

EXPOSITORY ESSAY: Portrayal Of Jesus, The Disciples, And The Religious Leaders (in the Books of Matthew and Luke, as compared to the Book of Mark)
by Tina A. Coddington

MATTHEW'S PORTRAYAL OF JESUS

The Book of Matthew portrays Jesus as a true heir to David's throne and as the coming Messiah (Matthew 1:1-17; Believer's). "Jesus' ancestry is traced from a Jewish perspective - from Abraham through David to Jesus" (Barton 4). The ancestry of Jesus is the first step in showing that Jesus, who would fulfill Old Testament expectations, was the divinely anointed Messiah (Believer's - Matthew 1:1). Throughout the Book of Matthew, the author points out twelve different occurrences in which the life of Christ fulfilled Old Testament Scripture (Matthew 1:22; 2:15,23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 27:9; Believer's - Matthew 1:22). The Book of Mark does not mention the genealogy of Christ or focus on Old Testament Scripture that Jesus fulfilled as the Messiah.

Secondly, the Book of Matthew portrays Jesus as one who taught to crowds of people. Matthew included large portions of Jesus' teaching (Matthew 4:25; 5:1-7:29; 7:28; 8:1-9:38; 9:36; 13:2; 14:13; 14:15; 15:30; 19:2; 21:9; 21:11; 22:33; 23:1). Matthew included five major discourses of Jesus' teaching (Chamblin 722). Jesus would sit on a mountainside or in a boat to teach the people (Matthew 2:13; 5:1; 10:1). However, Mark mentioned the crowds Jesus taught but did not include the content of Jesus' teaching (Mark 10:1).

Third, both the Books of Matthew and Mark portray Jesus as an individual who loves children. Jesus called the children to Himself, stood among them, placed His hands on them, and blessed them (Matthew 18:2; 9:13; Mark 10:13,16).

Fourth, the Book of Matthew portrays Jesus as one who denounces misery and pities individuals, religious leaders, and cities who reject Him or His message (Matthew 11:21; 18:7; 23:13; 23:15,16; 23:23; 23:25; 23:27; 23:29; 26:24; Zodiates 1071; Strong's #3759). In both the Books of Matthew and Mark, Jesus pronounces woe on the individual who betrays the Son of Man (Matthew 26:24; Mark 14:21). However, in addition, in the Book of Matthew, Jesus openly condemned the Pharisees and teachers of the law as being evil and reprehensible (American - 'denounces'). In Matthew, Jesus condemned the cities of Korazin and Bethsaida because the people in these cities did not repent when He performed miracles there (Matthew 11:21).

MATTHEW'S PORTRAYAL OF THE DISCIPLES

In the Book of Matthew, the disciples were portrayed as having 'little faith' (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; BurrIDGE 84). The term 'little faith' is used by Jesus to describe the disciples when they were anxious, frightened, or had misunderstood His teaching. In Matthew, on three occasions, the disciples understood Jesus' teaching, which resulted in the disciples' belief and worship of Christ (Matthew 13:16; 16:12; 17:13). However, Mark's accounts of the disciples show them to be "dull" (Mark 3:4; 17:18). Jesus had to explain in detail His teaching to them. The term 'dull' possibly shows that the disciples should have understood what Jesus was teaching them without an explanation. However, there were times when the disciples had small insights into the truth regarding the nature and person of Christ. Yet, these insights did not seem to last long. Peter told Jesus He was the Christ, but a few minutes later Jesus rebuked Peter (Mark 8:29-33; BurrIDGE 84). Additionally, in the Book of Matthew, the disciples received Christ's

teaching instructing them on aspects of their responsibilities and future roles for Christ (Burrige 85). The disciples were to start the church, the new community of God's people (Matthew 16:18-19). They would also have the authority to bind, to loose, and to spread Christ's teaching to the ends of the earth (Matthew 10; 18:18; 28:20; Burrige 85).

