

Eusebius also transmitted the following interpretation of this fantastic dream, as delivered by Moses' father-in-law:

O friend, that which God has signified to you is good; might I live until the time when these things happen to you. Then you will raise up a great throne and it is you who will judge and lead humankind; as you beheld the whole inhabited earth, the things beneath and the things above God's heaven, so will you see things present, past, and future.

The enthronement of Moses in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel is a fascinating episode whose importance is, for many reasons, exceptional, and its interpretation has naturally been the subject of some debate.<sup>91</sup> For our immediate purposes, however, enough is plain: the tradition that, on Sinai, Moses sat on the divine throne, must go back to at least the time of Ezekiel the Tragedian, that is, probably to the second century B.C.E.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup>See the brief overview in Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 57-59.

<sup>92</sup>Moses' enthronement on Sinai should just perchance be considered very old tradition independent of the Pentateuch. The myth of a heavenly ascent followed by the reception of heavenly tablets and enthronement was part and parcel of Mesopotamian royal ideology, and the pattern seems to be reflected in both biblical and extra-biblical traditions about Moses. See G. Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala: A. B. Lundequivistska, 1950), esp. 7-58. I would further add, although this is even more speculative, that the tradition of Enoch's enthronement (*1 En.* 45:3; 51:3; 55:4; 61:8; 69:27-29) may have been modelled upon that of Moses, and in any case there were probably in pre-Christian times rival traditions about Enoch and Moses as enthroned with or beside God; cf. P. W. van der Horst, "Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist," *JJS* 34 (1983):21-29. —I must here mention the so-called Jewish Orpheus, whose longer recension (in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13:12.5) apparently includes an account of someone's heavenly ascent (see M. Lafargue, "The Jewish Orpheus," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1978 Seminar Papers*, ed. P. J. Achtemeier [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978], vol. 2:137-43): "And no one has seen the ruler of mortal men, except a certain unique man, an offshoot from far back of the race of the Chaldeans. For he was knowledgeable about the path of the star, and how the movement of the sphere goes around the earth, both in circular fashion, but each on its own axis. He rides in spirit through the air and through the water of the stream. A comet makes manifest these events—he had a mighty birth. Yes he after this is established in the great heaven on a golden throne" (lines 25-33). Unfortunately the interpretation of these lamentably turgid lines is controversial. The phrase, "of the race of the Chaldeans," as well as the tradition that "the unique man" was learned in matters astronomical, which is said of Abraham in Ps.-Eupolemus in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:17; Artapanus in *ibid.*, 9:18; Josephus, *Ant.* 1:158, 167-68; *LAB* 18:5; *b. B. Bat.* 16b; etc., seem to point us to the patriarch. But Philo, *Mos.* 1:5, called Moses "a Chaldean," as did Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 53, and the lawgiver is explicitly mentioned in lines 40-41. Moreover, Philo purported that Moses was exceptionally learned in "the Chaldean science of the heavenly bodies" (*Mos.* 1:23), and the assertion that "the unique man" is the only one to have seen God suggests Moses. Thus the possibility that Pseudo-Orpheus recounts or reflects the apotheosis of Moses and his sitting on a throne cannot be excluded. I note that M. Lafargue, in *OTP* 2, 796-77, thinks of Moses rather than Abraham (evidently a reversal of his earlier opinion).

I am not, let me make plain, proposing that Matt. 5:1-2 be directly related to the traditions of Moses' *enthronement* on Sinai—although it may be worth recalling that some commentators have dimly sensed a royal motif in Matt. 5:1-2. The point is simply this: the image of Moses sitting on Sinai, whether on a throne or some other seat, was firmly established in the imagination of pre-Christian Jews.<sup>93</sup> It was therefore a resource Matthew could have utilized had he wished.

(3) Others did so wish. More than one ancient author advanced a Moses typology by making his main character sit. I refer the reader to what has already been said concerning both *4 Ezra* 14, where the scribes receiving the Torah sit for forty days and forty nights (see p. 63), and Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*, in which the Mosaic hero is often said to have sat on his mountain and communed with God (see p. 115). Additionally noteworthy is John 6:3, whose language is so close to Matt. 5:1-2: *anēlthen de eis to oros Iēsous kai ekei ekathēto meta ton mathēton autou*: Jesus went up into the mountain and sat there with his disciples. This is part of the preface to a long and dramatic chapter which draws several clear and explicit parallels between Jesus and Moses; hence the interpretation of John's mountain as a "Christian Sinai," to use Raymond Brown's term,<sup>94</sup> commends itself.<sup>95</sup>

Notice may also be taken of the Merkabah text in *b. Hag.* 14b.<sup>96</sup> In this an angel speaks from the midst of a fire (cf. Exodus 3) to R. Johanan b. Zakkai and R. Eleazar b. Arak as the latter is expounding the "work of the Chariot." Subsequently Johanan relates that once, when he and R. Jose the priest were on Mount Sinai, sitting as at a banquet (cf. Exod. 24:11), a voice invited them to ascend to the heavenly banqueting chambers. Now the use of Sinai imagery in Merkabah visions is elsewhere attested, and in the present instance the two rabbis sit on Sinai, which circumstance may accordingly be regarded with some plausibility as a Mosaic motif.

(4) If the vocabulary of 5:1-2, which introduces the SM, draws on biblical texts about Moses and Sinai, the same is true of 8:1, which

<sup>93</sup>For additional references to Moses sitting see Exod. 2:15; 18:13-14; *Mek.* on Exod. 18:13-14 (Moses' father-in-law "saw him behaving like a king who sits on his throne while all the people around him stand"); *ARN* A 12 (Moses on Nebo); *Deut. Rab.* 11:10. Did the notion that Moses was a scribe (cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1:2; *Tg. Onk.* to Deut. 33:21)—scribes sat for their work—contribute to this picture?

<sup>94</sup>Raymond Brown, *John*, 1:232.

<sup>95</sup>See further Theo Preiss, "Étude sur le chapitre 6 de l'Évangile de Jean," *ETR* 46 (1971):144-56.

<sup>96</sup>For what follows see D. J. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (American Oriental Series 62; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980), 128-33.

concludes the SM: *katabantos de autou apo tou orous*. This is almost identical with LXX A Exod. 34:29, which recounts Moses' descent from the holy mountain: *katabainontos de autou apo tou orous* (cf. also 19:14; 32:1, 15). Moreover, a participial form of *katabainō + de + autou + apo + tou orous* appears in the Septuagint only once, in the passage cited (LXX B has *ek* for *apo*).

Having made my four points, I am prepared to affirm that Matt. 5:1-2 was designed by the First Evangelist to summon distinct recall. For those properly informed of and alive to Jewish tradition, the two verses constitute a Mosaic preface: the mountain is typologically analogous to Sinai, and when Jesus sits thereon, his posture evokes the image of the lawgiver. To what end the construction of such a preface was directed will be considered in short order. But first 5:3 and 8 require attention.

#### TWO BEATITUDES (5:5, 8)

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." So Matt. 5:5, a logion absent from Luke but not for that reason to be reckoned to Matthean redaction.<sup>97</sup> Exegetical history has now and again associated this, the third beatitude, in both its parts, with Moses. In Judaism Moses was meekness' own self:

Num. 12:3: "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were of the face of the earth."

Ecclus. 45:4: God "sanctified him [Moses] through faithfulness and meekness."

Philo, *Mos.* 1:26: "Each of the other passions, which rage so furiously if left to themselves, he [Moses] tamed and assuaged and reduced to meekness."

ibid. 2:279: "Moses... [was] the meekest and mildest of men."

*b. Ned.* 38a: "The Holy One, blessed be He, causes his divine presence to rest only upon him who is strong, wealthy, wise, and meek; and all these are deduced from Moses."

<sup>97</sup>Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:434-36.

*Tanhuma* Bereshit 1: "As for the Torah, humility is her imprint and Godfearingness her crown, as it says, 'The end of humility is the fear of the Lord' (Prov. 22:4) and 'The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord' (Ps. 110:10). These two gifts were combined in Moses, who was 'exceedingly humble' (Num. 12:3) and who 'feared to behold God' (Exod. 3:6)."

Given passages such as these<sup>98</sup> it is no surprise to learn that some have illustrated the *praus* of Matt. 5:5a by remembering Moses. One example: when Theodoret of Cyrrihus sought to characterize the "simplicity of character, gentleness of behavior, and modesty of spirit" displayed by the monk Romanus, on account of which "he emitted the radiance of divine grace," the bishop joined Matt. 5:5 and Num. 12:3: "'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' And this was the distinguishing feature of the achievements of Moses the lawgiver: 'Moses', he says, 'was very meek, more than all men that were on earth'" (*Rel. Hist.* 11:2).

Like 5:5a, Matt. 5:5b has also on occasion cultivated memories about Moses. Eusebius, in *Dem. ev.* 3:2, commented: "Moses... promised a holy land and a holy life therein under a blessing to those who kept his laws; while Jesus Christ says likewise: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'" For Eusebius the third beatitude did not bring to mind Moses' meekness but rather Moses' rôle as the one who promised Israel inheritance of the land,<sup>99</sup> and thus he instanced the text as belonging to the parallels between Messiah and lawgiver: both gave the same promise to their followers (cf. Deut. 4:1).

