

# MATTHEW AS AN EDITOR OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

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The Gospel According to Matthew, or, as the Joseph Smith Translation notes, the Testimony of St. Matthew, is the first of the four Gospels in our New Testament.<sup>1</sup> This Gospel was very influential among early Christians.<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers (c. AD 155–230), described Matthew as the “most faithful chronicler of the Gospel.”<sup>3</sup> In this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph often used the first Gospel in his sermons.<sup>4</sup> Although modern scholars have debated the authorship of this Gospel, ancient Christian writings are unanimous in ascribing it to the tax collector named Matthew in Matthew 9:9.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of Matthew as an editor of Jesus’ acts and teachings. In other words, modern readers can learn much from this Gospel by examining *what Matthew chose to include and how he chose to write it*. This concept is not unfamiliar to Latter-day Saints. The Book of Mormon shows clear evidence that both Mormon and Moroni actively edited the texts that they had before them and inserted their voices into them. On a number of occasions,

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Mormon lamented that he could not include even “a hundredth part of the proceedings of [his] people” in his record (Helaman 3:14; see also Words of Mormon 1:5; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6). He had to make choices about what to include and what to leave out. We also know that Mormon inserted the Words of Mormon to bridge the gap between the small and large plates of Nephi, and Moroni inserted his commentary into the writings of Ether. Elder Gene R. Cook has taught that readers can gain significant insights **when they look for editorial phrases such as “and thus we see” that alert the reader to the reason why the editor included particular passages.**<sup>6</sup>

As we approach Matthew’s Gospel from this editorial perspective, we should note that while it is true that, as one of the Apostles, Matthew would have been present at many of the events during Jesus’ ministry, it is also clear that he used a number of oral and written sources to compile his Gospel. In many respects, Matthew was in a similar position to that of Mormon and Moroni, collecting and editing material in order to create a specific message about Jesus Christ for his audience.<sup>7</sup> Part of that message, however, can be lost to the reader if he or she is not aware of the editorial nuances of the text. Before we can recognize Matthew’s editorial hand, however, we must first briefly discuss both his audience and the sources he used.

### MATTHEW’S AUDIENCE

Although we may never be able to identify a specific congregation in a specific city as Matthew’s intended audience, there are clues from both external and internal evidence that help us to draw some broad conclusions. Eusebius, using an unnamed source, says that Matthew wrote his Gospel to the Hebrews at a time when he had decided to expand his missionary work.<sup>8</sup> Internal evidence from the Gospel itself seems to confirm that **the intended audience was Jewish.**<sup>9</sup> Matthew went to great lengths to show that **Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy** (see Matthew 1:22–23; 2:15, 17–18; 4:14–15; 8:17; 12:17–18; 21:4–5; 27:35). Matthew also began his work with a genealogy that links Jesus **with the royal Davidic line and with Abraham, the father of the covenant** (see Matthew 1:1–17), and he portrayed Jesus as

the new Moses, who came out of Egypt (see Matthew 2:13–23) and gave a new law on a mountain (see Matthew 5:1).

In the text, three characteristics of Matthew's editorial hand suggest that his audience was in tension with, or had recently split with, the synagogue. In Matthew's editorial passages the synagogue is always referred to as "their" synagogue (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54) or "your" synagogue (Matthew 23:34).<sup>10</sup> Thus the synagogue stood in some tension with the church. Matthew is the only Gospel author to include Jesus' sayings where He referred to the "church" (*ekklesiá*; Matthew 16:18; 18:17). Additionally, Matthew referred to "their scribes" (*grammateis auton*; Matthew 7:29), whereas Mark just said "the scribes" (*hoi grammateis*; Mark 1:22). All of these Matthean characteristics point to an "us" and "them" situation for Matthew's audience. Some scholars have argued that this situation reflects a time during the Jamnian period (AD 70–100) when Judaism was seeking to redefine itself after the destruction of the temple.<sup>11</sup> Rifts within Judaism, however, were not exclusive to this time period and may reflect a much earlier period.<sup>12</sup>

Matthew, therefore, would have chosen sayings and deeds of Jesus that would have had meaning for a Jewish audience. This is a very different scenario from the ones faced by Mark and Luke, where the internal evidence suggests they were intended primarily for Gentile audiences.