The Book of Matthew gives added insight into Judas's actions at the last supper and after Jesus was arrested. Matthew is the only book where Jesus identified Judas as the betrayer at the last supper (Matthew 26:25; Burrige 93). Additionally, Judas is portrayed as having been seized with remorse regarding his actions toward Jesus (Matthew 27:3). The word 'remorse' is the Greek word 'metamelomai', which means "to care afterwards or regret" (Strong's # 3338). It is possible that Judas regretted his actions of betrayal toward Jesus. Matthew shows that in Judas's remorse, he attempted to return the money to the chief priests. When the chief priests did not accept the returned money, Judas left the money in the temple, and went out and hung himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

Matthew indicated the disciples' desire to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1; 20:20). This possibly shows that a competition existed between the disciples. They were possibly concerned with their future heavenly position more than they were concerned with their earthly duties.

MATTHEW'S PORTRAYAL OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, etc.)

The Book of Matthew presents the religious leaders in a very unfavorable light (Burdette). Their sole purpose seemed to be focused on opposing God's will by discrediting and ultimately by putting Jesus to death (Burdette). Matthew described the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders and showed the religious leaders increasing conflict and resistance to Jesus' teaching (Burrige 89). The religious leaders came to Jesus intent on exposing Him as a messianic pretender (Herrick). When the religious leaders came to Jesus, they were testing Him, accusing Him, trying to trap Him, or plotting to kill Him. In both Matthew and Mark, the religious leaders accused Jesus of using Satan's power to accomplish His miracles (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22). In addition, the religious leaders accused Jesus of not knowing the law and violating the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2-10).

In the Book of Matthew, the religious leaders are portrayed as false prophets (Burdette). False prophets are those who reject Christ, God's way of salvation, and actively teach a different form of salvation. Three of the parables taught by Jesus address the issue of the religious leaders being false prophets (Matthew 21:28-32; 23:1-18; Burdette).

In addition, Matthew and Mark portray the religious leaders as willing to combine their efforts with other religious sects to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people (Burdette). The Pharisees conspired together with the Herodians and the Sadducees (Matthew 22:15-16,23-33; Mark 12:13-27). The working together of the religious sects was unusual due to their conflicting beliefs. However, the crusade of discrediting Jesus allowed them to briefly set aside their religious differences and work together for a common cause (Burdette).

Additionally, the Book of Matthew portrays the religious leaders as hypocrites because they fail to follow their own teaching (Matthew 23:4; Ulrich). The religious leaders had a pretense of piety with their long fancy robes and a love to sit at the head of the

table (Matthew 23; Younce). Also, the religious leaders prided themselves on being called 'Rabbi' or 'Father' (Younce). The actions and the hearts of the religious leaders were evil (Matthew 9:4; 12:34,39,45; 16:4; Ulrich). The religious leaders dominated others through the use of unjust power by manmade rules and regulations (Ulrich). The religious leaders are a supreme example of what a disciple of Christ is not to be (Senior). According to Matthew, the religious leaders rejected the Messiah and therefore stand under judgment (Tenants).

LUKE'S PORTRAYAL OF JESUS

The Book of Luke portrays Jesus as the "Son of man" (Adams). The title 'Son of Man' is used in twenty-five places in Luke's book (Bratt). 'Son of man' refers to Jesus' true humanity as well as his Messiah-ship (Psalm 8; Daniel 7:13). In using this title, Jesus identifies Himself with mankind and as the One who God entrusts with His judgment and His kingdom (Bratt).

The Book of Luke portrays Jesus in His humanity. According to the genealogy listed in Luke, Jesus entered history as a human being (Herst). The genealogy of Christ is traced back to Adam, stressing His heritage from a common man (Luke 3:23-38; Son; Herst). In addition, the Book of Luke includes information regarding the lowly family background, the birth, and the boyhood of Christ (Burrige 103; Herst). This information with precise detail establishes Jesus as a person in history (Herst).

In addition, the Book of Luke portrays Jesus as a man of prayer (Hogan). Christ taught others to pray with urgency and demonstrated the importance of prayer through His actions (Constance). In Luke's book, Christ prayed at the baptism, after cleansing the leper, before calling the twelve disciples, at His transfiguration, on the cross for the malefactor, and with His last breath (Constance).

