

The Gospel of Matthew

1. Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.
The Birth of the Messiah: the Fulfillment
of God's Promises (*Matthew 1.1-25*)

Sunday, November 20, 2005

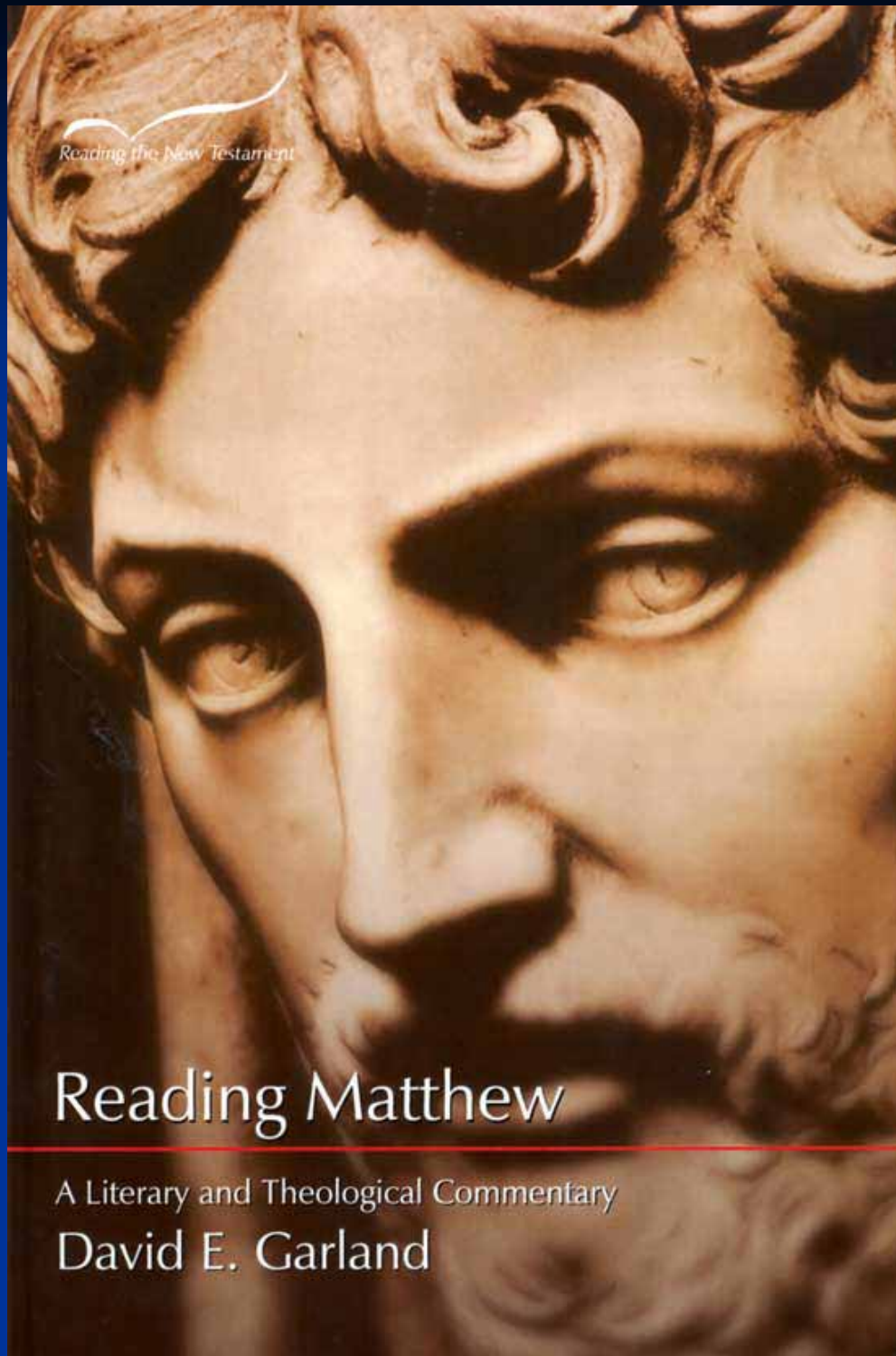
10 to 11 am in the Parlor.

Everyone is welcome!