Perhaps we should follow the interpretive lead of Theodoret and Eusebius and set Matt. 5:5 against the Moses traditions. Moses was, in meekness, the exemplar. He promised the Israelites inheritance of the land. *And he himself did not enter the land.* From this last fact, sufficiently unexpected to have engendered much rabbinic reflection, one might extract that the third beatitude pledges something Moses never gained. On such an interpretation, the members of the new covenant would be more blessed than the chief figure of the old: if, in the past, the meek one did not enter the land, now, that the kingdom of God has come, "the meek... shall inherit the earth." Compare 11:11: the least in the kingdom is greater than all those who came before.

<sup>98</sup>See also Origen, *Exod. hom.* 11:6; Jerome, *Ep.* 82:3; *Apophthegmata Patrum*, PG 65, Synclitica II; John the Persian 4; Antiochus Monachus, *Hom.* 115.

<sup>99</sup>The parallel is stronger if Matthew's *την γην* be translated "the land (of Israel)" instead of "(all) the earth." But against this see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:450-51.

One hesitates to pronounce whether or not the Mosaic interpretation of Matt. 5:5 should be endorsed. It is encouraging that, on the two other occasions Matthew used *praus*, he was, we shall find, thinking of Moses (see pp. 218-33, 248-53). But against the proposed reading is the apparent dependence of 5:5 upon Ps. 37:11 ("But the meek shall possess the land"): that verse and its context make no reference, explicit or otherwise, to Moses. Also in the way is the circumstance that no other beatitude can have anything to do with Moses—unless it be 5:8, which refers to the beatific vision: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This might be taken to promise Christians the felicity of beholding what Moses beheld, or what he did not behold, depending upon one's interpretation of Exodus 33.<sup>100</sup> But this can be no more than a conjecture, one without, to my knowledge, patristic or modern support. So the verdict on 5:5 must be: not proven.

#### JESUS AND THE TORAH (5:17-48)

5:17-20, the preamble to 5:21-48, has as its first function the prevention of misunderstanding—although its plain message has all too often been ignored. Many readers, ancient and contemporary, have construed 5:21-48 as a series of "antitheses"—that is the word so commonly used—which overturn the Torah. But, to judge from 5:17-20, there are in the first place no antitheses because in the second place there is no overturning of the Torah. Jesus, according to Matthew, neither dismissed the Torah nor released his followers from its imperatives. The commandments given to Moses, so far from having been drained of their ancient life, are still the living, active word of God. "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven..."

Not only does 5:17-20 rebut in advance a wrong interpretation of 5:21-48, it also supplies the reader with a clue as to the right interpretation. 5:20, in announcing that the righteousness of Jesus' followers must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, anticipates that Jesus' words in the subsequent paragraphs will, in their moral stringency,

<sup>100</sup>See further below, pp. 218-21. Some spoke of Moses seeing God, others of him not seeing God, still others of his seeing God in a partial or imperfect fashion.

exceed those of the Torah. Thus the tension between Jesus' teaching and the Mosaic law is not that those who accept the former will transgress the latter; rather is it that they will achieve far more than they would if the Torah were their sole guide.<sup>101</sup> As the *pleion* of 5:20 and the *perisson* of 5:47 imply, Christian righteousness means doing more. So although there is continuity with the past, there is also newness in the present, and it does not surprise when 5:21-48 goes beyond the letter of the law to demand even more.

Structurally, 5:21-48 consists of six paragraphs, each illustrating the truth of 5:17-48:

Moses forbade murder.

Jesus forbids anger.

Moses condemned adultery.

Jesus condemns the adulterous thought.

Moses permitted divorce.

Jesus restricts that permission.

Moses gave rules for taking oaths.

Jesus rules that oaths should not be taken at all.

Moses recommended the precept, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

Jesus denies the precept's application to personal disputes.

Moses required love of neighbor.

Jesus requires love of the enemy, in effect, love of all.

The paragraphs whose basic content has just been indicated are all introduced by variations on a formula:

a You have heard that it was said to those of old

b. But I say to you

a You have heard that it was said

b. But I say to you

<sup>101</sup>For this and what follows see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:481-566. Herein I must, for reasons of constricted space, neglect a score of controversial issues and just lay down my own judgments. I beg the reader's indulgence for the seemingly apodictic sentences.

- a It was said  
 b. But I say to you
- a Again, you have heard that it was said to those of old  
 b. But I say to you
- a You have heard that it was said  
 b. But I say to you
- a. You have heard that it was said  
 b. But I say to you

The first portion of the recurring formula (marked a) in each instance introduces instruction which can be found in the Pentateuch:

- 5:21 = Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17  
 5:27 = Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18  
 5:31 = Deut. 24:1-4  
 5:33 = Lev. 19:12  
 5:38 = Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21  
 5:43 = Lev. 19:18

The second half of the formula (marked b) in every case prefaces Jesus' teaching, which transcends<sup>102</sup> a traditional commandment by making additional, difficult demands. (5:18, note well, rejects only subtraction from the law, not addition to it.) The meaning of the formula therefore is this: You (my listeners) have heard (in Scripture) that it was said (by God through Moses) to those of old (the wilderness generation)...; but I (Jesus) say to you... It follows that, in 5:21-48, Jesus is directly dealing with the words of Moses—but not so much interpreting them as qualifying and adding to them.

This fact, that Jesus' words stand beside and supplement those of Moses, is not explicitly stated. But for ancient Jewish readers explicitness would have been otiose. It was only too obvious that Jesus was quoting Moses and then adding to him. But how would this remarkable circumstance—remarkable because we possess no precise parallel—have been understood?

The first clue is the macrotext, or larger context. We have already reviewed quite a number of texts in Matthew 1-5 which together make

<sup>102</sup>Cf. the formulation in Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 3:2.

Jesus another Moses. Particularly significant is 5:1-2, where the Sinai typology leads one to anticipate new revelation delivered by a new Moses. This expectation is met, especially in 5:21-48, where Jesus twice enlarges upon the decalogue itself (5:21-30). Hence 5:21-48 continues the Moses typology: Jesus is another lawgiver. In this connection one should recall that, in Judaism, Mosaic characteristics transmigrated to later legislators and teachers (for example, Ezekiel and Hillel); and that in 4 *Ezra*, where the scribe receives the old revelation of Sinai *plus additional, new revelation*, the Moses typology is extensive. Insofar then as Matthew made his teacher and revealer into another Moses, he was only being conventional.

But that is not the end of the matter. We must not forget the identity of the SM's speaker: he is the Messiah. In other words, he is the fulfillment of eschatological expectation, the culmination of Israel's history. This inevitably raises a question: should we, as have some, speak of "messianic Torah"?<sup>103</sup> My answer is that we should: Jesus is the Moses-like Messiah who proclaims the eschatological will of God on a mountain typologically equated with Sinai.

In contending this I do not assume that "messianic Torah" was to hand as a well-defined conception in Matthew's world, nor that our use of the expression is free of ambiguity. Our evangelist did not have access to a ready-made notion which we can easily document and which he could simply lay upon his hero. At the same time, an examination of certain texts will clarify my claim and help us to understand why the First Evangelist interpreted the Messiah's teaching as an eschatological law against which the first law is to be measured.

(i) Matthew probably associated Jesus' office as teacher with his status as Messiah. This follows from the expectation, attested in many texts from divers times and places, according to which the Messiah and/or some other eschatological figure will bring eschatological instruction. A sampling:

—Isa. 42:1-4: the servant (= Jesus the Messiah for Matthew; cf. Matt. 12:18-21) will bring *mišpat* and *tôrâ*.

<sup>103</sup>So Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; Uppsala and Lund: Gleerup, 1964), 327. Cf. Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 44, opposing Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (London: SCM, 1963), 153-59, and rightly observing that there was hardly one firm conception of what a "messianic Torah" might be: one cannot establish what was or was not possible in Matthew's time on the basis of later rabbinic sources.

—CD 7:18: the messianic oracle in Num. 24:17 ("A star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel") is referred to "the Interpreter of the law."

—4Q175: this quotes Deut. 18:18-19 in an anthology of messianic texts, implying that the Qumran community expected an eschatological prophet like Moses, of whom God said: "I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all that I command them."

—II Q Melch. 2:15-21: "an anointed one, a prince" (cf. Dan. 9:25) will proclaim peace and salvation (cf. Isa. 52:7) and instruct those who mourn in Zion (cf. Isa. 61:2-3) "in all the ages of the world."

—I En. 51:3: the Elect One, the Son of man, will sit on God's throne, and "from the conscience of his mouth shall come out all the secrets of wisdom" (cf. 46:3; 49:3-4).

—Ps. Sol. 17:43: the Messiah's "words will be purer than the finest gold, the best. He will judge the peoples in the assemblies, the tribes of the sanctified. His words will be as the words of the holy ones, among sanctified peoples."

—Tg. Onq. to Gen. 49:11: the Messiah and those with him will study the Torah.

—Tg. Isa. to 53:5: peace will come through the Messiah's teaching, and those who "gather around his words... will be forgiven."

