many centuries, people thought Matthew was oldest of four Gospels; most scholars today believe Mark was first.
 - Gospel of Matthew probably not finalized until the late 70's or 80's of the first century, but it incorporates older sources.
 - Main sources are Old Testament, Gospel of Mark, Q-Document, and other oral or written material about Jesus.
 - Final composition of Matthew was *after* destruction of Jerusalem temple in AD 70 (see Matt 21:41; 22:7; 24:15-16)
- **Place of Composition:**
 - Possibly in Palestine, but more probably in or around the city of Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria.
 - Large early Christian community there: "it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians" (Acts 11:26b).
 - In early 2nd century already, Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (died ca. 110 AD) quotes passages from Matthew's Gospel.

II) Sources and Contents of the Gospel according to Matthew:

- **Main Sources of Matthew's Gospel:**
 - **Old Testament:** Matthew's Gospel quotes extensively from the Old Testament, especially the prophetic books.
 - **Gospel of Mark:** Most scholars today believe that Mark is the oldest surviving Gospel, and that the author of Matthew's Gospel used Mark's text as one of his primary written sources.
 - **Q-Document:** Matthew supplemented Markan material with more stories & teachings of Jesus from another written source, now lost, which scholars call the Q-Document (from the German word "Quelle," meaning "source").
 - **Sayings of the Lord, recorded by Matthew:** The 4th-century church historian Eusebius of Caesarea refers to the 2nd-century bishop Papias of Hierapolis regarding the composition of Matthew's Gospel [see [Eusebius on the Four Gospels](#)].
 - *"So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able."*
 - This collection of "Sayings of the Lord" may have been written in Aramaic, the Jews' common spoken language at the time of Jesus, rather than in Hebrew (language of ancient Israelites, in which most of the OT is written).
 - If Matthew's early document was a source, it explains why the Greek Gospel was called "according to Matthew."
 - **Other Material:** Matthew also incorporated some material from other written and/or oral sources.
- **Use of Mark's Gospel in Matthew:**
 - **Matthew's Gospel retains the geographical outline and most of the content of Mark's Gospel:**
 - The public ministry of Jesus seems to last only about one year (from his baptism to his death).
 - The adult Jesus undertakes only one journey to Jerusalem with his disciples, at the very end of his life.
 - Matthew's Gospel contains most of Mark's material, although sometimes rearranged (see Matt 5-7 & 8-11).
 - Very few stories from Mark are omitted by Matthew.
 - **Matthew's Gospel improves on Mark's Greek grammar and writing style:**
 - Matthew makes some stories less wordy and repetitive than in Mark.
 - Matthew narrates stories of Jesus in the past tense, not Mark's "historical present"
 - **Matthew's Gospel corrects some of Mark's historical inaccuracies:**
 - Matt 3:3 drops text not actually from Isaiah 40 (cf. Mark 1:2-3)
 - Matt 12:3 omits incorrect reference to "Abiathar" (cf. Mark 2:26)

- **Matthew's Gospel groups similar materials, but in ways different from Mark:**
 - Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7)
 - Ten Miracles (Matt 8–9), but also including various dialogues & teachings
 - Many parables, mostly about the "Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt 13)
 - A series of "Woes" against the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23)
 - Another collection of parables (Matt 24–25)
- **Additional Materials in Matthew's Gospel, not found in Mark:**
 - **New Narrative Material added:**
 - Infancy story (chap. 1–2, including genealogy of Jesus)
 - Three temptations of Jesus in the desert (4:1-11; also in Luke 4:1-13)
 - Healing a Centurion's servant (8:5-13; also in Luke 7:1-10)
 - Healing of two blind men in Galilee (9:27-31; cf. 20:29-34)
 - Peter attempts to walk on water (14:28-31)
 - New episodes in Passion Narrative (chap. 26–27)
 - Risen Jesus appears to disciples in Galilee: Great Commission (chap. 28)
 - **New Sayings Material added:**
 - In Mark, Jesus is often addressed as "teacher," but Mark includes relatively few teachings of Jesus
 - Matthew has many more sayings, teachings, parables, dialogues, etc.
 - Some of these also in Luke (from Q-source); others are unique to Matthew (from other oral or written sources)
 - **Complete list of materials unique to Matthew:** http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Synoptic_Outlines.htm#Matt

III) Structural Outline of Matthew's Gospel:

- **Five Major Discourses:** Most scholars agree that aside from the *introduction* (Ch. 1–2: Narrative of Jesus' Birth) and *conclusion* (Ch. 26–28: Narrative of Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection), the *body* of Matthew's Gospel is structured around five lengthy sermons that Jesus gives to his disciples or to the broader public.
 - First Discourse: **"Sermon on the Mount": Matt 5–7**
 - Second Discourse: **"Missionary Instructions": Matt 10**
 - Third Discourse: **"Collection of Parables": Matt 13**
 - Fourth Discourse: **"Community Instructions": Matt 18**
 - Fifth Discourse: **"Sermon on Eschatology": Matt 23–25**
- **This structure is indicated by the Evangelist himself**, who at the end of each of these five discourses writes a transition:
 - "Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching..." (7:28)
 - See also 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1
- The rest of Matthew's Gospel (Ch. 3–4, 8–9, 11–12, 14–17, 19–23) consists mostly of *narrative* materials (Jesus' travels, miracles, healings, exorcisms, disputes with opponents, etc.), although also containing many shorter sayings and teachings.

IV) Literary Features and Themes of Matthew:

- **Matthew's Gospel includes many references to the Hebrew Scriptures, esp. Prophetic Texts:**
 - **Biblical Event and Characters:** Matthew's Gospel frequently refers to figures from the Old Testament:
 - Moses (mentioned 7 times), Elijah (9x), Isaiah (6x), Jeremiah (3x), Daniel (1x), David (17x), Solomon (3x), etc.
 - **Direct Quotations:** Matthew's Gospel contains over sixty quotations of (or strong allusions to) texts from Hebrew Bible.
 - It frequently says the words or actions of Jesus or other Gospel characters have taken place "to fulfill" the scriptures.
 - The scripture quotations are sometimes introduced by what scholars call a "fulfillment formula."
 - **Fulfillment Formulas:** In over a dozen texts, the evangelist/narrator(Matthew) says, "All this took place *to fulfill* what had been *spoken* by the Lord through the *prophet*" (or something similar), often followed by an OT quotation:
 - Matt 1:22-23; 2:5b-6; 2:15b; 2:17-18; 2:23b; 3:3; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15; 13:35; 21:4-5; 26:56; 27:9-10
 - In most references, the particular "prophet" is not named; but several times Matthew explicitly names *Isaiah* (3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14; 15:7), *Jeremiah* (2:17; 27:9; see also 16:14), and *Daniel* (24:15)
 - **Jesus himself** says something very similar in several texts:
 - Matt 5:17 (Sermon on the Mount, speaking to the crowds) - "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill."
 - Matt 15:7 (in Galilee, speaking to Pharisees) - "You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said..."
 - Matt 26:54 (at Gethsemane) - "But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?"
 - Matt 26:56a (at Gethsemane) - "But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled."