St. John in the Wilderness

We thank you, heavenly Father, for the witness of your apostle and evangelist Matthew to the Gospel of your Son our Savior; and we pray that, after his example, we may with ready wills and hearts obey the calling of our Lord to follow him; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 244



- **Reading Matthew. A Literary and Theological Commentary**, David E. Garland, Smyth & Helwys, 2001, ISBN 1-57312-274
- **Dr. Garland** is Professor of Christian Scriptures and Associate Dean for Academic Services at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University

INTERPRETING
I · B · T
BIBLICAL TEXTS

THE
GOSPEL
OF
MATTHEW

Donald Senior

- **The Gospel of Matthew** (**Interpreting Biblical Texts Series**), Donald Senior, Abingdon Press, 1997, ISBN 0-687-00848-4
- **Dr. Senior** is Professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew

“Favorite” Gospel of the Early Church

- Matthew was the “favorite” gospel of the early church.
- In the early manuscripts of the New Testament, the order of the various books often varied, but Matthew was always the first gospel.
- His is the gospel most quoted by the early Church Fathers.

The Gospel of Matthew

The Author

- The author is anonymous.
- We can say with some confidence that he:
 - Must have belonged to a Hellenized Jewish culture
 - Could write good Greek (much more elegant than the author of Mark)
 - Was well versed in the Hebrew Scriptures

The Gospel of Matthew

The Author

- Tradition of Matthew as the author:
 - **Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis** (~110-125 AD; Hieropolis = a major ancient Roman city in Asia Minor) is the first person we know of who refers to “Matthew” as the gospel’s author.
 - It is questionable if the “Matthew” who wrote the gospel is the same Matthew who left his job as a tax collector to become a disciple of Jesus:
 - **9:9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. (NRSV)**
 - **10:2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; ... (NRSV)**

The Gospel of Matthew

“The Jewish Gospel” ?

- Matthew is often described as the gospel written for the Jews. Matthew:
 - does *not* explain Jewish customs and terms
 - Tries hard to show that Jesus was:
 - the “Son of David”
 - met the qualifications to be the Jewish Messiah
 - Frequently quotes and interprets the Hebrew Scriptures to illuminate Jesus life and mission

The Gospel of Matthew

“The Jewish Gospel” ?

- Matthew alone cites Jesus saying:
 - “... Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather **to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'” (10:5-7 NRSV)
 - “I was sent only **to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**.” (15:24 NRSV)
- Emphasizes Jesus was perfectly obedient to the law:
 - “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.” (5:17 NRSV)

The Gospel of Matthew

“The Jewish Gospel” ?

- However we should not assume that Matthew wrote primarily for the Jews, since:
 - Gospel also contains material that seems biased against the Jews (21:43; 23:32-33,35; 27:25)
 - Gospel also reflects Jesus’ desire to include the Gentiles:
 - **“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.” (8:11-12 NRSV)**
 - **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, ... (28:19 NRSV)**

The Gospel of Matthew

Setting

- Time and place of the gospel's composition matter of reasoned conjecture.
- **Time.** Most scholars feel it was composed:
 - after the Jewish rebellion against Rome in 70 AD, when the temple was destroyed
 - before the end of the century
- **Place.** No consensus.
 - Perhaps Syria, as Matthew notes Jesus' "... **fame spread throughout all Syria...**" (4:24 NRSV) while Mark says **Galilee**.
 - Perhaps in the city of Antioch in Syria: according to Acts, one of the earliest Christian communities outside of Palestine.

The Gospel of Matthew

Two Source Theory

- Until 19th century, Matthew was thought to be the *first* gospel written.
- Predominant modern view is that Matthew's sources include:
 - Gospel of Mark (*first* gospel written)
 - A source "Q" (from German *Quelle* = "source") available to Luke and Matthew, but not to Mark

The Gospel of Matthew

Two Source Theory

- Some reasons justifying this theory:
 - Mark is the shortest gospel: 661 verses. Matthew has 1,068 verses, and Luke 1,149 verses.
 - Matthew has 80% of the 661 verses in Mark; Luke has 65% of Mark's verses.
 - Matthew and Luke have 220 verses (= presumed to be from "Q") of material in common, not found in Mark.
 - Why would the author of Mark, if it were written after Matthew, condense / leave out so much material found in an earlier Matthew?