—Gen. Rab. 98:9: "When he, about whom it is written, 'Lowly and riding upon an ass' (Zech. 9:9) will come... he will elucidate for them the words of the Torah... and elucidate for them their errors. R. Hanina said: 'Israel will not need the teachings of King Messiah in the world to come, for it is said, "Unto him the nations shall seek" (Isa. 11:10)—not Israel.' If so, why will King Messiah come, and what will he come to do? To gather the exiles of Israel and to give them thirty commandments."<sup>104</sup>

One should also not overlook John 4:25, which purports that a Samaritan woman, in conversation with Jesus, expressed her faith that, when

<sup>104</sup>Additional rabbinic texts in SB 4/1:1-3.

the Christ comes, "he will show us all things" (cf. *Memar Marqah* 4:12).<sup>105</sup>

(ii) Rabbinic sources witness to a variety of beliefs about the fate of the Torah in the messianic age and/or the age to come<sup>106</sup>—that it will stay the same, inviolate forever,<sup>107</sup> that obscure parts will become clarified,<sup>108</sup> that certain sacrifices and festivals will cease,<sup>109</sup> that the laws covering things clean and unclean will be revised,<sup>110</sup> or even that there will be a new Torah.<sup>111</sup> One is sorely tempted to call upon this last belief to elucidate Matthew and the SM. But the texts attesting it are all very much later than the first century.<sup>112</sup> I therefore cannot in good conscience propose that we simply read the First Gospel in their light. Nonetheless, the rabbinic texts referred to remain indirectly instructive, for they incontestably show us that some rabbis, at some points in time, did entertain speculative thoughts about possible changes in the Torah; and if they did so we must ask why in this particular Matthew could not have anticipated them. This is all the more true when notice is taken of Gal. 6:3: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (*ton nomon tou Christou*). Now the Hebrew equivalent of the expression in parenthesis, *tōratō šel Mā šāh*, appears in *Mid. Qoh.* 11:8: "the Torah which a man learns in this world is vanity compared with the Torah of the Messiah." The coincidence of phrase with Paul may not be coincidence. Gal. 6:3 could be the proof that pre-Christian Judaism already spoke of the Messiah's Torah. Of this, however, we must remain unsure: independent invention of the same phrase cannot be reckoned impossible. Yet of one thing we may be confident. Paul, whatever he meant by it, could refer to Jesus Christ as having his own *nomos*.<sup>113</sup> I believe that Matthew's Gospel also presents us with the *nomos* of the Messiah—if not in terminology then in substance.

<sup>105</sup>As further background one should recall the common promise of eschatological wisdom and knowledge; see Hab. 2:14; LXX Hos. 6:2-3; *1QpHab.* VII:1-5; XI:1-2; Matt. 11:25 par.; 13:35. There is also much material in Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament* (FBBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968).

<sup>106</sup>For detailed discussion see Davies, *Setting*, 156-90.

<sup>107</sup>See *y. Meg.* 1:70d; *Exod. Rab.* 6:1; 33:7; *Lev. Rab.* 19:2; SB 1:244-47.

<sup>108</sup>*E.g. m. 'Ed.* 8:7; *m. Sek.* 2:5; *b. Ber.* 35b; *b. Hag.* 25a; *b. Menah.* 45a.

<sup>109</sup>*Yal. on Prov.* 9:2; *Lev. Rab.* 9:7.

<sup>110</sup>*Midr. Ps.* on 146:7; *Lev. Rab.* 13:3.

<sup>111</sup>*Lev. Rab.* 13:3; *Tg. on Isa.* 12:3; *Tg. on Cant.* 5:10; *Midr. Qoh.* 2:1; *Yal. on Isa.* 26:2.

<sup>112</sup>Although the use of *kainē entole* in John 13:34 and of *kainos nomos* in Barn. 2:6 may suggest an earlier currency for the concept.

<sup>113</sup>See further Heinz Schürmann, "'Das Gesetz des Christus' (Gal 6,2)," in *Neues Testament und Kirche*, ed. Joachim Gnülka (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 282-300.

(iii) The Dead Sea Scrolls are further cause for pursuing the issue. *1QS IX.9-II<sup>114</sup>* and *CD VI.14<sup>115</sup>* seem to imply the expectation that the sect's laws, based on its interpretation of the Torah, will be improved upon in the future. But much more significant is the *Temple Scroll*. This document not only reproduces much Pentateuchal legislation but also adds to and alters some of that legislation—and does so in the first person singular, with reference to God himself. Moreover, M. O. Wise has urged that the redactor's omissions of portions of Deuteronomy 12-26, when not due to avoidance of redundancy or rejection of legislation presupposing polygamy or remarriage after divorce, can be plausibly explained in terms of eschatological expectation.<sup>116</sup> Thus most of Deuteronomy's rules concerning aliens, slaves, lending, and boundary markers were omitted because thought inappropriate for the coming era. Further, the scroll assumes that all twelve tribes are in the land, as eschatological expectation dictated (*11QT<sup>Temple</sup> 57:11-12*).<sup>117</sup> Now if Wise is correct in all this, he has finally given us the demonstration that pre-Christian Judaism not only contemplated a messianic Torah but actually produced one. Unfortunately, the reach of this study on Matthew prohibits examination of the merits and demerits of Wise's work as well as review of the competing theories. But if new Qumran discoveries and future scholarship confirm the direction of Wise's arguments,<sup>118</sup> the ramifications for New Testament studies will be considerable.

(iv) Gregory of Nyssa wrote:

One can divide wickedness under two headings, one concerned with works, the other with thoughts. The former, the iniquity which shows itself in works, he [God] has punished through the old law. Now, however, he has given the law regarding the other form of sin, which punishes not so much the evil deed itself, as guards against even the beginning of it (*Beat. 6*).

<sup>114</sup>"They shall not depart from any counsel of the law, walking in all the stubbornness of their hearts; but they shall judge by the first judgements by which the men of the community began to be disciplined, until there shall come a prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel."

<sup>115</sup>"They [those of the covenant] shall take care to act according to the exact interpretation of the law during the age of wickedness."

<sup>116</sup>*Temple Scroll*, passim; idem, "The Eschatological Vision of the Temple Scroll," *JENS* 49 (1990):155-72.

<sup>117</sup>For the eschatological ingathering of the tribes see the texts cited in my article, "Who will come from East and West? Observations on Matt. 8.11-12 = Luke 13.28-29," *IBS* 11 (1989):158-70; also T. A. Bergen, "The 'People coming from the East' in 5 Ezra 1.38," *JBL* 108 (1989):675-83.

<sup>118</sup>Also pertinent and tending in the same direction as Wise's works are the contributions of Wacholder, *Dawn*, passim, and Morton Smith, "Helios in Palestine," *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982):199-214.

This interpretation of the SM is not the whole truth; but it is very far from being wholly false. Matthew, we should not doubt, believed that Jesus, to great degree, focused on the interiority of the commandments.

There is already an emphasis upon such interiority in the Tanak, as in Ps. 40:8 ("I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart") and Deut. 30:11-14 ("The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that you can do it"). There is also Psalm 37, v. 31 of which reads: "The law of God is in his heart; his steps do not slip." There is some reason, beyond the later rabbinic evidence (see SB 1:199-200), to think that this last verse might have been understood by early Christians to pertain to eschatology. Matt. 5:5 quotes LXX Ps. 37:11 ("and the meek shall inherit the earth") and transforms it into an eschatological promise; and the Qumran community applied portions of Psalm 37 to the Teacher of Righteousness, the prince of wickedness, and the final destruction of evildoers (see *4QpPs<sup>a</sup>*). But much more telling for the point I wish to make, which is that the interiority of the Torah would have been for Matthew an eschatological conception, is Jer. 31:31-34:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember no more.

We need not here enter into the minefield that is this text, except to observe what is certain: according to Jeremiah 31, a new covenant will be established, the Torah will be interiorized, and the sins of God's people will be forgiven. Now it is more than suggestive that the three forecasts of Jeremiah all find their match in Matthew: Jesus the Messiah instituted a new covenant (26:28), stressed the internal dimensions of the commandments (5:21ff., etc.), and gave his life as a ransom for many (20:28; 26:28). Moreover, most commentators have supposed that Matt. 26:28 ("this is my blood of the covenant... for the forgiveness of sins") alludes to Jer. 31:31 and so implicitly proclaims in Jesus' deeds the realization of Jeremiah's words (cf. Luke 22:17; 1

Cor. 11:25). It is consistent with this that Jer. 31:31-34 has regularly been understood by Christians from a very early time to have been realized in Jesus Christ.<sup>119</sup> What follows? I am lured to believe that Matthew 1-5 presents Jesus as the new lawgiver, the eschatological revealer and interpreter of Torah, the Messiah who brought the definitive, end-time revelation, a revelation for the heart, as foretold by Jeremiah's ancient oracle (cf. Justin, *Dial.* 11).