- **Matthew's Gospel improves the Portrait of Jesus' Disciples:**
 - Mark 4:13 – They don't understand Jesus' parables
 - Matt 13:51 – "Have you understood all this? They answered, Yes"
 - Mark 8:29-30 – When Peter says Jesus is the Christ, Jesus tells him not to tell!
 - Matt 16:15-20 – Jesus responds much more positively to Peter
 - Mark 10:35-40 – James and John request places of honor for themselves
 - Matt 20:21-24 – their mother makes the request for them
- **Matthew's Gospel worsens the Portrayals of Jesus' Opponents:**
 - More focus on "scribes and Pharisees" as Jesus' main opponents (see Matt 5:20; 9:11, 34; 12:2; 23:2-3; 27:62)
 - Use of phrases "their synagogues" (4:23; 9:35) and "their scribes" (7:29) emphasizes the separation.
 - Matthew's Jesus calls them "hypocrites, blind guides, blind fools" ("Woe to you..." Matt 23:1-39)
 - More focus on conspiracy between Judas Iscariot, Jewish authorities (esp. Caiaphas), and Pilate in plot to kill Jesus:
- **Matthew's Gospel has many Pairs/Twos:**
 - Call of Peter & Andrew, James and John: specifies "two brothers" (4:18-21)
 - Two healing stories, each with two blind men (both in 9:27-31 and 20:29-34)
 - Two demoniacs (8:28-34); Parable of two sons (21:28-32)
 - Other pairs: weeds & wheat; God & mammon; wise & foolish virgins; sheep & goats; etc.
- **In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' Ministry is only to Jews, not Gentiles nor Samaritans:**
 - Jesus sends the apostles out on a mission only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," explicitly telling them "Go nowhere among the *Gentiles*, and enter no town of the *Samaritans*" (Matt 10:5b-6)
 - Only at the end of the Gospel, in the "Great Commission," does the risen Jesus tell his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. / Go therefore and *make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matt 28:18-19)

V) Christology: Matthew's Portrait of Jesus

Gospel of Matthew uses the main Christological titles found already in Mark's Gospel, including Christ/Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Rabbi, and Teacher. But Matthew adds several new titles and emphasizes certain aspects of Jesus' identity differently from Mark. Matthew's Gospel identifies Jesus as "the **son of David**, the **son of Abraham**" (1:1), indicating Jesus' Davidic/royal and Abrahamic/Jewish heritage, respectively. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is also presented as "the **New Moses**" for the people of Israel, and is given a variety of other titles, including **Emmanuel**, **Savior**, **Prophet**, and **King of the Jews**.

- A. **Jesus as the Son of Abraham (and Isaac & Jacob)** - stresses Jesus' Jewish heritage much more directly than Mark does:
- "An account of the **genealogy of Jesus** the Messiah, the son of David, **the son of Abraham**. / **Abraham was the father of Isaac**, and **Isaac the father of Jacob**, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers..." (Matt 1:1-2)
 - "So all the generations **from Abraham** to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations." (Matt 1:17)
 - In John the Baptist's preaching to the scribes and Pharisees: "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have **Abraham** as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to **Abraham**." (Matt 3:9)
 - When Jesus complements a Roman centurion's faith: "I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with **Abraham and Isaac and Jacob** in the kingdom of heaven, / while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt 8:11-12)
 - When Jesus argues with the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead: "And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, / **'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'**? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." (Matt 22:31-32; citing Exod 3:6; par. Mark 12:26)
- B. **Jesus as the Son of David and King of the Jews (and King of Israel)**
- Matthew's version of Jesus' genealogy also stresses that he is the royal "Son of David": "An account of the **genealogy of Jesus** the Messiah, **the son of David**, the son of Abraham... / ...and Jesse the father of **King David**. And **David was the father of Solomon** by the wife of Uriah... / So all the generations from Abraham to **David** are fourteen generations; and from **David** to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations." (Matt 1:1, 6, 17; cf. 1:20)
 - More subtle references to King David in this genealogy are three mentions of the **number fourteen** (the number of the name "David" in Hebrew gematria, since D=4, V=6, and only consonants are counted; thus D+V+D = 4+6+4 = 14). Moreover, the **deportation to Babylon** is also a subtle reference to the royal line of David, since it was at that time when the descendants of David ceased to rule as Kings of Judea (in contrast to the promises made in 2 Sam 7:11b-13).
 - Matthew later stresses that Jesus is royal "**Son of David**" (Matt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:1-9; 21:15; 22:42-45).

- In Mark, the title “**King of the Jews**” is only used near the end of the Gospel: during the trial of Jesus before Pilate (Mark 15:2, 9, 12; cf. Matt 27:11), when the soldiers mock the condemned Jesus (Mark 15:18; cf. Matt 27:29), and on the *titulus* on the cross stating the reason why Jesus was crucified (Mark 15:26; cf. Matt 27:37). Before Jesus dies on the cross, some bystanders also mockingly call him “**the King of Israel**” (Mark 15:32; cf. Matt 27:42).
- Already at the beginning of Matthew, Magi from the East come in search of the newborn “**King of the Jews**” (Matt 2:2).
- Note that **kings** also appear as characters *in various parables* of Matthew’s Gospel (Matt 18:23; 22:2-10; 22:11-13; 25:34-40), much more frequently than in Mark or Luke.

C. Jesus as a great Prophet and Teacher, like a new Moses

- The name “**Moses**” is not directly used in a [Christological Title](#), nor can Jesus be called the “Son of Moses,” since Jesus belongs to the Tribe of Judah, while Moses belongs to the Tribe of Levi (see a chart of [Abraham’s Descendants](#)). However, Jesus is *portrayed* as being very **similar to Moses** in several interesting and significant ways:
 - Pharaoh (King of Egypt, 1300 BC) *killed all the baby boys* of the Hebrews, and only *Moses is saved* (Exod 1:22–2:10),
 - so also Herod (King of Israel) *kills all the male babies* in Bethlehem, and only *Jesus is saved* (Matt 2:13-18).
 - When Moses’ life is in danger, he flees from *Egypt to Israel*, but returns to *Egypt* after many years (Exod 2:15; 7:6-7);
 - when Jesus’ life is in danger, he takes goes from *Israel to Egypt* and later back to *Israel* (Matt 2:13-21).
 - Moses goes up to a *mountain* to receive the *Law* (incl. the Ten Commandments) from God (Exod 19:3),
 - so also Jesus goes up to a *mountain* to give a *new Law* (incl. the Nine Beatitudes) to the people (Matt 5:1).
 - Moses *does not eat or drink for forty days and forty nights* while on the mountain, recording God’s Law (Exod 34:28),
 - so also Jesus *fasts for forty days and forty nights* in the desert, being tempted by Satan (Matt 4:2).
 - Moses was thought to have written the first *five books* of the Hebrew Bible (Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut),
 - so also Jesus’ teaching is contained in *five speeches* or extended “discourses” (Matt 5–7, 10, 13, 18, 23–25).
 - Moses was considered the greatest *teacher, prophet and lawgiver* in the Hebrew Bible (and throughout the NT);
 - so also Jesus is portrayed in Matthew as a great *teacher, prophet and lawgiver*, equal to or greater than Moses.
 - Moses is mentioned seven times in Matthew (8:4; 17:3-4; 19:7-8; 22:24; 23:2), most of which have parallels in Mark;
 - Matthean Jesus also explicitly upholds the law of Moses, rather than abolishing it (5:17-20; 22:35-40; etc.)