The Gospel of Matthew

Structure: Five Books

- Matthew's literary structure is unique in having **five great teaching discourses** by Jesus, each separated by **narrative / story-telling passages**.
- American scholar Benjamin Bacon in the early 20th century noted a structure of 5 great "books" of "narrative" and "discourse."
 - Bacon also suggested they were patterned after the Pentateuch = the first five books of the Old Testament (a view not convincing to modern scholars).

The Gospel of Matthew

Structure: Five Books

- **Book 1:**
 - Chapters 1-4 Narrative
 - **Chapters 5-7 Discourse**
- **Book 2:**
 - Chapters 8-9 Narrative
 - **Chapter 10 Discourse**
- **Book 3:**
 - Chapters 11-12 Narrative
 - **Chapter 13 Discourse**
- **Book 4**
 - Chapters 14-17 Narrative
 - **Chapter 18 Discourse**
- **Book 5:**
 - Chapters 19-25 Narrative
 - **Chapter 24-25 Discourse**
- **The Passion**
 - Chapters 26-28 Narrative

The Gospel of Matthew

Structure: Three Divisions

- Scholar J.D. Kingsbury has identified a three-fold structure in the story-line defined by phrase **“from that time Jesus began...”** found in 4:17 and 16:21:
 - **From that time Jesus began** to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (4:17 NRSV)
 - **From that time on, Jesus began** to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. (16:21 NRSV)

The Gospel of Matthew

Structure: Three Divisions

- Three divisions:
 - **1:1—4:16:** The Presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of God
 - **4:17—16:20:** The Presentation of Jesus in Term of His Public Proclamation
 - **16:21—28:20:** The Presentation of Jesus in Terms of His Passion and Resurrection
- This “story-line” based structure is the one we will adopt for this study

- **Introducing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 1:1—4:16)**
 - **The Birth of the Messiah: The Fulfillment of God's Promises (1:1-25)**
 - From Judea of David to the Galilee of the Gentiles (2:1-23)
 - Getting Ready: God's Son in the Wilderness (3:1—4:11)
 - Dispelling the Darkness in Galilee (4:12-16)
- **Jesus' Ministry to Israel - Part 1. Teaching, Healing, and Calling the Lost Sheep (Matthew 4:17—10:42)**
 - Jesus' Debut: Authority and Compassion. Dawn in Galilee (4:17-25)
 - The Sermon on the Mount: Magisterial Teaching, A Charter for Discipleship (5:1—8:1)
 - Jesus ascends the mountain (5:1-2)
 - The Beatitudes (5:3-12)
 - The mission of disciples of Jesus to change the world (5:13-16)
 - The fulfillment of the law by Jesus: the greater righteousness demanded of his disciples (5:17-48)
 - Murder, Adultery, Divorce
 - Oaths, Retaliation, Love of Enemies
 - Directions on piety (6:1-18)
 - Directions on money (6:19-34)
 - Directions on social relationships (7:1-12)
 - Warnings (7:13-27)
 - Reaction of the crowds; descent from the mountain (7:28—8:1)
 - Restoring Life to Others: Jesus the Healer (8:2—9:35)
 - Great Harvest and Great Dangers: The Mission Discourse (9:36—10:42)
- **Jesus' Ministry to Israel - Part 2. Rejection and Confession (Matthew 11:2—16:20)**
 - Doubt, Indifference, and Dissent (11:2—12:45)
 - The Parable Discourse: the Mysteries of the Kingdom Revealed (12:46—13:54)
 - The Mission Resumes (13:54—16:12)
 - Rejection in Nazareth (13:54-58)
 - The Death of John (14:1-12)
 - Two Great Signs (14:13-36)
 - A Dispute with Israel; An Opening to the Gentiles (15:1-28)
 - Healing and Feeding the Multitudes; Demand for a Sign (15:29—16:12)
- **Jesus' Passion and Resurrection (Matthew 16:21-28:20)**
 - The Journey to Jerusalem (16:13—20:34)
 - Confession at Caesarea Philippi (16:13-28)
 - Transfiguration (17:1-21)
 - Living Together as the Family of God: Life Within the Community of the Kingdom (17:22—18:35)
 - Teachings on the Journey (19:1—20:16)
 - The Conclusion of the Journey (20:17-34)
 - In the Holy City: Conflict, Death, and Resurrection (21:1—28:15)
 - The Messiah in the Temple (21:1-17)
 - The Teacher and His Opponents (21:18—22:46)
 - False Teachers Lead Others to Ruin: Condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees (23:1-39)
 - The Coming of the Son of Man and the Judgment of the World (24:1—25:46)
 - The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Finale (26:1—28:15)

