

The Gospel of Matthew

10. In the Holy City: Conflict, Death, and Resurrection

The Messiah and the Temple (21:1-17)

The Teacher and His Opponents (21:18—22:46)

Sunday, March 12, 2006

10 to 11 am in the Parlor.

Everyone is welcome!

St. John in the Wilderness

**O God, giver of life and health,
your Son Jesus Christ has called us
to hunger and thirst to see right prevail;
refresh us with your grace
that we may not be weary of well-doing;
for the sake of him who meets all our
needs,
our Savior Jesus Christ**

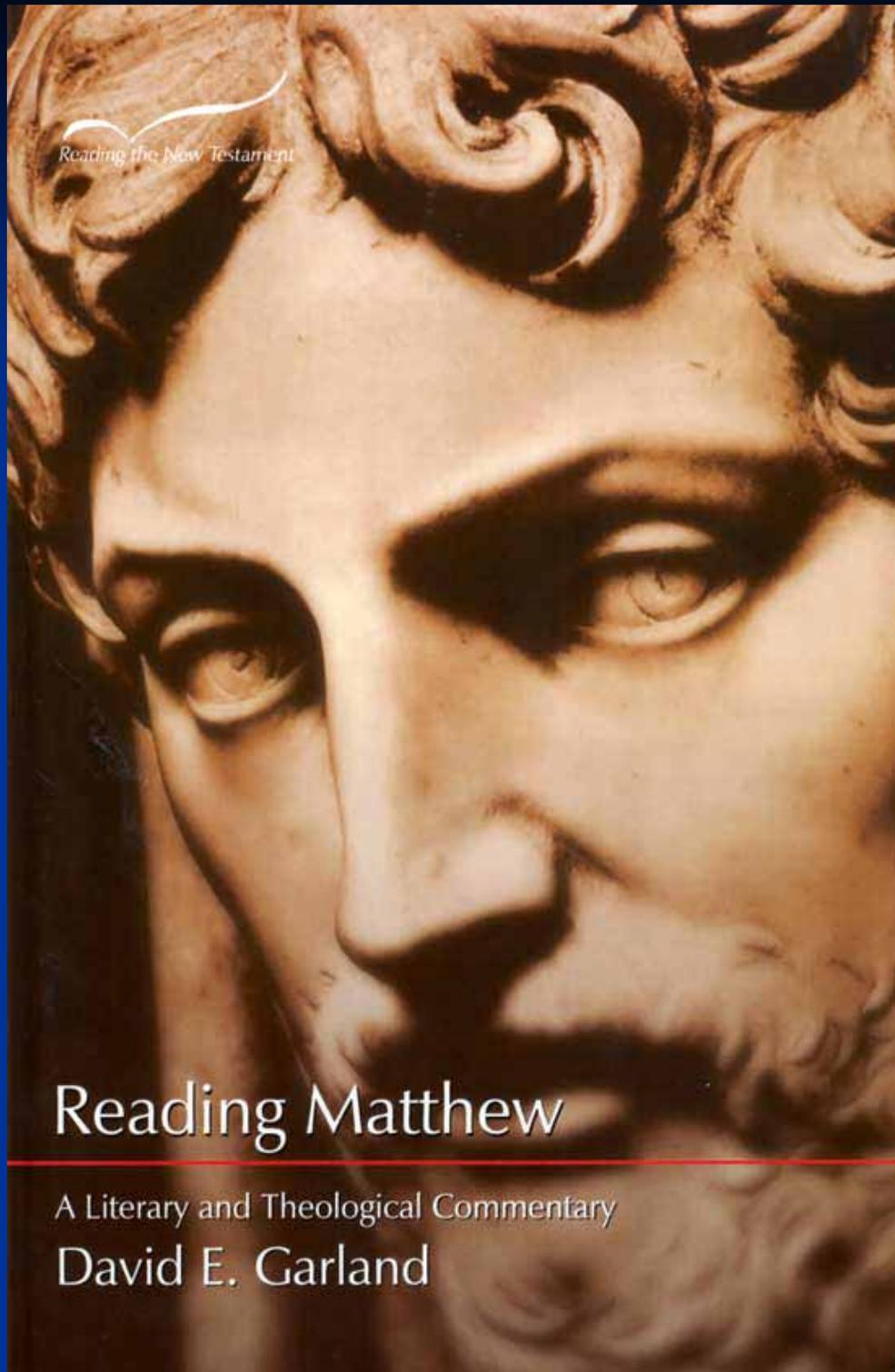
- New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 578

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.