D. Jesus as Emmanuel (“God with Us”) and Savior

- Infancy narrative: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. / She will bear a son, and **you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**” / All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: / “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and **they shall name him Emmanuel,**” which means, “**God is with us**” (Matt 1:20-23; citing Isaiah 7:14).
- During a storm at sea, Jesus’ disciples cry out, “**Lord, save us**” (Matt 8:25)
- When Peter attempts to walk on water, but begins sinking, he similarly cries, “**Lord, save me**” (Matt 14:30).
- Jesus several times teaches, “**Whoever endures to the end will be saved**” (Matt 10:22; 24:13; cf. 24:22).
- How hard for the rich to enter Kingdom of heaven; then people ask, “**Then who can be saved?**” (Matt 19:25; cf. 16:25)
- While dying on the cross, Jesus is taunted by various groups: “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, **save yourself!** If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (Matt 27:40; cf. 27:42, 49).
- When the risen Jesus speaks to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee, his very last words are, “And remember, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:20; cf. 26:29)

VI) Discipleship: Matthew’s Description of Christian Life and Community

- The ideal disciple is a **loyal subject** who **obeys** the King; a **good student** who **learns & understands** what he/she is taught:
 - Jesus’ disciples *understand* his parables (Matt 13:51; contrast Mark 4:13, where they don’t understand)
 - They *understand* when he says, beware the yeast of the Pharisees and Herodians (Matt 16:12; contrast Mark 8:17-21)
 - When Jesus speaks about Elijah, his disciples *understand* that he means John the Baptist (Matt 17:13)
- Authentic discipleship necessitates **putting faith into action**:
 - John Baptist preaches, “...every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matt 3:10)
 - Jesus teaches, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matt 5:16)
 - Jesus uses analogies of trees and other plants producing good or bad fruit (Matt 7:15-20; cf. 12:33-37)
 - Jesus teaches, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” (Matt 7:21-23)
 - The parable of houses built on rock or on sand (Matt 7:24-27)
 - The parable of the sower and the seed, only some of which produces a great yield (Matt 13:8, 23)
 - The parable of the weeds among the wheat (Matt 13:24-30; explained in 13:36-43)
 - The parable of the two sons (Matt 21:28-32)

Quotations from the Old Testament in the Gospel according to Matthew

compiled by Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.

Introductory Notes:

- Many of the references in the following table are direct quotations, while some are paraphrases or close allusions to older scriptural texts.
- Some OT quotations in Matthew are closer to the Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of OT) than to the Hebrew Bible (used by NRSV).

| Matthean Text (NRSV) | Old Testament Source (NRSV) |
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| Matt 1:3b-6a – “and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, / and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, / and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, / and Jesse the father of King David .” | Ruth 4:18-22 – “Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez became the father of Hezron, / Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, / Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, / Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, / Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.” (cf. 1 Chron 2:1-15) |
| Matt 1:22-23 – All this took place to fulfill what had been <i>spoken by the Lord through the prophet</i> : / “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” | Isaiah 7:14 – “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” |
| Matt 1:23b – “...and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” | Isaiah 8:8, 10 – “it will sweep on into Judah as a flood, and, pouring over, it will reach up to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel. / Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to naught; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.” |
| Matt 2:5-6 – They [chief priests and scribes] told him [Herod], “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been <i>written by the prophet</i> : / ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ” | Micah 5:2 – “But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.” |
| Matt 2:15 – This was to fulfill what had been <i>spoken by the Lord through the prophet</i> , “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” | Hosea 11:1 – “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” |
| Matt 2:17-18 – Then was fulfilled what had been <i>spoken through the prophet Jeremiah</i> : / “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” | Jeremiah 31:15 – “Thus says the LORD: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.” |
| Matt 2:23 – There [in Galilee] he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been <i>spoken through the prophets</i> might be fulfilled , “He will be called a Nazorean.” | Isaiah 11:1 – “A shoot (Heb. nezer) shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” |
| Matt 3:3 – This is the one [John the Baptist] of whom <i>the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said</i> , “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’ ” | Isaiah 40:3 – “A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’ ” |
| Matt 4:4 – [Jesus to the devil]: “ <i>It is written</i> , ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” | Deut 8:3 – “He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” |
| Matt 4:6 – [Devil to Jesus]: “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for <i>it is written</i> , ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ” | Psalms 91:11-12 – “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. / On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” |
| Matt 4:7 – Jesus said to him [the devil]: “ <i>Again it is written</i> , ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” | Deut 6:16 – “Do not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.” |
| Matt 4:10 – Jesus said to him [the devil], “Away with you, Satan! for <i>it is written</i> , ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ” | Deut 6:13 – “The LORD your God you shall fear; him you shall serve, and by his name alone you shall swear.” |
| Matt 4:14-16 – [Jesus moved to Capernaum] so that what had been <i>spoken through the prophet Isaiah</i> might be fulfilled : / “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles / the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” | Isaiah 9:1-2 – “But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. / The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined.” |

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| Matt 5:21 – “ <i>You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’</i> ” | Exod 20:13 – “You shall not murder.” Deut 5:17 – “You shall not murder.” |
| Matt 5:27 – “ <i>You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’</i> ” | Exod 20:14 – “You shall not commit adultery.” Deut 5:18 – “Neither shall you commit adultery.” |
| Matt 5:31 – “ <i>It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’</i> ” | Deut 24:1-2 – “Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house / and goes off to become another man’s wife.” |
| Matt 5:33 – “ <i>Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’</i> ” | Lev 19:12 – “And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the LORD.” Num 30:2 – “When a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” |
| Matt 5:38 – “ <i>You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’</i> ” | Exod 21:24 – “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” Lev 24:19-20 – “Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: / fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered.” Deut 19:21 – “Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” |
| Matt 5:43 – “ <i>You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’</i> ” | Lev 19:18 – “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” |
| Matt 8:17 – This was to fulfill what had been <i>spoken through the prophet Isaiah</i> , “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” | Isaiah 53:4 – “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.” |
| Matt 9:13a – “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’” | Hosea 6:6 – “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” |
| Matt 10:35-36 – “For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; / and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.” | Micah 7:6 – “for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; your enemies are members of your own household.” |
| Matt 11:10 – This is the one [John Baptist] about whom <i>it is written</i> , “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” | Malachi 3:1 – “See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.” |
| Matt 12:7 – “But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.” | Hosea 6:6 – “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” |
| Matt 12:17-21 – This was to fulfill what had been <i>spoken through the prophet Isaiah</i> : / “Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. / He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. / He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. / And in his name the Gentiles will hope.” | Isaiah 42:1-4 – “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. / He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; / a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. / He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.” |
| Matt 12:40 – “For <i>just as Jonah</i> was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth.” | Jonah 1:17 – “But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” |
| Matt 13:14-15 – “With them indeed is fulfilled <i>the prophecy of Isaiah</i> that says: ‘You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. / For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn-- and I would heal them.’” | Isaiah 6:9-10 – “Go and say to this people: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.’ / Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.” |
| Matt 13:35 – This was to fulfill what had been <i>spoken through the prophet</i> . “I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.” | Psalms 78:2-3 – “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, / things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.” |