The Birth of the Messiah: The Fulfillment of God's Promises

Matthew 1:1-25

The Birth of the Messiah

Two Parts

- Two parts:
 - Genealogy of the Messiah (1:1-17)
 - Jesus' Conception by the Holy Spirit and Adoption by Joseph (1:18-25)

Matthew 1:1-25

Genealogy of The Messiah

Introduction

- The gospel begins with
“An account of the genealogy of **Jesus the Messiah**, the **son of David**, the **son of Abraham**.” (1:1 NRSV)

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Genealogies in Ancient Biographies

- Genealogies were common in ancient biographies, and considered helpful.
- Roman author Quintilian wrote: **“With regards to things preceding a man’s birth, there are his country, his parents and his ancestors, a theme which may be handled in two ways. For either it will be credible to the objects of our praise not to have fallen short of the fair fame of their country and of their sires or to have ennobled a humble origin by the glory of their achievements.”**

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Genealogies in Ancient Biographies

- Matthew's genealogy tells us:
 - Jesus belongs to the legitimate line of the kings of Israel.
 - Jesus' roots go deep into Israel's sacred history.

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Jesus, David, Abraham

- The names of **Jesus, David, Abraham** also appear at the end of the genealogy (1:16-17), and thus are “bookends” at the beginning and end of the genealogy
- By linking **Jesus** to **Abraham** and **David**, Matthew links Jesus to two great promises made to Israel.

Genealogy of The Messiah

Son of David

- The promises made to David:
 - In 2 Samuel 7:12-16, God tells David: “¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, ...** ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; **your throne shall be established forever.**”
 - Similar passages in: 1 Chron 17:11-14; Ps 89:3; Ps 132:11, Isa 11:1-5,10; Jer 23:5-6; Jer 30:9; Jer 33:14-18; Ezek 34:23-24, Ezek 37:24; Sir 47:11; 1 Macc. 2:57

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Son of David

- In benedictions prayed three times a day by pious Jews, the 15th asks: **“Cause the Shoot of David to shoot forth quickly, and raise up his horn by thy salvation. For we wait on thy salvation all the day. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who causest the horn of salvation to shoot forth.”**
- Matthew is telling us the awaited time of salvation has arrived with the advent of Jesus, Son of David.

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Son of Abraham

- By linking Jesus to Abraham as well, Matthew links him to the other great promise made to Israel.
- Promise made to Abraham: **“¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”**
(Genesis 22:17-18 NRSV)

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

- Matthew's genealogy of Jesus the Messiah diverges from the conventional pattern of genealogies of the times: "X the father of Y."
- *One divergence*: begins with last entry, Jesus, rather than the first person who sired the family.
 - Emphasizes Jesus overshadows all those who came before him

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

- *Another divergence:* includes some mothers and women:
 - Tamar 1:4
 - Rahab and Ruth 1:5
 - the wife of Uriah 1:6
 - Mary 1:16
- Luke did not include any women in his genealogy (Luke 3:23-38)

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

■ Tamar

- Lived in the time of Patriarchs
- Was an Aramean, according to ancient sources
- When her father-in-law Judah failed to find a husband for her after she was widowed, she took matters in her own hands, posed as a prostitute to lure Judah, and conceived twin sons by him (Gen. 38)

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

■ Rahab

- Lived in the time of the conquest of the promised land.
- Was a prostitute in the city of Jericho.
- She sheltered the spies sent by Joshua to check out Jericho.

■ Ruth

- Lived in the time of the Judges.
- Member of the cursed race of the Moabites (said to have arisen from Lot's incest with his firstborn daughter).

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

- **Mother of Solomon**
 - Identified as the wife of Uriah, a Hittite (= Bathsheba)
 - King David committed adultery with her and then orchestrated her husband Uriah's death on the battlefield
- All four of these women were Gentiles or associated with Gentiles.
- Why would Matthew include them in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah?