#### THE SM'S CLOSING TRIAD (7:13-27)

The SM winds down with a series of warnings which may be grouped into three subsections:

1. The two ways (7:13-14)
  - a. Exhortation (13a)
  - b. The wide gate and easy way (13b-c)
  - c. The constricted gate and hard way (14)
2. False prophets (7:15-23)
  - a. Exhortation (15a)
  - b. The deeds of the false prophets (15b-20)
  - c. Their judgement (21-23)
3. The two builders (7:24-27)
  - a. The wise builder (7:24-25)
  - b. The foolish builder (7:26-27)

This closing portion might, for five reasons, remind a reader of the Pentateuch's closing book. To begin with, Deuteronomy contains a prominent collection of warnings near its end, in chapters 28-30, warnings directed, like those of Matt. 7:13-27, against people who will not obey the divine imperatives. Next, Matt. 7:15-23 addresses the problem of false prophets, and the Pentateuchal legislation on that subject belongs to Deuteronomy 13 and 18. Thirdly, the two-way theme appears in Matt. 7:13-14; and that theme, so prominent in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, has its roots in Deuteronomy. Note especially Deut. 11:26 ("Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse"); 30:1 ("And when all these things come upon

<sup>119</sup>See 2 Corinthians 3; 6:17-18; Heb. 8:8-12; and C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Fontana, 1965), 44-46.

you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you..."); and 30:15 ("I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil"). 30:1 and 15 particularly interest because they belong to the same neighborhood as Deut. 31:1; 31:24; and 32:45, verses which, I shall argue, are imitated by Matt. 7:28. Moreover, Matthew's particular antithesis, *zōē*—*apōleia*, appears in Deut. 30:15-20: "I have set before you life (LXX: *zōē*)... . But if your heart turns away... you shall perish utterly" (LXX: *apōleia apoleisthe*). In the fourth place, the wording of Matt. 7:24-27, which enjoins hearing (*akouei, akouōn*) Jesus' words (*logous*) to do (*poiei, poiōn*) them, echoes LXX Deut. 31:12: *akousontai poiein pantas tous logous tou nomou toutou*. Lastly, Deut. 28:15-30 is reminiscent of the parable of the two builders: "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you... . You shall build a house and you shall not dwell in it."

Should we infer that Matt. 7:13-27 was constructed with an eye on the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy, that the end of the SM simulates the end of the Pentateuch? Those of us who postulate the existence of Q will not be able to attribute to Matthew either the combination of *akouein* + *logous* + *poiein* in vv. 24 and 26 or the location of the parable of the two builders at the close of the SM, this because Luke 6:46-49 exhibits the same features, which features, it follows, already belonged to Q's sermon on the plain. That circumstance, however, is offset by another. A comparison of both 7:13-14 (on the two ways) and 7:15-23 (on false prophets) with Luke 6:43-44 and 13:23-24 suggests that the two subsections owe as much to Matthean redaction as to tradition. To judge by Luke, neither the alternative of the two ways nor the directions for discerning false prophets belonged to Q's sermon on the plain.<sup>120</sup> Instead it was evidently Matthew's creativity which gave to the SM's conclusion the form and content it now has, a form and content which, we have seen, might remind one of Deuteronomy. When to this is added the knowledge that in other particulars the First Evangelist designed the SM to recall the law of Moses, one begins to wonder whether 7:13-27 was not likewise so designed. To do more than wonder, however, would perhaps be unwise; and I am content simply to call attention to a possibility.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:694-95,

## THE TRANSITIONAL FORMULA (7:28-29)

Five times Matthew placed the following refrain at the end of a major discourse:

- 7:28      *kai egeneto ote etelesen ho Iēsous  
tous logous toutous*
- 11:1      *kai egeneto ote etelesen ho Iēsous  
diastassōn tous dōdeka mathētais autou*
- 13:53     *kai egeneto ote etelesen ho Iēsous  
tas parabolās tautas*
- 19:1      *kai egeneto ote etelesen ho Iēsous  
tous logous toutous*
- 26:1      *kai egeneto ote etelesen ho Iēsous  
pantas tous logous toutous*

The first six words are in each case the same. Thereafter the words vary, although a demonstrative pronoun occurs in four instances, and each second half of the formula refers to Jesus' teaching—to his words (7:28; 19:1; 26:1), to his instruction of the twelve (11:1), to his parables (13:53).

Matthew's transitional formula<sup>121</sup> has usually been discussed in connection with the Gospel's structure. Bacon, as is well known, made it the key to his Pentateuchal outline (pp. 293-98). But there is a second issue which 7:28-29 and its parallels provoke. The repetition of a transitional formula throughout a Jewish book is a well-attested phenomenon. "The Israelites (again) did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" punctuates Judges: 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1. And the Pentateuch offers several variations on the basic form, "These are" + type of teaching<sup>122</sup> + agent of teaching:<sup>123</sup> Lev. 26:46; 27:34; Num. 30:16; 36:13; Deut. 1:1; 6:1. There is also a formula that appears three times in Deuteronomy, in 31:1, 24; and 32:45:

*kai sunetelesen Mōusēs  
lalōn pantas tous logous toutous*

<sup>121</sup>"Transitional formula" is more accurate than "concluding formula."

<sup>122</sup>"Statutes," "judgments," "laws," "words," "commandments."

<sup>123</sup>"That the Lord established through Moses," "that the Lord gave to Moses," "that the Lord commanded (through) Moses."

*henika de sunetelesen Mōusēs  
grapōn pantas tous logous tou nomou toutou*

*kai sunetelesen Mōusēs  
lalōn panti Israēl*

A few commentators have believed that Matthew's five-fold formula was forged under the memory of these three texts.<sup>124</sup> In Deuteronomy, as in Matthew, we have a recurring transitional formula, the first half of which is more stable than the second half. Further, *tous logous toutous* recurs in three of the Matthean texts and in two from Deuteronomy. The additional similarities can be seen from this analysis:

- introductory element, with opening *kai* in all but one case  
+ (sun)teleō  
+ subject (Jesus or Moses)  
+ type of authoritative speech delivered  
(usually with demonstrative pronoun)

The texts from Matthew and Deuteronomy all fit this common form.

Is the parallel fortuitous, or was Matthew's formula intended to function as an allusion? Luz objects that, if an allusion were intended, more words would be shared; thus the passages from Deuteronomy lack *egeneto*, and Matthew has the simplex, *teleō*, instead of the compound, *sunteleō*.<sup>125</sup> But these observations hardly free the mind of doubt, for not only does the Huck-Greeven *Synopse* print *sunetelesen* for Matt. 7:28, but is it prudent to insist that an allusion be, in effect, a quotation? Certainly there are other Matthean texts whose allusive nature is obvious and yet the correspondence with Scripture is far from perfect. The evangelist, had he wished, could readily have assimilated Matt. 2:19-21 even more completely to Exod. 4:19-20. That he did not so wish is a simple fact. Moreover, there are scriptural quotations, such as those in 2:23 and 27:9-10, which are, to understate the matter, inexact—so inexact that their very source is disputed. Should this not halt us from issuing a pontifical *a priori* regarding what

<sup>124</sup>E.g. P. Dabek, "Siehe, es erscheinen Moses und Elias' (Mt 17,3)," *Bib.* 23 (1947):176; H. Frankemölle, *Jahresbund und Kirche Christi* (NTAbh, n.F. 10, 2nd ed.; Münster: Aschendorf, 1984), 334, 370; Gnlika, *Matthäus*, 1:283-84; A. Ogawa, *L'histoire de Jesus chez Matthieu* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/116; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1979), 115-16; Teeple, *Prophet*, 82. For other parallels see LXX Num. 16:31; Ps. 72:20; 4 Ezra 7:1; 2 Bar. 87:1.

<sup>125</sup>Matthew, 1:455.



Matthew might have written but did not—particularly when we remember that allusions, as opposed to quotations, are by definition informal and only partially reproduce earlier texts? I am inclined to accept what Luz rejects, namely, that the redactional refrain in Matt. 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1 recalls another refrain, one belonging to the end of Deuteronomy and the story of Moses.

In favor of this conviction is a textual decision with which the critic is faced: for Matt. 7:28 one can either read *etelesen*, as does NA<sup>26</sup>, or one can read *sunetelesen*, as does HG. If we adopt the latter reading, the parallel with Deut. 31:1, 24 and 32:45 is all the closer. But if we accept the former, it seems a very good guess that the resemblance to Deut. 31:1, 24 and 32:45, verses which employ *sunetelesen*, was recognized; and just as scribes sometimes assimilated NT citations to the LXX, so here too: the parallel, so far from being overlooked, was enhanced. I note that the textual apparatus in Legg shows that *sunetelesen* is also reproduced by witnesses in ll:l and 26:l.

One last point. Although others have rendered a different verdict,<sup>126</sup> it is my best judgment that there is probably no significance in the fact that Matthew's formula appears five times. One could, I suppose, observe that some have divided Deuteronomy into five sections (Deut. 1-3; 4-11; 12-26; 27-30; 31-34),<sup>127</sup> or that the law code in Deut. 12-26 falls into five parts (12:2-28; 12:29-17:13; 17:14-18:22; 19:1-25:19; 26:1-15).<sup>128</sup> But the formula which our evangelist apparently imitated appears only three times. More worthy of reflection perhaps is that Matthew's basic structure, marked by his five-fold formula, is that of narrative followed by discourse followed by narrative followed by discourse, etcetera. This is also more or less true of most of Exodus-Deuteronomy: sections of law and narrative alternate.

#### OVERVIEW OF MATTHEW 1-8

(i) The new exodus. Having reviewed the pertinent portions of Matthew 1:1-8:1 it remains to inquire whether the parallels we have discerned between Moses and Jesus are parts of some greater whole. Did Matthew hand us an unordered heap of semblances, or did he

<sup>126</sup>See Appendix I, pp. 296-97.

<sup>127</sup>See Duane L. Christensen, in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Watson E. Mills (Macon: Mercer, 1990), 211, s.v. "Deuteronomy."

<sup>128</sup>S. D. McBride, "Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy," *Int.* 41 (1987):229-44.

intend something more? It is my view that the many allusions to Moses cohere into a pattern, a structure of meaning. All along we have been examining the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; and, when they are all put together, a distinct image stares back at us. I refer not to the face of Moses but rather to a picture of which he is only a part, albeit a very important part.