### MATTHEW'S SOURCES

There is internal evidence in the text to suggest that Matthew relied, at least in part, on written sources to write his Gospel. For example, we know that he relied heavily upon texts from the Old Testament. He often used the Greek word *gegraptai* ("it is written") to introduce his scriptural quotations indicating that, on these occasions, he was not relying on oral versions.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that Matthew knew both the Hebrew and Greek versions of Old Testament texts.<sup>14</sup> However, it is also possible that Matthew did not have access to written accounts of some of the Minor Prophets. In Matthew 21:16 he recorded Jesus' quotation of Micah 2:25 but, unlike most of his scripture citations, did not identify the source of the quote. Again, in Matthew 27:9 he quoted Zechariah 11:13, but attributed it to Jeremiah.<sup>15</sup> In these cases, he may

have relied upon oral versions of the prophecies. The Joseph Smith Translation also indicates that Matthew used a written source for his account of Jesus' birth: "Now, *as it is written*, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise" (JST, Matthew 1:18, emphasis added). Unfortunately, we no longer have access to that original source.

Modern scholarship also identifies two other major sources for Matthew's Gospel: the Gospel of Mark and a written source of Jesus' sayings. We must consider each of these briefly if we are to recognize Matthew's editorial work in his Gospel.

Many early Christians considered that Matthew's was the first written Gospel.<sup>16</sup> This belief undoubtedly influenced the Gospel's position in our present canon. Modern scholars, however, have debated the question of Matthean priority. Many now believe that Mark was the first written Gospel and that Matthew used it as a source for his own Gospel.<sup>17</sup> While there are some difficulties with this position,<sup>18</sup> there are two arguments that are compelling for me and for most scholars. First, even though Papias says that Mark was not particularly interested in writing the sayings and events in chronological order,<sup>19</sup> **Matthew and Luke tend to follow Markan order.** In Matthew's case, this is particularly evident in chapters 14–28, although even in the earlier chapters we can discern its influence.<sup>20</sup> It is true that Markan priority is only one way of explaining this phenomenon. The more telling characteristic is that when Matthew disagrees with Mark's chronology, the difference can be understood to be the result of Matthean editorial tendencies.<sup>21</sup> In part, the differences in Markan chronology in Matthew 4–13 can be attributed to Matthew's penchant for collecting materials into thematic blocks (see the collections of miracle stories in Matthew 8–9 and of the parables in Matthew 13). Second, in at least twelve verses, Matthew appears to change Mark's rare or difficult word or phrase and renders it with more common terminology.<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to acknowledge Matthean priority over Mark in these cases, because we would then have to explain why Mark would want to obscure the message for his readers.

A second source that many scholars see behind Matthew's Gospel is **a hypothetical document known as Q** (from the German word *Quelle*, meaning "source").<sup>23</sup> It is hypothetical because no copy of it has ever

been found. Nevertheless, scholars have identified a number of places where Matthew and Luke shared material that is not found in Mark. They noted that much of this material consisted of the sayings of Jesus. For example, one passage found in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, is John the Baptist's tongue-lashing against the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew or the multitude in Luke. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matthew 3:7–9; see also Luke 3:7–8). In both Matthew and Luke, the Greek in these passages is almost exactly the same and suggests to scholars that they borrowed from a written, rather than an oral, source.

The question in scholars' minds, once they identified this phenomenon of shared sayings in Matthew and Luke, was whether early Christians would have been interested in just the sayings of Jesus without a corresponding narrative context. Frankly, there was no evidence for this view until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in Egypt in 1945. Among the codices, scholars found a text known as the Gospel of Thomas that included 114 purported sayings by Jesus without any narrative. This text showed that the **hypothetical genre of Q was indeed a reality for some Christians.**<sup>24</sup> While I do not accept all of the assumptions that Q scholarship has developed,<sup>25</sup> I do find the basic concept of a written source of Jesus' sayings compelling and helpful in identifying Matthew's editorial work, particularly in chapters 4–11, where the sayings shared by Matthew and Luke are most prevalent.<sup>26</sup>

In highlighting these sources, I am not suggesting that they were the only sources Matthew drew upon. One New Testament scholar has recently reminded us: "Scholars of the twenty-first century must take more seriously than their twentieth-century predecessors the fact that **first-century Israel was an oral culture** and the probability that the Jesus tradition was processed in oral form through the first two generations of Christians (and beyond), prior to, including Q, and alongside the written Gospels."<sup>27</sup> Matthew undoubtedly tapped into this oral culture

as well. Nevertheless, it is with the written texts that we can most easily discern his editorial hand.