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Divergences from Convention

- Reason for the inclusion of these women:
 - Reveals:
 - Gentiles have already been grafted into the line of David
 - The inclusion of Gentiles benefited Israel
 - Foreshadows that God's offer of salvation will be universal, including both Jews and Gentiles
 - The aberrations of these women's stories in sacred history remind us **“God's way is often a detour through which his promise is nevertheless fulfilled”** (E. Lohmeyer), and prepares us for the aberration of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit

Matthew 1:1-17

Genealogy of The Messiah

Conclusion

- “The genealogy is not the record of one birth after another. It discloses that God has been working within history to achieve foreordained purposes and that Jesus, the last person of the last epoch, is the fulfillment of God’s plan for Israel and the beginning of a new messianic age.”

- Garland, page 20,

Birth of The Messiah

Two Parts

- Two parts:
 - Genealogy of the Messiah (1:1-17)
 - Jesus' Conception by the Holy Spirit and Adoption by Joseph (1:18-25)

Matthew 1:1-25

Adoption by Joseph

A Problem: Son of David?

- Matthew has traced the line of Abraham and the line of David to **Joseph**, the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus.
- Now he tells us Jesus was conceived by Holy Spirit. *Jesus had no human father.*
- How then can Jesus be called “Son of Abraham,” “Son of David?”

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

A Problem: Son of David?

- Matthew's explanation in 1:18-25:
 - Joseph was betrothed to Mary
 - Betrothal was the first stage of marriage, not an "engagement."
 - Betrothal could be cancelled only by a bill of divorce.
 - Joseph, after told to do so by an angel of God in a dream, completed his marriage with Mary, and
 - Joseph made Jesus his legal son *by naming him*.

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (1) Jesus' Dual Paternity: Son of God and Son of David
 - Dual Paternity common in deified rulers of the ancient world.
 - Example: Homer's **Odyseus** in the *Iliad*, sired by Zeus, but heir to throne of Ithaca because his mother's human husband was Laertes
 - The acknowledgement of a child by a father *officially makes that child his own*.
 - Mishna: "If a man said, 'This is my son,' he may be **believed.**"

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (2) The Meaning of Righteousness.
 - Joseph is “a righteous (*dikaiois*) man” (1:19) = a faithful observer of the law.
 - Joseph knew he was not the father of Mary’s child.
 - He could therefore not marry Mary because that would be to tolerate evil in his midst.
 - He could have demanded a public trial and avoided having to pay out the money previously pledged Mary if he divorced her.
 - Instead, he planned to divorce her “quietly.”
 - The “righteous” man interprets and obeys the law with compassion and mercy.

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (2) The Meaning of Righteousness.
 - When the angel of God tells Joseph to marry despite the law, he obeys without hesitation.
 - Garland: **“The righteous person ... is not one who simply conforms to conventional expectations but one who is obedient to God’s revelation no matter how scandalous it might appear to others.”** (p. 23)

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (3) Names chosen by God for the child highlight his vocation
 - **Jesus** = Greek form of Hebrew name “Yeshua” or “Yeshu, ” meaning “God helps.”
 - **Immanuel**
 - Isaiah 7:14: ... the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. (NRSV)
 - Immanuel = “God is with us”

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (4) Jesus fulfills the promise of the Scriptures
 - Septuagint translation (the Greek translation of the Old Testament available in Matthew's time) of Isaiah 7:14:
“behold, a **virgin** shall conceive in the womb, and shall **bring forth a son**, and thou shalt call his name **Emmanuel.**”

Matthew 1:18-25

Adoption by Joseph

Theological Themes

- (5) The Holy Spirit is involved in the Jesus' conception:
 - The Holy Spirit is the source of creation and life:
 - The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the **Spirit of God** was moving over the face of the waters. (Gen 1:2 RSV)
 - The Holy Spirit is the initiator of the messianic age:
 - The **Spirit of the Lord GOD** is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound... (Isaiah 61:1 RSV)

Matthew 1:18-25

Next Session:

Introducing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God:

From Judea of David to the Galilee of the
Gentiles (2:1-23)

Getting Ready: God's Son in the Wilderness
(3:1—4:11)