Matthew commenced by replaying the plot of Exodus 1-2 and of the haggadah that grew up around those chapters; thus the circumstances of Mary's pregnancy, the prophecy of Israel's savior, the issuance of Herod's decree, and the saving of Jesus' life are all recollective.<sup>129</sup> What comes next? The text jumps forward many years,<sup>130</sup> quotes a new exodus text from Isaiah (3:3), and then tells of Jesus' experience of baptism—which ritual, be it noted, Paul likened to the passing of Israel through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1-5).<sup>131</sup> After that we read that Jesus, like Moses, fasted for forty days and forty nights (4:2), after which (5:1-2) he climbed a mountain and, having sat down, critically engaged the Mosaic Torah and delivered fresh imperatives (cf. 7:28-29). Does not the whole sequence inexorably push us to the conclusion that in Matthew's opening chapters we have to do not just with parallel personages (Jesus and Moses) but with parallel plots, that an extensive typology underlies all of Matthew 1-7, that the story of Jesus is the story of a new exodus, that Matt. 1:1-5:2 contains a predictive

<sup>129</sup>I also note that if Matthew opens with a genealogy, Exodus 1:1-7 supplies a list of Israelite ancestors.

<sup>130</sup>Is it just coincidence—I ask the question; I give no answer—that the jump from Matt. 2:23, where the infant Jesus goes to Nazareth, to 3:1ff., where the adult Jesus comes to John, has a parallel in Exodus 2, where the narrative passes from the naming of Moses (2:10) to his adulthood (2:11)? "I drew him out of the water" is followed immediately by "One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked upon their burdens." The LXX has: *egeneto de en tais hēmerais tais pollais ekeinai megas genomenos Moyses*. . . . Comparable are Matthew's debated *de*, the use of *en tais hēmerais*, and the abutment of events from infancy and adulthood.

<sup>131</sup>We do not know if the comparison was conventional (as Goodenough, *Symbols*, 10:135, claimed: "Paul certainly did not invent the idea that the passage of the Red Sea was baptism into Moses") or whether it was invented by the apostle; but the link in rabbinic sources between baptism and the phrase, "enter under the wings of the Shekinah" (*b. Yeb.* 46b, etc.), favors the former possibility. —In later Christian literature and art of course Moses' passing through the Red Sea, as well as the imitative crossings of the Jordan by Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, came to be prefigurations of the baptism of Jesus and Christians; see Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University Press, 1956), 86-98. The same prefiguration is implicit in Matthew. But this, apart from the quotation of Isaiah in v. 3, only appears from Matthew's schematization in chapters 1-7. Little emphasis upon the new exodus or new Moses theme emerges when chapter 3 is examined in isolation. At most there are hints of such. I refer the reader to the exhaustive treatment of Davies, *Setting*, 26-45, upon which I cannot improve.

structure which leads the alert reader to anticipate, in the event justly, the revelation of another law?<sup>132</sup> Following Austin Farrer and Michael Goulder,<sup>133</sup> I have no misgivings in returning whole-hearted assent.<sup>134</sup>

More than consistent with this conviction is the existence of other ostensible historical narratives which not only contain Moses typologies but also borrow the plot of the exodus. Here it suffices to advert to the discussion in chapters two and three, especially to what was said regarding Joshua, I Samuel, the *Jeremiah Apocryphon*, and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. In constructing an extended exodus typology Matthew was scarcely playing the rôle of an innovator. The archaic plot of the exodus was constantly updated by both Jews and Christians; it was ever old, ever new.

Having established this fact, a crucial observation falls to be considered: Matthew's text has a profound eschatological dimension—something missing from Joshua, I Samuel, the *Jeremiah Apocryphon*, and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. The Gospel concerns the Messiah, a figure of the latter days. Thus its new exodus is to be understood against those Jewish texts which, according to the principle that the end is declared from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), announce an eschatological exodus. Representative are the following:

Hos. 2:14-15: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness... And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt."

Isa. 10:24-26: "Therefore thus says the Lord, the Lord of hosts: 'O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they smite with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. For in a very little while my indignation will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a scourge, as when he smote Midian at the rock

<sup>132</sup>I have elsewhere, following Davies, tried to relate the SM to the triadic declaration of Simeon the Just as recorded in *m. 'Abot* 1:2: "Upon three things the world stands: upon Torah, upon temple service, and upon *gemilut hasadim*." This is worth noting because it underlines the comprehensive character of the SM: it is Matthew's version of the three rabbinic pillars by which the world is sustained. See my article, "The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount," *JBL* 106 (1987):423-45; also W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Reflections on the Sermon on the Mount," *SJT* 44 (1991), pp. 283-310.

<sup>133</sup>See Appendix IV, pp. 307-11.

<sup>134</sup>Note also the remarks of S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), 169-70.

of Oreb; and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt."

Isa. 11:15-16: "And the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; and will wave his hand over the River and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dryshod. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt."

Ezek. 20:33-38: "As I live, says the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples; and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord God. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number. I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

Additional, related texts include Isa. 4:5; 40:3-5; 48:20-21; 51:9-11; Jer. 31:31-34; Mic. 7:15; 1QM XI:10; Rev. 11:6; 2 Bar. 29:8; *Sib. Orac.* 7:149; *Deut. Rab.* 2:2.<sup>135</sup> When Jews looked to the future they saw the past. For them, the distant time of Moses and the longed-for latter days mirrored one another.

Particularly interesting for comparison with Matthew are Jer. 16:14-15 ("Therefore, behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' For I will bring them back to their own land which I gave to their fathers") and Isa. 52:11-12 ("Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from

<sup>135</sup>Discussion in B. Anderson, "The Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. B. Anderson and W. Harrelson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 177-95; J. Fischer, "Das Problem des neuen Exodus in Isaia 40-55," *TQ* 110 (1979):111-20; H. Sahlin, "The New Exodus of Salvation," in *Root of the Vine*, 81-95.

the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard"). According to the former, future oaths will refer not to the exodus from Egypt but to the new saving event, which is therefore greater than its historical analogue: the first exodus will in some sense be superseded. According to the latter, "in the new exodus disquietude will be replaced by calm. The new exodus will therefore not simply be a remanifestation of an older prototype, but will have qualitative distinctions of its own"<sup>136</sup> (cf. Isa. 43:18-19).

That the hope for a new exodus, which might surpass the old, was very much alive in Matthew's time, is a familiar fact, one demonstrated especially by the Dead Sea Scrolls. These feature a community that entered the desert in order to prepare the way for a new exodus (cf. 1QS VIII:12-14, quoting Isaiah 40:3). That community structured itself on analogy with the structure of Mosaic Israel and also anticipated that its eschatological battle would be a memory come to life (see 1QM III-IV, X); as 1QM XI:8 has it: "Thou will do to them as Thou did to Pharaoh, and to the captains of his chariots in the Red Sea."<sup>137</sup>

In addition to the Dead Sea Scrolls there is Rev. 15:2-4, a text presumably composed very near Matthew's time. Here those who have conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name stand beside a sea of glass and "sing the song of Moses" (cf. Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 32). Clearly the deliverance from the Red Sea is here the typological equivalent of the eschatological deliverance, and the song in Revelation "celebrates a new and greater exodus."<sup>138</sup> Also quite pertinent for our understanding of Matthew in its historical context are the several new exodus motifs in the Pauline epistles<sup>139</sup> and especially the popular prophets whose sad and partial stories Josephus recorded. We had occasion to examine these on pp. 78-83 and deemed it most likely that more than one must have fruitlessly sought, by reliving certain exodus experiences, to prove himself the eschatological prophet like Moses (cf. Matt. 24:26). Now if I may so put it, what we have in Matthew is the obverse of Josephus' capsule summaries of

<sup>136</sup>Fishbane, *Interpretation*, 364.

<sup>137</sup>See further Frank More Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 78, n. 36a.

<sup>138</sup>J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 239.

<sup>139</sup>See esp. 1 Cor. 10:1-4; 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3-4; and the remarks of Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 100-110, 141-46, 250-53, 313-14; also Sahlin, as in n. 135.

failed leaders. That is to say, the Gospel is the literary record not of an unsuccessful eschatological prophet like Moses but a successful one, who for Christians had accomplished a new exodus. This is in part the implication of Matt. 3:3: "For this [John the Baptist] is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" The line from Isa. 40:3 is, in its original context, a proclamation of the eschatological exodus (cf. the application in the Dead Sea Scrolls). In Matthew (as in Mark 1:3) it helps cast the shadow of the exodus over the story of Jesus.