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| Matt 15:4a – “For <i>God said</i> , ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ ” | Exod 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” Deut 5:16 – “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” |
| Matt 15:4b – “[For <i>God said</i> ...] and ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’ ” | Exod 21:17 – “Whoever curses father or mother shall be put to death.” |
| Matt 15:7-9 – “You hypocrites! <i>Isaiah prophesied</i> rightly about you <i>when he said</i> : ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; / in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ ” | Isaiah 29:13 – “The Lord said: Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote;” |
| Matt 18:16 – “But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” | Deut 19:15 – “A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.” |
| Matt 19:4 – He [Jesus] answered, “ <i>Have you not read</i> that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female;” ” | Genesis 1:27 – “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Genesis 5:2 – “Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them ‘Humankind’ when they were created.” |
| Matt 19:5 – and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” | Genesis 2:24 – “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” |
| Matt 19:7 – They [some Pharisees] said to him [Jesus], “Why then did <i>Moses command us</i> to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?” | Deut 24:1-2 – “Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house / and goes off to become another man’s wife.” |
| Matt 19:18b-19a – And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; / Honor your father and mother” | Exod 20:12-16 – “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Deut 5:16-20 – “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. Neither shall you commit adultery. Neither shall you steal. Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.” |
| Matt 19:19b – [Jesus said]: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” | Lev 19:18 – “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” |
| Matt 21:4-5 – This took place to fulfill what had been <i>spoken through the prophet</i> , saying, “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” | Isaiah 62:11 – “The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, ‘See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.’ ” Zechariah 9:9 – “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” |
| Matt 21:9 – The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” | Psalms 118:25-26 – “Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success! / Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.” |
| Matt 21:13 – He [Jesus] said to them [buyers and sellers in the temple], “ <i>It is written</i> , ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.” | Isaiah 56:7 – “these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” |
| Matt 21:16b – Jesus said to them [chief priests and scribes], “Yes; <i>have you never read</i> , ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?’” | Psalms 8:2 – “Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.” |
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| Matt 21:42 – Jesus said to them, “ <i>Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?’</i> ” | Psalm 118:22-23 – “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. / This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” |
| Matt 22:24 – [Sadducees ask Jesus]: “Teacher, <i>Moses said</i> , ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.’ ” | Deut 25:5-6 – “When brothers reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her, taking her in marriage, and performing the duty of a husband’s brother to her, / and the firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the deceased brother, so that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.” |
| Matt 22:31-32a – [Jesus to Sadducees]: “And as for the resurrection of the dead, <i>have you not read what was said to you by God</i> , ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’” | Exod 3:6 – “He said further, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.” Exod 3:15 – God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.” |
| Matt 22:36-37 – [Lawyer asks Jesus]: “Teacher, which <i>commandment in the law</i> is the greatest?” / He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” | Deut 6:5 – “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” |
| Matt 22:39 – “And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” | Lev 19:18 – “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” |
| Matt 22:43-44 – He [Jesus] said to them [Pharisees], “How is it then that <i>David by the Spirit</i> calls him Lord, saying, / ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’ ”? | Psalm 110:1 – “The LORD says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ” |
| Matt 23:39b – “For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ” | Psalm 118:26 – “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.” |
| Matt 24:15 – “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, <i>as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel...</i> ” | Daniel 9:27b – and in their place shall be an abomination that desolates, until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator” (see also Dan 11:31; 12:11) |
| Matt 24:29 – “Immediately after the suffering of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.” | Isaiah 13:10 – “For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.” |
| Matt 24:30 – “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory.” | Daniel 7:13 – “As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him.” |
| Matt 26:31 – Then Jesus said to them [his disciples], “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for <i>it is written</i> , ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ” | Zechariah 13:7 – “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate,” says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.” |
| Matt 26:64 – Jesus said to him [the high priest], “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power’ and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’ ” | Psalm 110:1 – “The LORD says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’ ” Daniel 7:13 – “As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him.” |
| Matt 27:9-10 – Then was fulfilled what had been <i>spoken through the prophet Jeremiah</i> , “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, / and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.” | Zechariah 11:12-13 – “I then said to them, ‘If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.’ So they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. / Then the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it into the treasury’--this lordly price at which I was valued by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the treasury in the house of the LORD.” |
| Matt 27:46 – And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” | Psalm 22:1 – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?” |

Parables and Parabolic Images in the Gospels

What is a “Parable”?

Definition: “At its simplest a parable is a *metaphor or simile* drawn from *nature or common life*, arresting the hearer by its *vividness or strangeness*, and leaving the mind in sufficient *doubt* about its precise application to tease it into *active thought*.” (C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1961, p. 5)

Implications of this definition:

- The meaning of most parables is *not* so obvious, or at least it shouldn’t be. If we *assume* we know what Jesus is talking about, we are probably missing the main point; if we are too familiar with the story (having heard it so often before), we might not think carefully enough about its real meaning.
- Most parables contain some element that is strange or unusual. They should cause you to say, “Wait a minute! That’s not how farmers do their work! That’s not what kings usually do! That’s not what normally happens in nature!” And this strange element should cause you to think!
- Parables do not *define* things precisely, but rather use *comparisons* to describe some aspect of how God acts or interacts with human beings. Yet to say “A is like B” does not mean that “A is identical to B in all respects”; so one should be careful not to misinterpret or misapply the parables.

The Purpose of the Parables?

We might think that Jesus spoke in parables to make it *easier* for people to understand his message. According to the Gospels, however, he surprisingly does NOT expect everyone to understand them! This is clearly expressed in Matthew 13:10-17. In Matt 13:51, at least *Jesus’ disciples* understand the parables; but in Mark 4:13, 33-34, *even they* have a *hard* time understanding, despite receiving extra instructions in private!

Where Are the Gospel Parables?

From the tables below, you will note that *Mark* has only few parables and related images; *Matthew* adds quite a few more; and *Luke* has by far the most parables in the New Testament, including some of the most famous ones. The non-canonical Gospel of Thomas also contains quite a few parables that are also found in one or more of the Synoptics. In contrast, *John’s Gospel* never uses the word “parable” and has only few very images that are even similar to Synoptic parables. To compare the texts of parables that appear in two or more of the Gospels, see [The Five Gospel Parallels](#) website.