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

SACRA PAGINA

Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., Editor



The Gospel of
MATTHEW

Daniel J. Harrington, S.J.

- **Sacra Pagina. The Gospel of Matthew**
Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1991, ISBN 0-8146-5803-2
- **Daniel Harrington** is Professor of New Testament at the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts

- **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)
 - 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)
 - Marriage and Divorce (19:3-12)
 - The Children (19:13-14)
 - Leaving Behind One's Possessions (19:16-30)
 - The Parable of the Laborers (20:1-16)
 - 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)

In the Holy City: Conflict, Death, and Resurrection

Matthew 21:1—28:15

In the Holy City

Introduction

- Jesus arrives at Bethphage (probably at the Mount of Olives), and he and his disciples make preparations for his triumphant entrance into the Holy City Jerusalem.
- Jesus proceeds, knowing the conflict, suffering and death that awaits him there: 20:18-19.
- Narrative emphasis changes:
 - During the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus' instruction of his disciples was front and center in the narrative
 - Now the opponents of Jesus and crowds about him will become front and center.

Matthew 21:1—28:15

In the Holy City

Introduction

- The shadow of the Temple looms over much of the narrative.
- The narrative sequence follows Mark closely.

Matthew 21:1—28:15

The Messiah and the Temple

Matthew 21:1-17

The Messiah & the Temple

Introduction

- In Mark, the:
 - Entrance into the city (one evening; Mark 11:1-11)
 - The cleansing of the Temple (the next day; Mark 11:12-19)are separate events.
- In Matthew, the two events are combined, amplifying the impact of the scene.
- The focus is on the messianic authority of Jesus, the “Son of David.”

Matthew 21:1-17

The Messiah & the Temple

Entrance Into the City

- Jesus dispatches two disciples to commandeer a donkey and colt.
- The heirs of David had rode a donkey to be anointed king:
 - Absalom is riding a donkey as a symbol of his claim to the kingship in 2 Samuel 18:9
 - Solomon rides a donkey to his anointing as king (1 Kings 1:32-40; 2 Kings 9:13)
- Some also expected that the Messiah would come from the east. The Bethphage (the Mount of Olives) lay east of the city.

Matthew 21:1-11

The Messiah & the Temple

Entrance Into the City

- Matthew tells us the procurement of the animals is a fulfillment of the scripture Zechariah 9:9 (Matthew 21:5)
 - Zechariah 9:9 **“Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, Meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.”** (NRSV)

Matthew 21:1-11

The Messiah & the Temple

Entrance Into the City

- Jesus enters the city riding on two animals: **“They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them.”** (21:7 NRSV)
- The Zechariah quote **“... riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.”** is an example of Hebrew parallelism (repeating the same idea in different words)
- Some have suggested Matthew has Jesus riding two animals because he did not understand Hebrew parallelism and thus misunderstood the Zechariah quote.

Matthew 21:1-11

The Messiah & the Temple

Entrance Into the City

- More likely he had some particular theological purpose. Perhaps the two animals represented two paradoxical dimensions of Jesus' identity in the messianic title "Son of David"
 - **Donkey, the coronation animal:** Jesus comes as king and royal son of David.
 - **Pack Animal:** Jesus also comes as the meek, suffering servant.