At this juncture let me revert to an issue earlier considered (p. 142). Some commentators have played the new Moses and new exodus themes against each other, as though emphasis upon one must lead to de-emphasis upon the other. I disagree, and not just because there are other texts which integrate the two themes. There are two additional and important facts, the first being that Matthew wished to open his story by telling of a new exodus, the second that it was impossible for there to be another exodus without the participation of the people of God, those to be redeemed—but when Jesus came into the world the new covenant community, the *ecclesia*,<sup>140</sup> did not yet exist: disciples had not been called, and the church had not yet been built upon Peter the rock (4:18-22; 16:13-20). Or, to be more precise, the *ecclesia* did exist, but it then consisted solely of its leader, Jesus himself—as I think Hos. 11:1, quoted in Matt. 2:15, implies: Jesus = Son = Israel. Thus narrative circumstances dictated that, at the book's beginning, the new Moses also be the new Israel; and so when we discover that Jesus is, in Matthew 2 and 4, not only very much like Moses but also very much like Israel, what prohibits giving both facts their full force? There is an analogy to all this in Exodus, where it is related that, when the golden calf was made, every Israelite save one forsook Yahweh. That individual was of course Israel's leader, Moses, who for a time became the remnant: he himself was true Israel (cf. 1 Kings 19:14). And as with the first redeemer, so with the last: if Moses once constituted the people of God, the Mosaic Messiah did no less.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup>For this term see 16:18; 18:17. The word is used of the exodus community in LXX Deuteronomy.

<sup>141</sup>It is also pertinent that "almost every key element in Moshe's early life—e.g., rescue from death by royal decree, rescue from death by water, flight into the desert, meeting with God on the sacred mountain—foreshadows Israel's experience in the book of Exodus. The key theme of the distinction between Israel and Egypt, so central

(ii) The new creation. There is a minor yet important theme that shows itself more than once in Matthew's opening chapters. I refer to the theme of the new creation.<sup>142</sup> The Gospel opens with two loaded words, *biblos genesēōs*. These words, which I take to be the book's title, appear together only twice in the Septuagint, in Gen. 2:4 and 5:1 (cf. 6:9). Further, "*Genesis*" was already, among Greek-speaking Jews of Matthew's time, the name for the first book of Moses, as is conclusively established by Philo, *Poster* C. 127; *Abr.* 1; and *Aet. mund.* 19. Obviously Matthew selected his opening words with the intention of sending thoughts back to the primeval history. The evangelist also accomplished this end by designating Jesus "son of Abraham" (1:1) and by heading his genealogy with the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then there is 3:16, where the Spirit of God descends as a dove upon Jesus. Although many interpretations of this have been offered, it is altogether likely that 3:16 implies a parallel between the baptism of Jesus and the creation of the cosmos. Just as the Spirit of God "brooded"—the Hebrew verb is used of a bird in Deut. 32:11 (cf. *b. Hag.* 15a)—over the face of the waters at the inception of things, so did the Spirit of God, in the form of a dove, move over the waters when Jesus was baptized.<sup>143</sup>

What does the new creation motif have to do with the new Moses theme? The two things are complimentary when we take into account the principle, *ta eschata hōs ta prōta*: the last things (will be) as the first (*Barn.* 6:13). This sentiment, a fundament of eschatological expectation,<sup>144</sup> incorporated both the creation of the world and the exodus from Egypt; that is, Jews who imagined the end foresaw both a new creation and a new exodus. It is therefore no surprise that both things were sometimes envisaged at once. Two examples:

to the Plague Narrative and to Israelite religion as a whole, is brought out beautifully in the depiction of Moshe's development from Egyptian prince to would-be liberator to shepherd in the wilderness.... What is important in these early chapters of Exodus, then, is not the customary focus on the young hero's deeds... but on what he shares with his people, or, more precisely, how he prefigures them." So Everett Fox, *Genesis and Exodus: A New English Rendition* (New York: Schocken, 1991), 235.

<sup>142</sup>In addition to the following see Davies, *Setting*, 67-72.

<sup>143</sup>See further Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:331-34; also my article, "The Baptism of Jesus and a New Dead Sea Scroll," *BAR* 18 (1992), pp. 58-60. The patristic texts which associate baptism with the primitive waters of Genesis (see Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 70-75) are here in continuity with the canonical Gospels.

<sup>144</sup>Cf. 4 Ezra 7:30 and the *paliggenesis* of Matt. 19:28. Discussion in Nils A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation, and the Church," in *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 120-40.

Isa. 51:9-11: "Awake, awake, put on strength, o arm of the Lord; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragon? Was it not thou that didst dry up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that didst make the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

2 Bar. 29:3-8: "And it will happen that when all that which should come to pass in these parts has been accomplished, the Anointed One will begin to be revealed. And Behemoth will reveal itself from its place, and Leviathan will come from the sea, the two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation and which I shall have kept until that time. And they will be nourishment for all who are left. The earth will also yield fruits ten thousandfold. And on one vine will be a thousand branches, and one branch will produce a thousand clusters, and one cluster will produce a thousand grapes, and one grape will produce a cor of wine. And those who are hungry will enjoy themselves and they will, moreover, see marvels every day. For winds will go out in front of me every morning to bring the fragrance of aromatic fruits and clouds at the end of the day to distill the dew of health. And it will happen at that time that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who will have arrived at the consummation of time."

Also noteworthy is Isa. 43:15-21, where "the Creator of Israel," who once made a way in the sea and extinguished chariot and horse, army and warrior, promises to do "a new thing," which is explicated as another exodus: "I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert... for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people." Not unrelated are certain promises made by the Apocalypse of John: those who overcome will, at the consummation, not only eat of the tree of life, as did Adam and Eve: they will also be given manna, as was Israel of old (Rev. 2:17; 22:2).<sup>145</sup>

It is my suggestion that, in Matthew, the new exodus that is the historical renewal of Israel in the person of the Mosaic Messiah is simultaneously a new creation, that is, a renewal of the world. To what degree, however, we should regard as predominately eschatological the mingling of exodus themes with creation motifs is problematic. For the creation and the exodus were associated even outside the

<sup>145</sup>Further texts and discussion in R. Le Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale* (AB 22; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963).

sphere of eschatological speculation.<sup>146</sup> Wisd. 19:6 affirms that "the whole creation in its nature was fashioned anew" when God preserved the Israelites as they fled from Egypt; and LAB 15:5-6 compares the parting of the Red Sea to the creative act of Gen. 1:9: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place." Already the Hebrew Bible, as is well known, moves Rahab, the female monster of chaos, from creation contexts (Job 9:13; 38:8-11) to Exodus contexts (Ps. 89:11; Isa. 51:9-10). The Bible further offers two competing rationales for observing the Sabbath, one involving commemoration of the creation (Exod. 20:9-11), the other involving commemoration of the exodus (Deut. 5:15). Even more significant for our purposes, however, is the lesser known fact that the book of Exodus itself implicitly likens the advent of Moses to a new creation. In Exod. 1:5-7 we read that in Egypt the Israelites "were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong; so that the land was filled with them." The striking redundancy is not just overdone rhetoric. The repetition is rather the repetition of Gen. 1:28 ("Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion...") and 9:1-2 ("Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast..."). "The Exodus passage has," to quote James S. Ackerman, "preserved the five-fold verb structure of [the Genesis texts]... and three of the verbs are the same in all three passages,<sup>147</sup> so we can assume that it [Exod. 1:5-7] is inviting us to perceive" connections between Exodus 1 and both Genesis 1 and 9; specifically, "the destiny of man, as announced at the Creation and after the Flood, is in the process of being fulfilled by the descendants of Israel."<sup>148</sup>

Closely following upon the allusions to Adam and Eve and Noah there are promptings to recall Genesis 11 and the tower of Babel. If I may cite Ackerman again: in both Exod. 1:8-14 and Gen. 11:1-9

<sup>146</sup>There is much useful material in R. Chernus, *Redemption and Chaos: A Study in the Symbolism of the Rabbinic Aggadah* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1978).

<sup>147</sup>*parā, rābā, malē*.

<sup>148</sup>J. S. Ackerman, "The Literary Context of the Moses Birth Story (Exodus 1-2)," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*, ed. K. R. R. Gros Louis et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 77. Cf. Terence E. Fretheim, "The Plagues as Ecological Signs of Historical Disaster," *JBL* 110 (1991), 385, n. 3: "That the phrase 'the land was filled with them' in Exod 1:7 is intended as an explicit reference to Gen 1:28 and 9:1 is no doubt evident in the absence of any reference to Egypt or Goshen, the mention of which would have blurred this link. In some sense Israel is represented as having fulfilled the creational command, and hence Israel is a microcosmic fulfillment of God's intentions for the creation."

there is an emphasis on human ingenuity. Both [passages] are introduced by the interjection *haba* 'come now,' with the main verb in the Hebrew cohortative 'let us,' followed by *pen* 'lest,' describing the situation which the protagonists are seeking to avoid. Both stories refer to building activity and describe similar building materials [Gen. 11:3: *nīlbenā lēbenīm... hōmer*; Exod. 1:14: *bēhōmer ūbilbenīm*; 5:7: *lēbōn hallēbenīm*]. Both stories stress that man's proud wisdom and purposive activity were in vain, and can lead to his own destruction, when they run counter to the order of things perceived by Israel. In each story man's purposive activity precipitates a divine counteraction which results in redemptive dispersion, first in Abraham, then in Israel...<sup>149</sup>

The silent gesturing towards Genesis continues in Exodus 2. Moses' mother, it is said, put her infant son in a *tēbā*, an ark (2:3). Is there significance in this? Many have so thought.<sup>150</sup> Gen. 6:14 reads: "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood... and cover it inside and out with pitch." Exod. 2:3 reads: "She took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch." The correspondences are striking: *tēbā* appears in the Hebrew Bible only in these two places, and in both instances the person whom the ark is to serve is similarly indicated (*lēkā; lō*). Moreover, "the building materials for the *tēbah*" are specified "in a construct chain; puns involving words for 'pitch' are found in both (*kpr* in Genesis and *hmr* in Exodus); the vessel is twice sealed, 'inside and out' in Genesis and 'with pitch and with mortar' in Exodus."<sup>151</sup> One can hardly avoid the thought that Moses was a second Noah. If Noah, the savior of all living things, was preserved upon the waters in an ark, it was not otherwise with Moses, the savior of Israel.

