

Patrick SCHREINER, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2019, xiv + 289 pp.

Patrick Schreiner is assistant professor of New Testament at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. In this present work he deals with the Christology of Matthew's Gospel, focusing especially on the key characters and institutions of the Old Testament that Jesus recapitulates and fulfills. The chapters discuss such topics as Jesus as sage, teacher, Davidic king, new Moses, new Abraham and perfect Israelite.

Schreiner leads the reader to his overarching thesis as he gradually reveals its stages. From the beginning we learn what the title actually announces: that Matthew, in the language of Matthew 13, 52, is the discipled scribe, discipled of course by his master, Jesus. Initially, "Matthew is the discipled scribe who narrates Jesus' life through the alternation of the new and the old," still using the language of 13, 52 (p. 9). Then, this brief description is developed. Thus, Matthew becomes "a Torah-royal-sapiential scholar who penetrated the prophecies and studied the hidden meanings of the Hebrew Scriptures" (p. 21). As the theological exposition unfolds, the image of Jesus also enriches. Thus, if at the beginning He is a sage, along the way He becomes an apocalyptic sage who is at the same time the Davidic shepherd-king and the Suffering Servant who fulfills the Law and offers the Gospel to the nations.

Sometimes Schreiner is inclined to show that one of these categories subsumes the others, but the result is inconclusive. But it cannot be disputed though that he uses the Gospel data very well to describe each category separately and to highlight their commonalities. Particularly helpful is his emphasis on the fulfillment of "the persons, places, things, offices, events, actions, and institutions of the OT" (p. 55). St. Matthew sees in the life and activity of Jesus a reflection and completion of the history of Israel. If, throughout time, Christians have emphasized the distance between

Jesus and the Judaism of His time, recent research tends to see more the similarities. Schreiner, however, manages to keep the balance between the two directions very well.

In several chapters, Schreiner shows how certain key themes summarize large sections of the Gospel, thereby providing a structuring device. Particularly compelling is the way he highlights the placement of the theme of fulfillment and the related Old Testament quotations as keys to the narrative flow of the gospel. Because Matthew thinks narratively, it should come as no surprise that many of these are concentrated in the opening and closing chapters, reflecting on Jesus' origins and preparation for his ministry, passion, death, and resurrection.

As Ben Witherington has also demonstrated, Matthew's strong emphasis on Jesus' quality as a son of David is grounded on the idea of a similarity between His wisdom and that of Solomon, David's son. The existence of Jewish traditions about certain healings performed by Solomon explains the somewhat surprising connection that Matthew sees between the Son of David and healing. On the other hand, it is a bit of an exaggeration to present much of Jesus' work as corresponding to David's exile from Jerusalem.

Schreiner very well captures the elements that foreshadow Matthew's transition from particularism to universalism, that is, from a ministry centered on Israel to the Great Commission that sends Jesus' disciples to all the peoples of the world. Among these are especially the pagan women in the genealogy, the Magi, the healing of the centurion's servant with the prophecy fulfilled in the healing of the nations, the retreat from Galilee foreshadowing the theme of universal judgment in the parables of chapters 24-25. The overlapping of categories is well illustrated in the chapter treating Jesus as the ideal and wise king. Included in this chapter is an excellent presentation of Jesus as the living law, even though this topic might have been expected to be part of the chapter on Jesus and the Mosaic exodus. Matthew's foreshadowing of the salvation of the Gentiles is more naturally linked to the idea that Jesus is a new Abraham; after all, Abraham's seed was to bring blessing to all the peoples of the earth. To say, on the other hand, that Jesus had a death similar to that of Isaac is a bit misleading, since Isaac is saved from death. Of course, Jesus was also saved from death, but only after he first passed through it. It is popular in some circles that certain NT texts reflect the Jewish *Akedah* tradition, but

the climax of the story in Genesis highlights that it was not Abraham's son who was sacrificed, but the ram caught in the bush.

Before the end of his study, Schreiner provides a full summary of the volume's conclusions:

“The disciplined scribe demonstrates the wisdom he learned from his teacher in a variety of ways. We can follow him down into the valleys and see how he shifts OT quotations to make a point, or we can track him up to the mountain and watch as he looks out over the life of Jesus as a whole. As we stand at the peak, we can see that Jesus is the new Adam, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Elijah, and Jeremiah, but Matthew also has Jesus recapitulate a broad chronological structure of the history of Israel, and therefore Jesus stands as the new Israel, who leads his people out of exile” (p. 239).

This is an excellent summary of the book, but a bit too heterogeneous to count as the single, unifying thesis upon which the book is built. However, if one wishes to be initiated into the Christology of the Gospel of Matthew, this work can be an excellent starting point.

Rev. Adrian MURG