Matthew 21:1-11

The Messiah & the Temple

Entrance Into the City

- The crowd cries out: **“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”** (21:9 NRSV)
 - This is a quote from Psalm 118:26, recited on the enthronement of a king: **“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.”** (NRSV)
- As a result of this apparently blasphemous entrance, **“the whole city was shaken and asked, ‘Who is this?’”** (21:10 NRSV)
- The crowd replies **“This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”** (21:11 NRSV)
 - Later, Jesus will say **“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but you were unwilling!”** (23:37 NRSV)

The Messiah & the Temple

Cleansing of the Temple

- Jesus then immediately enters the Temple, and exercises his authority over it.
 - He ... drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, “It is written: ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a den of thieves.” (21:12-13 NRSV)

Matthew 21:12-17

The Messiah & the Temple

Cleansing of the Temple

- Jesus' explanation of his action **“It is written: ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a den of thieves.”** comes from Isaiah & Jeremiah:
 - Isaiah 56:7: **“For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”** (NRSV)
 - Jeremiah 7:11: **“Has this house which bears my name become in your eyes a den of thieves? I too see what is being done, says the LORD.”** (NRSV)

Matthew 21:12-17

The Messiah & the Temple

Cleansing of the Temple

- The *normal function* of the Temple was to serve as a place for animal sacrifice, and to do animal sacrifice, you needed a supply of suitable animals.
 - Jesus seems to be protesting the *normal function* of the Temple as a place for animal sacrifice – rather than a “house of prayer”
- He calls it a den of thieves – a refuge perhaps for those who think fellowship with God can be achieved through animal sacrifice rather than love of neighbor.

Matthew 21:12-17

The Messiah & the Temple

Cleansing of the Temple

- Jesus then heals Temple outcasts (the blind and the lame)
 - Temple purity laws excluded them.
 - Jesus actions fulfill Micah 4:6-7: **“On that day, says the LORD, I will gather the lame, And I will assemble the outcasts, and those whom I have afflicted. I will make of the lame a remnant, ...”** (NRSV)
- The high priests and scribes are indignant over Jesus’ actions and the cries of children **“Hosanna to the Son of David,”** (21:15 NRSV).
 - Jesus affirms the truth of the children’s cry (21:16) by quoting from Psalm 8:2-3 to the high priests and scribes:
 - Matthew 21:16: **“Yes; and have you never read the text, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nurslings you have brought forth praise'?”** (NRSV)
 - Psalm 8:2-3 **“O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth! You have set your majesty above the heavens! Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have drawn a defense against your foes, to silence enemy and avenger.”** (NRSV)

Matthew 21:12-17

The Teacher and His Opponents

Matthew 21:18—22:46

The Teacher & His Opponents

Introduction

- Jesus spends the night back at the Mount of Olives (Bethphage) and then returns to Jerusalem in the morning.

Matthew 21:18—22:46

The Teacher & His Opponents

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

- On the way to Jerusalem, he is hungry. He goes over to a fig tree but finds only leaves.
- **Matthew 21:19: Then he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!”**
And the fig tree withered at once.
(NRSV)

The Teacher & His Opponents

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

- In Matthew, this peculiar story seems to serve as instruction to the disciple on the power of faith. Jesus will shortly confront the chief priests and elders who have no faith in him and challenge his authority.
- The disciples are amazed that the tree withered so quickly, and they ask how it happened.
- **Jesus: “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.” (21:21-22 NRSV)**

Matthew 21:18-22

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- The chief priests and elders of the Temple challenge Jesus: **“By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”**
(NRSV)
- Their lack of faith evokes three parables from Jesus:
 - **The Parable of the Two Sons** (21:28-32)
 - **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants** (21:33-44)
 - **The Parable of the Wedding Invitation and the Guests**
(22:1-14)

Matthew 21:23—22:14

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32):**
 - Unique to the Gospel of Matthew
 - *Meaning of the Parable:* Words alone are not enough. Ultimately doing the will of God is what counts.
 - Jesus illustrates the an application of the Parable by telling the chief priests **“Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.”**
(21:31 NRSV)

Matthew 21:28-32

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-44)**
 - Also found in Mark 12:1-12
 - The **vineyard** is the traditional symbol for Israel. The Parable is talking about salvation history.
 - The description of the vineyard in 21:33 is included to evoke Isaiah 5:1-7

Matthew 21:33-44

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-44)**
 - **Isaiah 5:1-7: ... My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!**