### MATTHEW AS EDITOR

Matthew did not just collect Jesus' teachings and stories; he edited them as he fashioned his Gospel.<sup>28</sup> Just as Mormon and Moroni included phrases such as "And thus we see," Matthew also includes a number of techniques that help readers to identify his editorial hand. Recognizing these techniques will help us to appreciate the specific emphases of Jesus' ministry that Matthew felt were most important for his audience.

*Matthew's five discourses of Jesus.* First, we have already noted that Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience and that he portrayed Jesus as the new Moses. Within Matthew's Gospel, we find him delineating five major discourses by the Savior: the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), the Apostolic Commission (Matthew 10), the Kingdom of God discourse (Matthew 13), the Church Administration discourse (Matthew 18), and the Eschatological discourse (Matthew 24–25). We know that Matthew intended his readers to see these as distinct but related discourses by the way that he concluded each of them. At the end of each of the first four discourses, he added, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these" sayings, teachings, or parables (*kai egeneto hote etelesen ho Iēsous*; Matthew 7:28; see also Matthew 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). At the conclusion of the last discourse, he added, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished *all* these sayings" (emphasis added; *kai egeneto hote etelesen ho Iēsous pantas tous logous toutous*; Matthew 26:1). B. W. Bacon has argued that in doing so, Matthew's intent was to create for his readers a Christian Penteteuch (that is, the five books of Moses) to once again emphasize that Jesus was the new Moses.<sup>29</sup>

*Matthew's literary use of bookends.* Second, Matthew uses "bookends" around his Gospel as a whole and around important sections within his Gospel. Just as the function of bookends is to keep books together, so scriptural bookends help us to identify the parts of the Gospel that Matthew wanted his audience to read as a single unit. This is important because our current chapter divisions often divide passages that Matthew intended to be read as a single unit.

An important thematic bookend encapsulates the entire Gospel. We have noted already that Matthew intended his Gospel to be read by a predominantly Jewish audience. This point serves as an important point of demarcation from the other synoptic Gospels. **The importance of the Jewish mission for Matthew is highlighted in two of his editorial inclusions.** Matthew is the only Gospel writer to include Jesus' instruction to the Apostles that they were to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5–6). Furthermore, unlike Mark, in the story of the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter, Matthew includes Jesus' statement, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24).

While acknowledging the importance of the Jewish mission, it is significant that Matthew frames his Gospel within a gentile context. The first two chapters emphasize the importance of Gentiles in the establishment of Jesus' ministry. Matthew's genealogy differs from the one found in Luke. We have noted that Matthew begins with Abraham, the father of the covenant, but Genesis makes it clear that through this covenant all nations, not just the Israelites, would be blessed (see Genesis 12:3; 18:18).<sup>30</sup> In addition, Matthew includes four Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy, highlighting the importance of Gentiles in the coming forth of the Messiah. Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites, and Ruth was a Moabite. Matthew does not mention Bathsheba by name, but only as the wife of Uriah. Why would Matthew not identify Bathsheba by name? The scriptures are silent on her ethnic background; therefore it served Matthew's purposes to identify her instead by her relationship to Uriah, who was known to be a Hittite (see 2 Samuel 11:3). As one scholar has noted, Matthew's genealogy, therefore, "contains a universalistic overtone: it is indicated in a hidden way that the son of David, the Messiah of Israel, brings salvation for the Gentiles."<sup>31</sup> This universalistic tone is further strengthened in chapter 2, where the Wise Men seek out and worship the Christ child as "King of the Jews" when the representatives of Judaism fail to do so.<sup>32</sup>

The corresponding bookend that is unique to Matthew's Gospel is Jesus' commission to the disciples before His Ascension. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,

and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19–20).<sup>33</sup> This passage is in stark contrast to Jesus' command to the Apostles to go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6).