Only two Parable-like Images in the Gospel according to John:

- Shepherd and Sheep (John 10:1-16)
- Vine and Branches (John 15:1-8)

Parables and Images originally in the Gospel according to Mark:

| Parable | Mark | Matthew | Luke | Thomas |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Garment & Wineskins | Mk 2:21-22 | Mt 9:16-17 | Lk 5:36-39 | GTh 47 |
| Strong Man | Mk 3:27 | Mt 12:29 | Lk 11:21 | GTh 35 |
| Sower & Seed | Mk 4.3-8 | Mt 13:3-9 | Lk 8:5-8 | GTh 9 |
| [<i>Why Jesus Uses Parables</i>] | Mk 4:10-12 | Mt 13:10-17 | Lk 8:9-10 | - |
| [<i>Interpretation of Sower & Seed</i>] | Mk 4:13-20 | Mt 13:18-23 | Lk 8:11-15 | - |
| Lamp on a Stand | Mk 4:21 | Mt 5:15 | Lk 8:16; 11:33 | GTh 33 |
| [<i>Other Sayings about Jesus’ Parables</i>] | Mk 4:22-25 | Mt 10:26; 7:2; 13:12 | Lk 8:17-18 | GTh 5; GTh 41 |
| Seed Growing Secretly | Mk 4:26-29 | [cf. Mt 13:24-30] | - | GTh 21a |
| Mustard Seed | Mk 4:30-32 | Mt 13:31-32 | Lk 13:18-19 | GTh 20 |
| [<i>Jesus’ Use of Parables</i>] | Mk 4:33-34 | Mt 13:34-35 | - | - |
| Salt | Mk 9:50 | Mt 5:13 | Lk 14:34 | - |
| Wicked Tenants | Mk 12:1-11 | Mt 21:33-44 | Lk 20:9-18 | GTh 65 |
| Budding Fig-Tree | Mk 13:28-29 | Mt 24:32-33 | Lk 21:29-31 | - |
| Doorkeeper | Mk 13:33-37 | - | [cf. Lk 12:35-38] | - |
| Total Number of Markan Parables | 10 | <i>Mt keeps all but 2</i> | <i>Lk keeps all but 2</i> | <i>GTh has 7 of Mk’s</i> |

Additional Parables and Images from the “Q” Source (10 not in Mark):

| Parable | Mark | Matthew | Luke | Thomas |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Two Houses | - | Mt 7:24-27 | Lk 6:47-49 | - |
| Children in the Market Place | - | Mt 11:16-19 | Lk 7:31-35 | - |
| Return of the Unclean Spirit | - | Mt 12:43-45 | Lk 11:24-26 | - |
| Burglar | - | Mt 24:43-44 | Lk 12:39-40 | GTh 21b, 103 |
| Servant Entrusted with Supervision | - | Mt 24:45-51 | Lk 12:42-46 | - |
| Going before the Judge | - | Mt 5:25-26 | Lk 12:58-59 | - |
| Leaven | - | Mt 13:33 | Lk 13:20-21 | GTh 96 |
| Great Supper | - | Mt 22:1-10 | Lk 14:16-24 | GTh 64 |
| Lost Sheep | - | Mt 18:12-14 | Lk 15:4-7 | GTh 107 |
| Pounds or Talents | - | Mt 25:14-30 | Lk 19:12-27 | - |

Additional Parables and Images from the Gospel acc. to Matthew (10 neither in Mark nor Luke):

| Parable | Mark | Matthew | Luke | Thomas |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Wheat & Tares | - | Mt 13:24-30 | - | GTh 57 |
| [Interpretation of Wheat & Tares] | - | Mt 13:36-43 | - | - |
| Treasure | - | Mt 13:44 | - | GTh 109 |
| Pearl | - | Mt 13:45-46 | - | GTh 76 |
| Net | - | Mt 13:47-48 | - | GTh 8 |
| Unmerciful Servant | - | Mt 18:23-35 | - | - |
| Vineyard Workers & Employer | - | Mt 20:1-16 | - | - |
| Two Sons | - | Mt 21:28-32 | - | - |
| Guest without a Wedding Garment | - | Mt 22:11-14 | - | GTh 75 |
| Ten Virgins | - | Mt 25:1-13 | [cf. Lk 13:25] | - |
| Last Judgement / Sheep & Goats | - | Mt 25:31-46 | - | - |

Additional Parables and Images only in the Gospel acc. to Luke (17 neither in Mark nor Matthew):

| Parable | Mark | Matthew | Luke | Thomas |
|--|------|---------|-----------------------|--------|
| Two Debtors | - | - | Lk 7:41-43 | - |
| Good Samaritan | - | - | Lk 10:25-37 | - |
| Friend Asking for Help at Midnight | - | - | Lk 11:5-8 | - |
| Rich Fool | - | - | Lk 12:16-21 | GTh 63 |
| Faithful Servants | - | - | Lk 12:35-38 | - |
| Barren Fig-Tree | - | - | Lk 13:6-9 | - |
| Closed Door | - | - | Lk 13:24-30 | - |
| Choice of Places at Table | - | - | Lk 14:7-11 | - |
| Tower-Builder & King Planning for Battle | - | - | Lk 14:28-32 | - |
| Lost Coin | - | - | Lk 15:8-10 | - |
| Prodigal Son | - | - | Lk 15:11-32 | - |
| Unjust Steward | - | - | Lk 16:1-8 | - |
| Rich Man & Lazarus | - | - | Lk 16:19-31 | - |
| Servant’s Reward | - | - | Lk 17:7-10 | - |
| Unjust Judge | - | - | Lk 18:1-8 | - |
| Pharisee & Publican | - | - | Lk 18:9-14 | - |
| Throne Claimant | - | - | Lk 19:12, 14, 15a, 27 | - |

List of Parables and Images in the Gospel according to Thomas (18 total):

| Parable | Thomas | Mark | Matthew | Luke |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| [Other Sayings about Jesus' Parables] | GTh 5 | Mk 4:22 | Mt 10:26 | Lk 8:17 |
| Net | GTh 8 | | Mt 13:47-48 | |
| Sower & Seed | GTh 9 | Mk 4:3-8 | Mt 13:3-9 | Lk 8:5-8 |
| Mustard Seed | GTh 20 | Mk 4:30-32 | Mt 13:31-32 | Lk 13:18-19 |
| Seed Growing Secretly | GTh 21a | Mk 4:26-29 | [cf. Mt 13:24-30] | |
| Burglar | GTh 21b [cf. GTh 103] | | Mt 24:43-44 | Lk 12:39-40 |
| Lamp on a Stand | GTh 33 | Mk 4:21 | Mt 5:15 | Lk 8:18; 11:33 |
| Strong Man | GTh 35 | Mk 3:27 | Mt 12:29 | Lk 11:21 |
| Garment & Wineskins | GTh 47 | Mk 2:21-22 | Mt 9:16-17 | Lk 5:36-39 |
| Wheat & Tares | GTh 57 | | Mt 13:24-30 | |
| Rich Fool | GTh 63 | | | Lk 12:16-21 |
| Great Supper | GTh 64 | | Mt 22:1-10 | Lk 14:16-24 |
| Wicked Tenants | GTh 65 | Mk 12:1-11 | Mt 21:33-44 | Lk 20:9-18 |
| Guest without a Wedding Garment | GTh 75 | | Mt 22:11-14 | |
| Pearl | GTh 76 | | Mt 13:45-46 | |
| Leaven | GTh 96 | | Mt 13:33 | Lk 13:20-21 |
| Burglar | GTh 103 [cf. GTh 21b] | | Mt 24:43-44 | Lk 12:39-40 |
| Lost Sheep | GTh 107 | | Mt 18:12-14 | Lk 15:4-7 |
| Treasure | GTh 109 | | Mt 13:44 | |