The primeval history is also evoked by Exod. 2:2. According to this, Moses' mother "saw that he [Moses] was good." *ra* 'ā + *kī-tōb*, otherwise unattested outside Genesis, echoes the refrain of Genesis 1: "And God saw that it was good." The parallel is recognized in *Exod. Rab.* 1:20: "The sages say: When Moses was born the whole house became flooded with light; for here it says: and she saw him that he was a goodly child, and elsewhere it says: And God saw the light that it was good."<sup>152</sup> One also remembers that the traditions of Jochebed's recovered virginity, her second legal marriage, and her immunity from birth pangs, all previously discussed, convey that Moses marked a

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, 81. Cf. Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham was* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 117.

<sup>150</sup>Note e.g. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 18-19, and Sarna, *Exodus*, 28.

<sup>151</sup>So Kikawada and Quinn, *Before Abraham was*, 85.

<sup>152</sup>Cf. Kikawada and Quinn, *ibid.*, 114-15.

brand new beginning: his birth was a new event, different from the earlier births of his brother and sister, and it escaped the curse of Gen. 3:16. The sort of thing here implied appears in and was extended by Samaritan tradition, according to which Moses renewed the creation, opened Eden, and held in his hands the rod of Adam.<sup>153</sup> In short, Moses was another Adam.

Beyond the back references to Genesis already observed, Ackerman has wondered whether Moses' attempt to halt the combat of two Hebrew men (Exod. 2:11-15) should be related to the tale of Cain and Abel, and also—here he gropes for too much—whether, in Exod. 2:17, the driving of the women away from the well, their source of life, might not have something to do with the driving of Adam and Eve from paradise. However those matters may stand, Ackerman asks: "Is the narrative [in Exodus], moving back with its allusions through the primeval story sequence, portraying a God who, through Moses and the people of Israel, is in the process of reversing the alienation and broken community which had been man's condition since earliest times?"<sup>154</sup> He answers with this:

Pharaoh's Babel-like building activity is doomed to fail because bondage crushes the human spirit. Moses in the ark is, like Noah, the presence of life for mankind because he will point the way to freedom. His intention to prevent one Hebrew brother from smiting another is an attempt to overcome the hostility between brothers which had existed since Cain killed Abel. Paradoxically, the seven daughters are driven away by the shepherds because God, confirming the new situation of pride and hostility embodied in man's disobedience, had driven Adam and Eve out of Eden, away from the tree of life.<sup>155</sup>

I am inclined to suppose Ackerman is close to the truth, partly because later in Exodus there are additional ties to the creation narrative.<sup>156</sup> The destructive ten plagues, which leave a wrecked empire, are seemingly the antitheses of the ten wonderful words of creation,<sup>157</sup> as certain contrasting parallels suggest:

Exod. 7:14: Aaron lifted his

Gen. 1:10: God created the

<sup>153</sup>Evidence in Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 222-23.

<sup>154</sup>"Literary Context," 114-15.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

<sup>156</sup>For what follows see Ziony Zevit, "The Priestly Redaction and Interpretation of the Plague Narrative in Exodus," *JQR* 66 (1976):193-211.

<sup>157</sup>Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29; cf. *m. 'Abot* 5:1, 4.

staff over the "gatherings of their waters" (*miqwēh mēmēhem*)

"gatherings of the waters" (*miqwēh hammayim*)

Exod. 8:3: "the Nile will swarm (*šeras*) with frogs"

Gen. 1:20: "Let the waters swarm with swarms" (*yisrēsū ...šeres*)

Exod. 8:16-19: Aaron struck the "dust" (*āpar*) of the earth and from it came lice (or: gnats)

Gen. 2:7: God created human beings from the "dust" (*āpār*) of the ground

Exod. 9:1-7: the hand of the Lord killed "the cattle in the field, the horses, the asses, the camels, the herds, the flocks of the Egyptians"

Gen. 1:25: "And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind"

Exod. 10:15: the locusts "ate all the plants (*ešeb*) in the land and all the fruit (*pēri*) of the trees (*ēs*) which the hail had left; not a green thing remained, neither tree (*ēs*) nor plant of the field through all the land of Egypt"

Gen. 1:11: "The earth brought forth vegetation, plants (*ešeb*) yielding seeds according to their own kinds, and trees (*ēs*) bearing fruit (*pēri*) in which is their seed, according to its kind"

Exod. 10:22-23: "there was thick darkness (*hōšek*) in all the land of Egypt... but all the people of Israel had light (*ōr*) where they dwelt"

Gen. 1:2: "darkness (*hōšek*) was upon the face of the deep;" 1:4: "God separated the light (*hā'ōr*) from the darkness"

Exod. 12:29: God smote the first-born in the land of Egypt, and all the first-born of the cattle

Gen. 1:24, 26: God created human beings, God created cattle

Having observed these correlations, Ziony Zevit commented:

At the end of the narrative in Exodus, Israel looks back over the stilled water of the sea at a land with no people, no animals and no vegetation,

a land in which creation had been undone. Israel is convinced that her redeemer is the Lord of all creation.... He who had just reduced order to chaos was the same as he who had previously ordered the chaos.<sup>158</sup>

Long ago Philo offered a very similar interpretation: "God's judgment was that the materials which had served to produce the world should serve also to destroy the land of the impious; and to show the mightiness of the sovereignty which he holds, what he shaped in his saving goodness to create the universe he turned into instruments for the perdition of the impious whenever he would" (*Mos.* 1:96).<sup>159</sup>

There is at least one additional way in which the Pentateuch joins Moses and the creation. "The completion and consecration of the tabernacle in which the Lord is to dwell [Exodus 39-40] are narrated in terms that repeat, or recover, the original creation."<sup>160</sup> Seven times in Exodus 39 there appears the formula, "They/he made/prepared... as the Lord had commanded Moses" (39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31). Both the seven-fold repetition and the content resemble Genesis 1-2 and its formula: "And God said... and it was so." Further, that "Moses saw all the work... [and] blessed them" (Exod. 39:43) calls to mind the recurrent "God saw" of Genesis 1, which culminates in the blessing uttered upon creation's completion (Gen. 2:1-3); and when we read that, after "Moses finished the work" (*wayēkal Mošeh 'et-hammēlā'kā*), the divine cloud covered the tent of meeting, which circumstance communicates that the people of God have finally rested from their journeys (Exod. 40:33-38), one thinks of Gen. 2:1-3: "God finished his work" (*wayēkal 'ēlohīm... mēla'kētō*) and rested from "all the work which he had done." Lastly, that the construction of the tabernacle inaugurated a new time is suggested by the date assigned to its completion: "in the *first* month in the second year, in the *first* day of the month..." (Exod. 40:17). It does seem that "Genesis and Exodus

<sup>158</sup>Three Ways to look at the Ten Plagues," *BR* 6 (1990):23.

<sup>159</sup>There are also structural parallels between Genesis 1 and Exodus 7-12. Cf. Sarna, *Exodus*, 77. The pattern in Genesis is 3 acts of creation + 3 acts of creation + final act pertaining to God alone. The pattern of the plagues is 3 plagues + 3 plagues + 3 plagues + final plague whose agent is God alone (cf. p. 211). It is also just possibly relevant to note that both Psalm 78 and 105 preserve the tradition of seven plagues (cf. the seven days of Genesis).

<sup>160</sup>Richard H. Moyer, "In the Beginning: Myth and History in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 109 (1990):596-97. See in the addition to what follows M. Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1-2:3," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor (AOAT 212; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen; Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1981), 501-12.

[comprise] a narrative unit that closes with a repetition of the creation and blessing with which it opened,"<sup>161</sup> so that the building of the Israelite sanctuary is interpreted as imitation of the world's creation and a participation in its perfection.

The significance of the preceding paragraphs for Matthew should be evident. Jewish sources sometimes construe the exodus as a second creation; sometimes they interpret the eschatological denouement as a new creation and a new exodus; and sometimes they join creation motifs to the story of Moses. We accordingly find in Judaism literary precedent for the cluster of themes I have traced in Matthew's initial chapters. Thus when Jesus, the Mosaic Messiah, undergoes another exodus and inaugurates a new creation, he not only brings to realization certain eschatological expectations: he also leaves a record that recapitulates a rich literary tradition.

#### THE MIRACLES OF CHAPTERS 8-9

Christians have frequently compared the miracles of Moses with the wonders of Jesus. The *Acts of Pilate* makes Nicodemus speak as follows to Pilate:

What do you intend to do with this man? This man does many signs and wonders, which no one has done nor will do. Let him alone and contrive no evil against him. If the signs which he does are from God, they will stand; if they are from men, they will come to nothing. For Moses also, when he was sent by God into Egypt, did many signs which God commanded him to do before Pharaoh (5:1).