Yet Matthew has prepared his readers for the shift in missionary emphasis with his accounts of the healings of the centurion's servant and the Canaanite woman's children. The story of the centurion may have come from Q because Luke also includes the story, and it is not found in Mark. Matthew does not include Luke's description of the centurion as one who "loveth our nation" and who "built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:5). Both Matthew and Luke record Jesus' declaration that in the centurion He found faith that had not been manifested in Israel (see Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9). But only Matthew includes Jesus' statement, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:11–12). Luke records this statement in a different setting (see Luke 13:28–29). Thus, Matthew emphasizes that at times Gentiles have more faith than the covenant people and will participate in the eschatological feast when many of the house of Israel will miss out. The story of the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter also shows evidence of Matthean editing. Mark also includes the story (see Mark 7:24–30), but only Matthew records the woman's plea that Jesus "have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David" (Matthew 15:22) and Jesus' declaration "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matthew 15:28). Both the centurion and the Canaanite woman address Jesus with the title "Lord" (*kurios*), the title used by disciples and other supplicants.<sup>34</sup>

What benefit would this aspect of Matthew's editorial work be for his audience? One explanation may lie with the experiences of Matthew's intended audience. We know from Acts and the Pauline Epistles that the expansion of missionary work to include the Gentiles was a difficult transition for the early Church, and that there were members who resisted it. We recall Eusebius' statement that Matthew wrote this Gospel when he was about to begin preaching to others



besides the Hebrews, that is, Gentiles. Therefore, he may have written to try and convince his readers of the importance of the gentile mission. If this conclusion is accurate, then once again we are reminded of the possibility of an early date for this Gospel.

We find another example of Matthew's use of bookends in Matthew 4:23 and 9:35. Here the bookends are textual, rather than thematic. Matthew 4:23 reads, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." The passage in chapter 9 is almost identical except that it has "Jesus went about all the cities and villages" instead of "all Galilee," and the critical Greek text (contrary to the King James Version) does not have "among the people."<sup>35</sup> Matthew uses these parallel verses to prompt the reader to recognize that all of the material between them belongs to the same literary unit. This is one example of where chapter breaks in our modern New Testament interrupt the author's flow of ideas. Therefore, Matthew expected that his readers would recognize that the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5–7 should be read in conjunction with the collection of miracles in chapters 8 and 9. Thus, Matthew wants his readers to see that Jesus is the Messiah in both word (the Sermon on the Mount) and deed (His miracles).

*Matthew's use of "the coming one."* The last major aspect of Matthew's editorial practice noted here is found in Matthew 3–11. As can be readily seen, these chapters include the emphasis of Jesus as the Messiah in word and deed that we have just discussed. In this section, Matthew merges that concept with two important passages dealing with John the Baptist and his disciples. The baptism of John plays an important role in each of the four Gospels, although only Matthew and Luke record that he sent his disciples to Jesus, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3; see also Luke 7:20). This passage may stem from Q because it is not found in either Mark or John. Matthew, in distinction from Luke, links this passage with his description of John's baptism in Matthew 3. The link is not readily discernable in the King James Version but is recognizable in the Greek with the catch phrase *ho erchomenos* ("the coming one").

The account of John the Baptist's activities in the Judaeen wilderness plays a prominent part in Matthew's Gospel. His calls for repentance attract many Pharisees and Sadducees to attend one of his baptisms. As noted above, John identifies them as a "generation of vipers" (Matthew 3:7). He prophesies that "the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" and promises them that "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (verse 10). Then John declares, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but the coming one [who is] after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (verse 11, my translation). In contrast to Matthew, Mark (1:7) and Luke (3:16) do not use *ho erchomenos* in their accounts.<sup>36</sup> Matthew makes no explicit mention here of the identity of "the coming one," although he implies that it refers to Jesus by following the prophecy with the description of His baptism.