Complete List of Parables and Images in the Gospel according to Matthew (28 total):

| Parable | Matthew | Mark | Luke | Thomas |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Salt | Mt 5:13 | Mk 9:50 | Lk 14:34 | |
| Lamp on a Stand | Mt 5:15 | Mk 4:21 | Lk 8:16; 11:33 | GTh 33 |
| Going before the Judge | Mt 5:25-26 | | Lk 12:58-59 | |
| Two Houses | Mt 7:24-27 | | Lk 6:47-49 | |
| Garment & Wineskins | Mt 9:16-17 | Mk 2:21-22 | Lk 5:36-39 | GTh 47 |
| Children in the Market Place | Mt 11:16-19 | | Lk 7:31-35 | |
| Strong Man | Mt 12:29 | Mk 3:27 | Lk 11:21 | GTh 35 |
| Return of the Unclean Spirit | Mt 12:43-45 | | Lk 11:24-26 | |
| Sower & Seed | Mt 13:3-9 | Mk 4:3-8 | Lk 8:5-8 | GTh 9 |
| [Why Jesus Uses Parables] | Mt 13:10-17 | Mk 4:10-12 | Lk 8:9-10 | GTh 41 |
| [Interpretation of Sower & Seed] | Mt 13:18-23 | Mk 4:13-20 | Lk 8:11-15 | |
| Wheat & Tares | Mt 13:24-30 | [cf. Mk 4:26-29] | | GTh 57 |
| Mustard Seed | Mt 13:31-32 | Mk 4:30-32 | Lk 13:18-19 | GTh 20 |
| Leaven | Mt 13:33 | | Lk 13:20-21 | GTh 96 |
| [Jesus' Use of Parables] | Mt 13:34-35 | Mk 4:33-34 | | |
| [Interpretation of Wheat & Tares] | Mt 13:36-43 | | | |
| Treasure | Mt 13:44 | | | GTh 109 |
| Pearl | Mt 13:45-46 | | | GTh 76 |
| Net | Mt 13:47-48 | | | GTh 8 |
| Lost Sheep | Mt 18:12-14 | | Lk 15:4-7 | GTh 107 |
| Unmerciful Servant | Mt 18:23-35 | | | |
| Vineyard Workers & Employer | Mt 20:1-16 | | | |
| Two Sons | Mt 21:28-32 | | | |
| Wicked Tenants | Mt 21:33-44 | Mk 12:1-11 | Lk 20:9-18 | GTh 65 |
| Great Supper | Mt 22:1-10 | | Lk 14:16-24 | GTh 64 |
| Guest without a Wedding Garment | Mt 22:11-14 | | | GTh 75 |
| Budding Fig-Tree | Mt 24:32-33 | Mk 13:28-29 | Lk 21:29-31 | |
| Burglar | Mt 24:43-44 | | Lk 12:39-40 | GTh 21b, 103 |
| Servant Entrusted with Supervision | Mt 24:45-51 | | Lk 12:42-46 | |
| Ten Virgins | Mt 25:1-13 | | [cf. Lk 13:25] | |
| Pounds or Talents | Mt 25:14-30 | | Lk 19:12-27 | |
| Last Judgement / Sheep & Goats | Mt 25:31-46 | | | |

Complete List of Parables and Images in the Gospel according to Luke (36 total):

| Parable | Luke | Mark | Matthew | Thomas |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Garment & Wineskins | Lk 5:36-39 | Mk 2:21-22 | Mt 9:16-17 | GTh 47 |
| Two Houses | Lk 6:47-49 | | Mt 7:24-27 | |
| Children in the Market Place | Lk 7:31-35 | | Mt 11:16-19 | |
| Two Debtors | Lk 7:41-43 | | | |
| Sower & Seed | Lk 8:5-8 | Mk 4:3-8 | Mt 13:3-9 | GTh 9 |
| [Why Jesus Uses Parables] | Lk 8:9-10 | Mk 4:10-12 | Mt 13:10-17 | |
| [Interpretation of Sower & Seed] | Lk 8:11-15 | Mk 4:13-20 | Mt 13:18-23 | |
| Lamp on a Stand | Lk 8:16 [cf. 11:33] | Mk 4:21 | Mt 5:15 | GTh 33 |
| [Other Sayings on Jesus' Parables] | Lk 8:17-18 | Mk 4:22, 24a, 25 | Mt 10:26; 13:12 | GTh 5 |
| Good Samaritan | Lk 10:25-37 | | | |
| Friend Asking for Help at Midnight | Lk 11:5-8 | | | |
| Strong Man | Lk 11:21 | Mk 3:27 | Mt 12:29 | GTh 35 |
| Return of the Unclean Spirit | Lk 11:24-26 | | Mt 12:43-45 | |
| Lamp on a Stand | Lk 11:33 [cf. 8:16] | Mk 4:21 | Mt 5:15 | GTh 33 |
| Rich Fool | Lk 12:16-21 | | | GTh 63 |
| Faithful Servants | Lk 12:35-38 | [cf. Mk 13:33-37] | | |
| Burglar | Lk 12:39-40 | | Mt 24:43-44 | GTh 21b, 103 |
| Servant Entrusted with Supervision | Lk 12:42-46 | | Mt 24:45-51 | |
| Going before the Judge | Lk 12:58-59 | | Mt 5:25-26 | |
| Barren Fig-Tree | Lk 13:6-9 | | | |
| Mustard Seed | Lk 13:18-19 | Mk 4:30-32 | Mt 13:31-32 | GTh 20 |
| Leaven | Lk 13:20-21 | | Mt 13:33 | GTh 96 |
| Closed Door | Lk 13:24-30 | | [cf. Mt 25:10-12] | |
| Choice of Places at Table | Lk 14:7-11 | | | |
| Great Supper | Lk 14:16-24 | | Mt 22:1-10 | GTh 64 |
| Tower-BUILDER & King Planning for Battle | Lk 14:28-32 | | | |
| Salt | Lk 14:34 | Mk 9:50 | Mt 5:13 | |
| Lost Sheep | Lk 15:4-7 | | Mt 18:12-14 | GTh 107 |
| Lost Coin | Lk 15:8-10 | | | |
| Prodigal Son | Lk 15:11-32 | | | |
| Unjust Steward | Lk 16:1-8 | | | |
| Rich Man & Lazarus | Lk 16:19-31 | | | |
| Servant's Reward | Lk 17:7-10 | | | |
| Unjust Judge | Lk 18:1-8 | | | |
| Pharisee & Publican | Lk 18:9-14 | | | |
| Pounds or Talents | Lk 19:12-27 | | Mt 25:14-30 | |
| Throne Claimant | Lk 19:12, 14, 15a, 27 | | | |
| Wicked Tenants | Lk 20:9-18 | Mk 12:1-11 | Mt 21:33-44 | GTh 65 |
| Budding Fig-Tree | Lk 21:29-31 | Mk 13:28-29 | Mt 24:32-33 | |

Miracle Stories in the New Testament

Introduction and Classifications: The miracle stories of the New Testament can be separated into several different categories, each of which is significantly different from the others. Within each category, however, most of the stories have certain formal similarities:

- **Individual Narratives** of Specific Miracles (and associated controversies):
 - [Exorcisms](#) (casting out demons and unclean spirits)
 - [Healing Miracles](#) (healing physical illnesses & impairments)
 - [Restoration Miracles](#) (raising the dead; restoring to life)
 - [Nature Miracles](#) (feeding multitudes, calming storms, etc.)
- **The Evangelists' Summaries** of Miracles and Related Actions:
 - [Summaries of Jesus' Ministry](#) (exorcisms, miracles, and related works)
 - [Summaries of Other's Works](#) (the disciples and/or other exorcists)
 - Consider what Jesus does, for whom, and/or why? And how do people react?