Compare with this *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 1:57: "As Moses did signs and miracles, so also did Jesus. And there is no doubt but that the likeness of the signs proves him [Jesus] to be that prophet of whom he [Moses] said that he should come 'like myself.'" Eusebius, who also saw the evangelical miracles as proof that Jesus was the prophet of Deut. 18:15, 18, wrote in similar fashion: "Moses by wonderful works and miracles authenticated the religion that he proclaimed; Christ likewise, using his recorded miracles to inspire faith in those who saw them, established the new discipline of the gospel teaching" (*Dem. ev.* 3:2).

The common abutment, in early Christian literature, of the wonders of Jesus and Moses can be no surprise, for the lawgiver was

<sup>161</sup>Moyer, "In the Beginning," 597; cf. M. Fishbane, *Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 11-13.

remembered as an especially great miracle worker. Indeed, his stature as such grew over the centuries. The dramatic combat with Pharaoh's magicians, the spectacular parting of the Red Sea, and the several wilderness miracles, led to much reflection on Moses' extraordinary abilities. In time a whole corpus of magical charms and writings—including *The Key of Moses*, *The Eighth Book of Moses*, and *The Secret Book of Moses*—was assigned to the lawgiver.<sup>162</sup>

But what are the causes for surmising, as did B. W. Bacon and several others,<sup>163</sup> that the reader of Matthew 8-9 in particular should be put in mind of Moses? Consider these possible correlations:

- In Exodus 7-12 there are ten plagues. In Matthew 8-9 there are ten miracles.<sup>164</sup>
- In Matt. 8:1-4 Jesus heals a leper. Moses also healed a leper (Num. 12:10-16; cf. Exod. 4:6-7)—a fact of some note as stories of the remission of leprosy are rare in Judaism. Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 3:2, observed the parallel.
- Moses is named in Matt. 8:4: "Show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded." This order makes Jesus abide by the law, that is, makes him act in accord with Moses. Is 8:4 then programmatic for what follows?
- It was characteristic of Moses that he worked his wonders *en logois*, by his words (Ecclus. 45:3). Similarly does Jesus cast out demons and perform miracles *logō*, by his word (8:16).

<sup>162</sup>See John G. Gager, *Moses is Greco-Roman Paganism* (SBLMS 16; Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 134-61.

<sup>163</sup>B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930), 187-89; Kastner, *Moses*, 165-69; Schoeps, *Theologie*, 93-97 (citing Mic. 7:15: "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt I will show them marvelous things"); Teeple, *Prophet*, 82-83 (citing Schoeps).

<sup>164</sup>On the significance of the number ten see H. A. Brongers, "Die Zehnzahl in der Bibel und in ihrer Umwelt," in *Studia Biblica et Semitica Theodoro Christiano Vriezen*, ed. W. C. van Unnik and A. S. van der Woude (Wageningen: H. Veenman en Zonen, 1966), 30-45. He demonstrates that ten can function as seven often does, to indicate fullness, completeness, perfection. Recall the ten commandments and the tithe; see also Gen. 24:10, 22; 31:7; Lev. 26:26; Num. 14:22; 1 Sam. 1:8; Ruth 4:2; Job 19:3; Eccles 7:19; Zech. 8:23; *Jub.* 19:8; Philo, *Mos.* 1:96 (ten is "a perfect number"); Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 2:10; Josephus, *Bell.* 6:423; 4 *Ezra* 5:46; *m. 'Abot* 5:1-6. On p. 37 Brongers suggests that the accomplishment of ten miracles in Matthew 8-9 is a sign of messianic "Vollmacht."

- According to extra-biblical tradition, Moses raised the dead (see Artapanus in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1:23; and Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:27). In Matt. 9:18-26 Jesus raises the dead.
- In Matt. 8:23-27 Jesus calms and then crosses the sea of Galilee. Some have thought his power reminiscent of Moses' ability to part the Red Sea. Eusebius wrote: Moses "made the sea dry with a strong south wind. For Scripture says: 'Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove back the sea with a strong south wind,' and he adds: 'The waves congealed in the midst of the sea.' In like manner, only much more grandly, our Savior 'rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm'" (*Dem. ev.* 3:2). One may add (i) that "even the land and sea obey him" (Matt. 8:27) is similar to what Philo observed of Moses: "each element obeyed him as its master" (*Mos.* 1:156); (ii) that whereas Matt. 8:23-27 may be interpreted in terms of the old creation motif of the struggle against chaos,<sup>165</sup> that same motif was traditionally associated with the miracle of the Red Sea,<sup>166</sup> and (iii) that according to LXX Ps. 105:9-10 God "rebuked" the Red Sea (*epetimēse ... thalassē*) and so saved (*esōsen*) Israel, while according to Matthew Jesus "rebuked" (*epetimēsen*) the winds and the sea (*thalassē*) in response to his disciples' request that he "save" them (*sōson*).

Elsewhere I have complained that Bacon's proposal is problematic because although there may be ten miracles in Matthew 8-9, there are only nine miracle stories,<sup>167</sup> and further that the miracle stories of 8-9 are parcelled out into three different groups—8:2-15; 8:23-9:8; and 9:18-34.<sup>168</sup> Visually:

}	8:1-4 a healing	+ summary report and words of Jesus, 8:16-22
	8:1-22 8:5-13 a healing	
	8:14-15 a healing	

<sup>165</sup>Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:75.

<sup>166</sup>See Ps. 77:16 and Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 37-44; also Bernard F. Batto, "The Reed Sea: *Requiescat in Pace*," *JBL* 102 (1983):27-35.

<sup>167</sup>9:18-26, the healing of a ruler's daughter and of the woman with an issue of blood, is a unit. Cf. Meier, *Matthew*, 79-80.

<sup>168</sup>Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:1-2.



8:23-9:17	{	8:23-27	
		a nature miracle	
		8:28-34	+ call of Levi and words of Jesus, 9:9-17
		two demoniacs cured	
		9:1-8	
		a healing	
9:18-38	{	9:18-26	
		two people healed	
		9:27-31	+ summary report and words of Jesus, 9:35-38
		two people healed	
		9:32-34	
		a healing	

My presumption was that Exodus offers nothing similar. But live and learn: I was mistaken. A strikingly similar pattern does appear to order the ten plagues of Exodus. As Rashbam (Samuel ben Meir, the French Tosaphist) remarked, in his twelfth-century commentary on Exodus, the first and second, fourth and fifth, and seventh and eight plagues are preceded by warnings. The third, sixth, and ninth—whose narratives are uniformly brief—are not. Should we then group the first nine plagues into three sets of three, with the tenth, which, in contradistinction to the other plagues, has no natural grounding, standing apart as climactic? This is suggested by other patterns. Thus the first, fourth, and seventh plagues occur “in the morning” (*bab̄oqer*). Again, the first three plagues involve Aaron holding Moses’ staff while the seventh, eight, and ninth group themselves together by the circumstance that in each instance Moses stretches forth his hand. There is also an apparent pattern with regard to the introductory command in each pericope:

Command	Plague	Verse
“You stand” (a form of <i>ysb</i> )	1 4 7	7:15; 8:16; 9:13
“Go in to Pharaoh” ( <i>bō’ el Phar’ōh</i> )	2 5 8	7:26; 9:1; 10:1
no common feature	3 6 9	_____

Furthermore, one recent commentator has offered that if plagues 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate the superiority of God and his agents over against the Egyptians and their magicians (7:17; 8:10, 18-19), 4, 5, and 6 show God’s presence in the land and his ability to distinguish Israel from Egypt and shelter the former from calamity (8:22; 9:4, 6), while 7, 8, and 9, the most powerful plagues, substantiate God’s incomparability (9:14, 18, 24; 10:6, 14).<sup>169</sup>

Whatever the correct source-critical solution to Exodus 7-12 may be (many proposals have been forwarded), the plagues as they stand readily allow themselves to be grouped into three sets of three, as the chart on the opposite page illustrates.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, we need not wonder whether the triadic arrangement of the plagues was known to the ancients. Although his analysis differs from the one I have given, Philo did in fact find three triads in Exodus 7-12; see *Mos.* 1:97ff.<sup>171</sup>

The structural parallel between Exodus 7-12 and Matthew 8-9 has moved me to reconsider my earlier judgment. There is not only a common number of miracles to be reckoned with but also a shared pattern: in both Exodus and Matthew there are ten miracles, and in both narratives there is a 3 × 3 pattern. Is this just coincidence? Or did Matthew arrange Jesus’ miracles so that they would mirror the wonders of Moses? I am no longer quite so sure that Bacon has been executed at the scaffold of criticism. Nonetheless, my uncertainty has not been sufficient to foster full-fledged repentance. There remains the incongruity, perhaps (I admit) more jarring to us than to the ancients, between plagues of judgment and miracles of mercy: do they naturally invite comparison? Worse still, there is an obvious structural disparity: in Matthew, unlike Exodus, the final miracle is neither separated from the others nor climactic—it is in fact a model of pruned simplicity, a surprising anticlimax:

As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

<sup>169</sup>So Richard J. Clifford, in *NJBC*, 48.

<sup>170</sup>This reproduces page 76 of Sarna, *Exodus*, and is reprinted with permission. (The verses are cited according to the Hebrew text.)

<sup>171</sup>God “distributed the punishments in this wise: three belonging to the denser elements, earth and water, which have gone to make our bodily qualities what they are, He committed to the brother of Moses; another set of three, belonging to air and fire, the two most productive of life, He gave to Moses alone; one, the seventh, He committed to both in common; and the other three which go to complete the ten He reserved to Himself.”