The next mention of John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel is found in chapter 11. By this time John was in prison and sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire if He was "the coming one" (*ho erchomenos*; verse 3). Immediately the reader is reminded of Matthew's account of John's earlier prophecy to the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus did not answer them directly. Instead, He told them to "go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4–5).<sup>37</sup> Jesus' response is significant for a number of reasons. First, it portrayed the coming one in a different light than John's expectation in Matthew 3:10, where he was an axe who would hew down any tree that did not bring forth good fruit. In Matthew 11, Jesus was the coming one who, unlike the expectation in chapter 3, would heal and preach. This was not a common messianic expectation in Jesus' day.<sup>38</sup>

This portrayal of a healing and preaching Messiah influenced the Matthean order in chapters 4–9. It is here that, in chiastic format, we find the evidence for Jesus being the expected coming one. The evidence that Jesus taught the gospel to the poor is the Sermon on the Mount, where the opening line is "Blessed are the poor" (Matthew 5:3). Prior to Matthew 11, the opening beatitude is the only verse that uses

the word “poor” (*ptōchoi*).<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Matthew provided evidence that Jesus performed healings in Matthew 8–9, where there is at least one example of every miracle that is mentioned in Matthew 11:5. The only difficulty is finding an example of the deaf hearing, but this is a difficulty only in the English text, not the Greek. The Greek word for “deaf” in Matthew 11:5 is the plural of *kōphos*, the same word used to describe the demoniac who is dumb (*kōphos*; see Matthew 9:32–33).<sup>40</sup> Matthew therefore arranged the material in chapters 5–9 to provide evidence for his readers that Jesus was indeed the coming one.

## CONCLUSION

Matthew’s Gospel is a powerful testimony of Jesus as the Christ. It was never intended that this work be a biography of Jesus’ mortal life from birth to resurrection. Instead, as the Joseph Smith Translation notes in the title, he was bearing his testimony to his readers. In that testimony, Matthew drew on Jesus’ teachings and experiences from his own memories as well as from other sources. His editorial work has helped readers throughout the ages to see Jesus as the new Moses who gave a new law to His people, as the Messiah of both word and deed, and as the Coming One who preached and healed. Through his work, we are able to gain a greater appreciation of the magnitude and depth of Christ’s ministry. Thus, it is no wonder that this Gospel was a frequent part of the Prophet Joseph’s sermons. As one New Testament scholar has noted, “The Gospel of Matthew is a book intended to be read as a whole and not in parts or pericopes. It is intended to be read not just once but several times.”<sup>41</sup> The Prophet Joseph taught, “He who reads it [the Bible] oftenest will like it best.”<sup>42</sup> This has certainly been my experience with Matthew’s Gospel.

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## NOTES

1. For all Joseph Smith Translation quotes, see Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004).

2. It seems to have been referred to by Peter (2 Peter 1:16–18) and James (James 1:13; 2:13; 3:5–6, 18; 4:8, 11; 5:12), although they may be using a similar

source. It is quoted in the writings of Ignatius (*To the Ephesians*, 14.2; *To the Smyrnaeans*, 1.1; 6.1; *To Polycarp*, 2.2), and the *Didache* (1.4; 3.7; 7.1; 8.2; 9.5; 13.2). It was the only book of scripture used by the Ebionites (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1.26.2), and the Valentinians, Marcionites, and Basilidians also taught from it (Clement, *Stromata*, 7.17).

3. On the *Flesh of Christ*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 3:540.

4. Joseph's use of Matthew is seen in a survey of the scripture index in *Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, annot. Richard C. Galbraith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 462–67. In this index there are 545 references to Matthew; 96 references to Mark, 233 references to Luke, and 274 references to John.

5. For examples of the issues of authorship, see Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 93–95; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 2–4; R. T. France, *Matthew, Evangelist and Teacher* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 50–80. The unanimity among ancient authors is significant because at times they did question the authorship of texts (see Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.3.1–5; 6.14.1–3).

6. Gene R. Cook, *Searching the Scriptures: Bringing Power to Your Personal and Family Study* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 81–82.

7. James D. G. Dunn writes, “Not every [early Christian] church knew or thought it necessary to know all there was to know about Jesus; and that the Evangelists were probably at least in some measure selective in their use of the Jesus tradition” (*Jesus Remembered, Christianity in the Making* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 1:161).