| Healings | Mark | Matthew | Luke | John |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Healing Simon Peter's Mother-in-law | 1:29-31 | 8:14-15 | 4:38-39 | -- |
| Cleansing a Leper | 1:40-45 | 8:1-4 | 5:12-16 | -- |
| Healing a Centurion's Servant | -- | 8:5-13 | 7:1-10 | -- |
| Healing a Paralytic | 2:1-12 | 9:1-8 | 5:17-26 | [cf. 5:1-18] |
| Restoring a Man's Withered Hand | 3:1-6 | 12:9-14 | 6:6-11 | -- |
| Healing a Woman's Hemorrhage | 5:25-34 | 9:19-22 | 8:43-48 | -- |
| Restoring Sight to Two Blind Men | -- | 9:27-31 | -- | -- |
| Healing a Syro-Phoenician Girl | 7:24-30 | 15:21-28 | -- | -- |
| Healing a Deaf Mute | 7:31-37 | -- | -- | -- |
| Giving Sight to a Blind Man at Bethsaida | 8:22-26 | -- | -- | -- |
| Restoring a Woman Crippled for Eighteen Years | -- | -- | 13:10-17 | -- |
| Healing a Man with Dropsy | -- | -- | 14:1-6 | -- |
| Cleansing Ten Men of Leprosy | -- | -- | 17:11-19 | -- |
| Giving Sight to a Blind Man (or 2 Men) at Jericho | 10:46-52 | 20:29-34 | 18:35-43 | [cf. 9:1-41] |
| Healing a Royal Official's Son at Cana | -- | -- | -- | 4:46-54 |
| Healing a Man at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem | -- | -- | -- | 5:2-47 |
| Giving Sight to a Man Blind since Birth | -- | -- | -- | 9:1-41 |
| Healing a Slave's Severed Ear | [14:47] | [26:51-54] | 22:49-51 | [18:10] |
| Restoration Miracles | Mark | Matthew | Luke | John |
| Raising from the Dead a Widow's Son at Nain | -- | -- | 7:11-17 | -- |
| Raising from the Dead the Daughter of Jairus | 5:21-24,35-43 | 9:18-19,23-26 | 8:40-42,49-56 | -- |
| Raising Lazarus of Bethany from the Dead | -- | -- | -- | 11:1-44 |
| Nature Miracles | Mark | Matthew | Luke | John |
| Catching Unusually Many Fish in the Sea of Galilee | -- | -- | 5:1-11 | [cf. 21:1] |
| Stilling a Storm on the Sea of Galilee | 4:35-41 | 8:23-27 | 8:22-25 | -- |
| Feeding Five Thousand People | 6:32-44 | 14:13-21 | 9:10b-17 | 6:1-15 |
| Walking on the Water | 6:45-52 | 14:22-33 | -- | 6:16-21 |
| Feeding Four Thousand People | 8:1-10 | 15:32-39 | -- | -- |
| Finding a Coin in the Mouth of a Fish | -- | 17:24-27 | -- | -- |
| Cursing a Fig Tree near Bethany | 11:12-14 | 21:18-19 | -- | -- |
| Turning Water into Wine at a Wedding in Cana | -- | -- | -- | 2:1-11 |
| Catching Numerous Fish at the Sea of Tiberias | -- | -- | [cf. 5:1] | 21:1-14 |

Evangelists' Summaries of Jesus Ministry:

| Pericope | Mark | Matthew | Luke | John |
|---|---------------|------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Jesus Proclaims a "Jubilee Year" (cf. Isa 61:1-2) | -- | -- | 4:16-21 | -- |
| "Physician, Heal Yourself" Proverb | -- | -- | 4:23 | -- |
| Many Healed/Exorcized One Evening | 1:32-34 | 8:16-17 | 4:40-41 | -- |
| Brief Summary | 1:39 | 4:23 | [cf. 5:15] | -- |
| Jesus Heals Many by the Sea of Galilee | 3:10-12 | 4:24-25 [cf. 12:15-16] | 6:17-19 | -- |
| Response to the Baptist's Question | -- | 11:2-6 | 7:18-23 | -- |
| The Beelzebul Controversy | 3:22-30 | 12:24-29 [cf. 9:32-34] | 11:15-22 | [cf. 8:37-59] |
| Jesus Preaches and Heals | [cf. 6:6] | 9:35 | [cf. 8:1] | -- |
| Healings at Gennesaret | 6:53-56 | 14:34-36 | -- | [cf. 6:22-25] |
| Jesus Heals Many People | [cf. 7:31-37] | 15:29-31 | -- | -- |
| Jesus Heals the Blind and Lame in the Temple | -- | 21:14 | -- | -- |

Evangelists' Summaries of the Ministry of Jesus' Disciples and Others:

| Pericope | Mark | Matthew | Luke | John |
|--|----------------|-----------|-------------|------|
| Jesus Chooses 12 Apostles to Preach and Heal | 3:15 | -- | -- | -- |
| Jesus Sends the Twelve Out on Mission | 6:7, 13 | 10:1, 8 | 9:1-2, 6 | -- |
| Why the Disciples Could Not Heal/Exorcize | 9:18, 28 | 17:16, 19 | 9:40 | -- |
| Another Exorcist, not Jesus' Disciple | 9:38-41 | 10:42 | 9:49-50 | -- |
| Jesus Sends 72 More Disciples out on Mission | [cf. 16:17-18] | -- | 10:9, 17-20 | -- |
| False Prophets Will Show "Signs and Wonders" | 13:21-22 | 24:24 | -- | -- |
| Herod Hears of Jesus' Exorcisms and Healings | -- | -- | 13:32 | -- |
| [Believers Will Perform "Signs"] | [16:17-18] | -- | -- | -- |

Form Criticism of Healing Miracle Narratives:

One task of "form criticism" is to study many stories of one genre in order to determine a *typical pattern* for that genre. For example, most English "fairy tales" begin with "Once upon a time..." then develop some conflict, then show how the hero resolves the problem, and finally end with "...and they lived happily ever after."

In the NT, most "healing miracles" are narrated according to a fairly regular pattern that typically consists of five stages (some scholars count only three, others six or more, but I suggest the following five):

1. **Introduction** - A geographical/temporal setting is given; the condition of the sick person(s) is described; the healer encounters the sick person(s), or they are brought to the healer, or someone tells the healer about them.
2. **Conflict/Delay** - Often the healer investigates what the sick person wants or needs; sometimes the healer hesitates or tests the sick person's readiness to be healed; sometimes other persons intervene or delay the healing.
3. **Healing Action** - The healing itself might be brought about verbally, or through a simple touch, or through more elaborate therapeutic means (using spittle, oil, etc.). Sometimes the healing action is only implied, but not explicitly described.
4. **Confirmation** - The fact that the healing has taken place is either asserted by the narrator or demonstrated through some action performed by the person who has been healed (standing up, walking, speaking, etc.).
5. **Reaction** - Usually some reaction from those who witnessed the event is reported. In the Gospels, this response is often positive (giving praise to God), but sometimes there are negative reactions from some opponents.