Matthew 21:33-44

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-44)**
 - The first series of messengers in the Parable are badly treated, some killed – referring to the persecution of Old Testament prophets. (21:34-36)
 - The **owner of the vineyard** then sends his **son**, and he too is killed – referring to Jesus' own persecution and coming death (21:37-39)

Matthew 21:33-44

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-44)**
 - As a consequence, the owner of the vineyard will bring judgment upon the first set of tenants, and replace them with a new set of tenants.
 - Jesus makes his point clear: **“Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.”** (21:43 NRSV)

Matthew 21:33-44

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-44)**
 - Matthew wrote after the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 AD, and may have believed its destruction was the consequence of Israel's rejection of God's message of repentance and salvation in Jesus.

Matthew 21:33-44

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wedding Invitation and the Guests (22:1-14)**
 - Also in Luke 14:15-24 (thus believed to be drawn from the “Q Source” available to Mathew and Luke)
 - The first guests invited to the wedding (= Israel) rejects the invitation, and some even kill the servants bearing the invitation (22:6)
 - The latter enrage the king, who responds swiftly “... **He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.**” (22:7 NRSV)
 - Likely also an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Matthew 22:1-14

The Teacher & His Opponents

The Challenge of the Chief Priests

- **The Parable of the Wedding Invitation and the Guests**
(22:1-14)
 - The king opens up the invitation to all (= the Gentiles) (22:9)
 - The king notices one of the new guests is without a wedding garment (= likely a symbol of repentance and good deeds) (22:11)
 - The guest without a wedding garment also comes under the king's judgment: **"Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"** (22:13 NRSV)
 - The new guests, the Gentiles, must also do the will of God:
 - Matthew 12:50: **"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."** (NRSV)

Matthew 22:1-14

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- After his encounter with the chief priests and elders of the Temple, Jesus continues to preach in the Temple.
- He faces a new set of challenges from the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 22:15-46

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- First the Pharisees, along with some Herodians (supporters of Herod Antipas, whose seat of power was in Galilee) try to trap Jesus by asking if it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar.
- Jesus is well aware of the malice behind their question, and amazes them with his answer: **“Show me the coin used for the tax.”** And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, **“Whose head is this, and whose title?”** They answered, **“The emperor's.”** Then he said to them, **“Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.”** (22:19-21 NRSV)

Matthew 22:15-22

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- The same day some Sadducees try to trap Jesus with the story of the a woman who successively marries seven brothers who die childless (**“Moses said, ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.’ ... 22:24 NRSV**)
- The Sadducees:
 - Believed only the five books of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) were the word of God
 - Did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (it was not in the books of Moses)

Matthew 22:23-33

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- Jesus' answer to the Sadducees silences them and astounds the listening crowd: **“You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 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.”** (22:29-32 NRSV)

Matthew 22:23-33

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- When the Pharisees hear Jesus had bested the Sadducees, they send a lawyer to test Jesus.
- The lawyer asks, **“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”** (22:36 NRSV)
- Jesus answers **“‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’** (22:37-39 NRSV)
- And in a note found only in Matthew: Jesus adds **“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”** (22:40 NRSV)

Matthew 22:34-46

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- Jesus then turns the tables and asks the Pharisees a question that echoes the question he asked his disciples at Caesarea Philippi (16:13-20): **“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?”** (22:42 NRSV)
- The **“Son of David”** they answer.

Matthew 22:34-46

The Teacher & His Opponents

Challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees

- Jesus argues that Messiah must be more than merely the “Son of David,” for:
 - David said **“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””? (22:44)**
 - This a quote from Psalm 110:1, and presumes David is speaking the Psalm **“The LORD (= Yahweh) says to my lord (= the new king; here the future Messiah), “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.” (NRSV)**
 - Jesus: **“If David thus calls him [the new king, the Messiah] Lord, how can he [the Messiah] be his [David’s] son?” (22:45 NRSV)**
- The Pharisees cannot answer, and from that day no one dared ask Jesus anymore questions (22:46).

Matthew 22:34-46

Next Session:

In the Holy City: Conflict, Death, and Resurrection

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)