8. See Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.24.6.

9. Eusebius preserves a famous statement from Papias, which states: “Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as best he could” (*History of the Church*, 3.39.16). Although many have interpreted this statement as referring to Matthew's Gospel, there are major difficulties with doing so because it was written in Greek not Hebrew. The phrase “in the Hebrew language” may mean “in Jewish forms of expression” (see Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 116).

10. In Matthew 4:23, Matthew may be using the Markan phrase “their synagogues” (Mark 1:39) but, unlike Mark, Matthew repeats it in 9:35. In the other instances, Matthew has added the pronoun to the Markan passages (see Matthew 12:9; 13:54). There is no Markan parallel for Matthew 23:34.

11. W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 256–315; Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 113–45.

12. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 15–16.

13. He uses the phrase ten times; see Matthew 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; 27:37. See also Matthew 26:56, “That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled,” where “scriptures” is a translation of *graphai*, “writings.” In

addition, the Joseph Smith Translation adds the phrase “as the prophets have written” to Matthew 1:16; see also additions to 2:4; 5:27, 31, 33. Matthew also introduces formula quotations with variations of phrases such as “To fulfil what was spoken by the prophet” (*hina plērōthē to rhēthen . . . dia tou prophetou*; Matthew 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 27:9), and “It was said by them of old time” (*errethē tois archaiois*; Matthew 5:21, 27). While the idea of a written text may be implied with these phrases, they are not specific and so I have not included them in this discussion.

14. For a discussion of the issues, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew, The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1:32–57; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 29–33.

15. See Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 157.

16. One possible exception is Tertullian, where he indicates that “John and Matthew first instil faith into us” while “Luke and Mark renew it afterwards” (*Against Marcion*, 4:2; see also chapter 5). Tertullian’s intent, however, seems to differentiate John and Matthew from Luke and Mark rather than to make a statement about the priority of John over Matthew (see Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, in Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 6.25.4; cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.1–2; Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 4.2).

17. For two Latter-day Saint views on Markan priority, see Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 1:69; S. Kent Brown, “The Testimony of Mark,” in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Five: The Gospels*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 65.

18. See William R. Farmer, *Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture, and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

19. See Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.39.15.

20. Scholars have long noted the “editorial fatigue,” in the latter half of Matthew (Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982], 10). Markan order can still be detected frequently in Matthew 4–12. “Where Markan order is changed by Matthew, he can be shown to have been inspired by his sources” (Stanton, *A Gospel For a New People*, 31). For more detailed examinations of this phenomenon in Matthew 8–9, see C. M. Tuckett, “Arguments from Order: Definition and Evaluation,” in *Synoptic Studies: The Ampleforth Conferences of 1982 and 1983* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 207–11, James M. Robinson, “The Matthean Trajectory from Q to Mark,” in *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture: Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 125, and Linden Eric Youngquist, “Matthew and Q” (unpublished dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2003).

21. Tuckett, “Arguments From Order,” 207.

22. For a list of the verses in Greek, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 105–6.

23. James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffman, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

24. The copy of the Gospel of Thomas found at Nag Hammadi was in Coptic and dates from the fourth century AD, but the original was probably a much

earlier document. The Oxyrhynchus papyri seem to represent an earlier Greek version of the text. Greek paleographic evidence dates these fragments to before AD 200.

25. For an excellent Latter-day Saint review of the assumptions of Q scholarship, see Thomas A. Wayment, "A Viewpoint of the Supposedly Lost Gospel Q," *Religious Educator* 5, no. 3 (2004): 105–15.

26. Q scholars have postulated a Q community and divided Q into three redactional layers (see John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987]). In particular, I do not agree with statements such as the following: "Q puts us in touch with the earlier history of the Jesus movements, and their recollections of Jesus are altogether different. The first followers of Jesus did not know about or imagine any of the dramatic events upon which the narrative gospels hinge. These include the baptism of Jesus; his conflict with the Jewish authorities and their plot to kill him; Jesus' instruction to the disciples; Jesus' transfiguration, march to Jerusalem, last supper, trial, and crucifixion as king of the Jews; and finally, his resurrection from the dead and the stories of an empty tomb. All of these events must and can be accounted for as mythmaking in the Jesus movements, with a little help from the martyrology of the Christ, in the period after the Roman-Jewish war" (Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Christian Origins* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993], 247). The weaknesses that I see in this position are three-fold: (1) We cannot be certain that our constructed version of Q contains all of the sayings of Jesus; (2) The genre of Q as a sayings source would necessarily preclude a description of many of the "events" of Jesus such as the baptism, transfiguration, and resurrection; and (3) I question why a hypothetical text should be given precedence over texts that have survived from antiquity.

27. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 161.

28. Modern scholars use the term "Redaction Criticism" to describe the process of looking for signs of editorial emphases and insertions into a scriptural text. While I recognize the value of this technique, I consider myself to be a minimalist. Many scholars argue that Matthew (and other scriptural authors) created stories and events and inserted them into the text. As a result, they question the historical veracity of many parts of the scriptural texts. One biblical scholar, however, has argued, "So often scholarship assumes that if something *could* have been made up by early Christians, then it *must* have been made up by early Christians. But that is to show undue skepticism. Early Christian tradents . . . operated with a sense of integrity and responsibility which is often not adequately reckoned with" (Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 13). As a minimalist redaction critic, therefore, I recognize that Matthew has reworked the order of events and retold the stories of Jesus in a way that would better emphasize and teach doctrines that were important for his audience without having to create fictional events or sayings.

29. B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Holt, 1930).

30. This point was not lost on Paul in Galatians 3.

31. Luz, *Matthew* 1–7, 110.

32. Elder Bruce R. McConkie suggests that the Wise Men were probably diaspora Jews (see *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979–81], 1:358). This may be the case, but for Matthew, they were Gentiles. In Matthew's Gospel only Gentiles use the phrase "King of the Jews" (see Matthew 27:11, 29, 37). In contrast, the scribes and elders called Him mockingly "King of Israel" (see Matthew 27:42).

33. Luke records a similar statement, but he places it in Acts 1 rather than at the conclusion of his Gospel.

34. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, trans. James E. Crouch, ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 339.

35. The phrase "among the people" is a scribal addition in Codex Sinaiticus (ⲭ\*), and in Codex Ephraemi it is added by a third scribal hand (C<sup>3</sup>). It then becomes a part of the text in manuscripts during the eighth century and beyond: Codices Basiliensis (E), Borelianus (F), Wolfii A (G), Regius (L), and Koridethi (Θ), etc.

36. In Mark and Luke we have the articular use of the substantive comparative adjective *ischuros* as the subject of the conjugated definite verb *erchomai* (*erchetai* [*de*] *ho ischuroteros mou*), while Matthew uses the nominal substantive attributive participle of *erchomai* with the present indicative of the verb *eimi* (*ho de . . . erchomenos ischuroteros mou estin*). John's account, like Matthew's, uses *ho erchomenos*, but like Mark's, does not include the story of John's disciples coming to Jesus.

37. This passage is not found in Mark but is included in Luke 7:22, which may suggest that it comes from Q. Luke, however, includes the following verse between the disciples' question and Jesus' answer: "And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave their sight" (Luke 7:21). This verse acts as proof for the response Jesus gives. Matthew does not include this verse because, as we shall see, he uses chapters 8 and 9 as proof of Jesus' response.

38. One possible exception is a messianic fragment from the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q521) that describes God, through His Messiah, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, and preaching to the poor.

39. We do not know how the early Christians identified the Sermon on the Mount, but the modern title was not used until the fourth century AD, when Augustine coined it (see *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean*, 5.3). One practice that was used in antiquity was to identify a text by a word or phrase from the opening line. For example, Akkadian documents refer to the Babylonian Creation story as the *Enuma Elish* ("When on high"), and the Hebrew titles for the books of the Torah all come from the opening words of the text.

40. "The blind receive their sight" = Matthew 9:27–31; "the lame walk" = Matthew 9:1–8; "the lepers are cleansed" = Matthew 8:2–4; "the deaf hear" = Matthew 9:32–33; "the dead are raised up" = Matthew 9:18–19, 23–26. There is a lot more editorial work going on in these chapters than I have mentioned. For a more detailed discussion, see Ulrich Luz, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8–9," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Otto

Betz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 149–65, and Youngquist, “Matthew and Q,” 107–15.

41. Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, trans. Rosemary Selle (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 3.

42. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 56.