Form Criticism of Healing Miracles: Detailed Analysis

“**Form criticism**” also carefully analyzes particular stories so as to see how typical or how unusual they are for their genre. If a particular narrative omits or adds some stages, or if in a certain stage it says something different from what you would expect, then we should ask why the author has not followed the typical pattern and what he or she is emphasizing thereby. In the NT, for example, some “**healing miracles**” omit the “**Reaction**” stage, others have a much longer “**Conflict**” stage than normal. Many have only a very brief description of the actual healing, but some have a more detailed “**Action**” stage. A careful analysis of several miracle stories leads to some interesting conclusions about the different messages of the different evangelists.

For each of the following narratives, *which verses* belong to which of the five standard stages? Also, *which stage* is emphasized in each story? Finally, *what conclusions* can we draw about what the evangelists are trying to say to their readers? In particular, how is the emphasis of *Matthew* in these stories significantly different from that of *Mark* and/or *Luke*?

| | Stage 1 Introduction | Stage 2 Conflict/Delay | Stage 3 Healing Action | Stage 4 Confirmation | Stage 5 Reaction |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Mark 2:1-12</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Matthew 9:1-8</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Mark 8:22-26</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Mark 10:46-52</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Matthew 9:27-31</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Matthew 20:29-34</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Luke 18:35-43</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Luke 7:11-17</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Luke 13:10-17</i> | | | | | |

Practical Notes:

- Fill in the chart above with the exact verse numbers which belong to the corresponding typical stages for each of these healing miracle narratives.
- Use letters **a** and **b** to distinguish the first and second half of verses, if needed (i.e., use 10:52**a** and 10:52**b**, if the two halves of verse 52 belong to different stages).
- Remember that a particular narrative may totally omit or severely curtail one or more of these stages, or it may greatly expand and emphasize one stage, or it may even mix up the order of some of the stages.
- Put a big “X” in any box if a stage is missing from any of the stories. Add brief comments about any other unusual elements you find in any stage.
- Highlight which stage you think is the longest and/or receives the most emphasis in each narrative.
- For suggested answers, see <http://www.catholic-resources.org/Bible/Healings.htm> .

The Gospel according to Matthew: The Matthean Passion Narrative

I) Highlights of the Passion Narrative in Matthew's Gospel (26:1–27:66)

- Jesus enters Jerusalem (Matt 21:1-11) and teaches in Jerusalem (Matt 21–25)
- Authorities plot to kill Jesus (26:1-5) – *two days before Passover*; “*passion prediction*”; **Caiaphas** introduced
- Jesus is anointed at Bethany (26:6-13) – *anon. woman (not a “sinner”)* anoints Jesus **head**; *burial preparation*
- **Judas Iscariot** plans to betray Jesus (26:14-16) – *in all Gospels, but only Matthew has 30 pieces of silver*
- Disciples prepare the Passover meal (26:17-20) – *the time is at hand*; the **Teacher** will eat with his **disciples**
 - At Last Supper: Jesus foretells **Judas’** betrayal (26:21-25) – Judas: “**Is it I, Lord?**”; Jesus: “*You have said so!*”
 - At Last Supper: Jesus blesses bread & wine (26:26-29) – “*Drink of it, ... for the forgiveness of sins*”
- Jesus foretells Peter’s denial (26:30-35) – *after supper*; Peter: “*I will never fall away... I will not deny you.*”
- Jesus prays at Gethsemane (26:36-46) – “**My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done**”
- **Judas** arrives, and Jesus is arrested (26:47-56) – Judas: “*Greetings, Rabbi*”; Jesus: “**Friend, why are you here?**”
“**All who take the sword will perish by the sword**”; “**twelve legions of angels**”; “*scripture must be fulfilled*”
- Jesus is interrogated in Caiaphas’ house (26:57-68) – “*Christ, the Son of God*”; “*Son of Man*”; **blasphemy**
- Peter denies knowing Jesus (26:69-75) – “**Jesus the Galilean? from Nazareth?**”; “**I don’t know the man!**”
- Jesus is condemned & taken to Pilate (27:1-2) – *at dawn, priests & elders decide to have Jesus killed*
- **Judas** repents & hangs himself (27:3-10) – **returns 30 pieces of silver; money used to buy “Field of Blood”**
- Jesus is tried before Pilate (27:11-23) – *King of the Jews? release Jesus or Barabbas? Pilate’s wife’s dream*
- Jesus is convicted, scourged, mocked (27:24-31) – **Pilate washes his hands: “I am innocent of his blood”**
- Jesus is led to Golgotha, where he is crucified (27:32-37) – *charge: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews”*
 - On the Cross: Various groups taunt Jesus (27:38-44) – “**If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross**”
 - On the Cross: Jesus’ last words before he dies (27:45-50)
 - Matthew 27:46 – “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (also Mark 15:34)
 - Luke 23 – “*Father, forgive them*”; “*You’ll be with me in paradise*”; “*Into your hands I commit my spirit*”
 - John 19 – “*Woman, behold, your son / Behold, your mother*”; “*I am thirsty*”; “*It is finished*”
- Effects of Jesus’ Death; Witnesses (27:51-56) – *temple curtain torn; earthquake; tombs open; dead raised*
- Jesus is buried & his tomb guarded (27:57-61, **62-66**) – **chief priests tell Pilate: “disciples might steal his body”**

II) Summary of Emphases in Matthew's Passion:

- **Portrayal of Jesus:**
 - *Cruelly Mistreated*: suffering, scouring & crucifixion
 - *Royal Son of David*: the only legitimate “King of the Jews”
 - *Great Teacher (like Moses)*: faithful to God & to his disciples
 - *Beloved Son of God*: as attested by divine signs
- **Roles of Characters in the Narrative:**
 - *Caiaphas & Pilate* – political schemers, avoiding responsibility
 - *Judas & Peter* – betrayer & denier; but both repentant
 - *Other male disciples* – play fairly minor roles; flee
 - *Mary Magdalene & other women* – faithful witnesses
 - *Joseph of Arimathea* – courageous, charitable disciple
- **Familiar Episodes NOT in Matthew's Passion?**
 - **In Luke and John, but not Mark or Matthew:**
 - Much longer dialogues at the Last Supper (Luke 22:24-38; John 13–16)
 - Pilate stresses Jesus’ innocence (Luke 23:4, 13-16, 22; John 18:38b; 19:4, 6, 12)
 - **Only in Luke:**
 - Jesus is tried before the Sanhedrin at dawn (Luke 22:66-71)
 - Jesus is taken and questioned before Herod (Luke 23:6-12)
 - Jesus speaks with women on the Way to Calvary (Luke 23:26-33a)
 - Jesus forgives those who are crucifying him (Luke 23:34a)
 - Jesus speaks with the “repentant thief” (Luke 23:39-43)
 - **Only in John:**
 - Jesus washes his disciples’ feet (John 13:1-20)
 - Jesus’ long prayer to the Father (John 17:1-26)
 - Jesus has a much longer trial before Pilate (John 18:29–19:16)
 - Jesus’ last words on the cross (see above; John 19:26-27, 28, 30)
 - After Jesus’ death, his side is pierced, but his bones not broken (John 19:31-37)