Additionally, the Book of Luke focuses on Jesus' compassion on the poor (Bruzese). Christ is the friend of sinners (Graves). Jesus sought out and ministered to individuals who were the social outcasts of society and had been rejected by the spiritually proud (Paulk; Hogan). Examples of Jesus' compassion can be found in his interaction with Zaccheus, the robber on the cross, and His parables of the prodigal son, the two debtors, and the publican (Foutz).

Luke's book portrays Jesus as mankind's redeemer (Bratt). Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). Christ fulfilled the role of a kinsman-redeemer for all of humanity (Bratt). Luke's book showed Jesus as one who actively loved and sought out people in need to instruct them regarding God's kingdom (Paulk).

In addition, Jesus is portrayed as a prophet (Burrige 109). The baptism of Christ reminds individuals of a prophetic anointing (Luke 3:21-22; Burrige 109). However, Jesus was a rejected prophet (Robredillo). Yet, Luke shows that Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy (Luke 2:11; Adams).

LUKE'S PORTRAYAL OF THE DISCIPLES

Luke's portrayal of the disciples is different than Matthew's or Mark's (Brown). Luke portrays the disciples in a more sympathetic and understanding light (Brown). The disciples in Mark have 'no faith', in contrast to Matthew, who portrays the disciples as having 'little faith' (Burrige 112). However, Luke portrays the disciples as asking Jesus to

"increase their faith" (Luke 17:20; BurrIDGE 112). The disciples' request possibly showed their desire to learn what they did not understand.

Just as in Matthew and Mark, the disciples did not seem to understand everything that Jesus was teaching them (BurrIDGE 112). However, in the Book of Luke, the disciples were asleep in the Garden when Jesus told them to pray because they were "exhausted from sorrow" (Luke 22:45; Brown; BurrIDGE 112). The emotion of sorrow suggests that the disciples did understand in a limited fashion what was going to happen to Jesus.

In addition, the Book of Luke mentions women disciples who were helping to support Christ's work through their own means (Luke 8:1-3; BurrIDGE 113). Matthew and Mark make no specific mention of the women disciples (BurrIDGE 113).

Additionally, Luke is the only book that mentions Satan's involvement with Judas (BurrIDGE 114). Luke details that "Satan entered Judas", enabling him to betray Jesus to the chief priests (Luke 22:3; BurrIDGE 114).

LUKE'S PORTRAYAL OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (PHARISEES, SADDUCEES, SCRIBES, ETC.)

The Books of Mark and Matthew begin Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders in a negative fashion (BurrIDGE 113). However, the Book of Luke begins with three positive encounters with the religious leaders. Simeon and Anna the prophetess were devout worshippers in the temple. Both recognized the baby Jesus as the Savior and praised God (Luke 2:25-38; BurrIDGE 113).

In addition, when Jesus was twelve years old, He debated in the temple with the religious leaders (Luke 2:41-47 BurrIDGE 113). During the Passover, the greatest rabbis of the land would assemble in Jerusalem (Barton 251). The religious leaders were amazed at Christ's understanding and His answers (Luke 2:47; BurrIDGE 113).

Luke's book is the only one that portrays Jesus eating dinner with a Pharisee (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 14:1; BurrIDGE 114). When Jesus joined "Pharisees in table fellowship, it showed He was open to the possibility of the Pharisees joining him in fellowship and service" (Savior). Additionally, in the Book of Luke, some Pharisees warned Jesus about Herod wanting to kill Him (Luke 13:31; BurrIDGE 114). This warning from some of the Pharisees showed that not all the religious leaders were plotting with the Herodians to kill Jesus (Mark 3:6; BurrIDGE 114). However, even though some religious leaders did not want to harm Jesus, others were plotting to destroy Him (BurrIDGE 114). The struggle between Christ and the religious leaders progressed to a dangerous level, which led to Christ's death on the cross (BurrIDGE 114). All three books portray their hatred that led to Christ's death (BurrIDGE 115).

Works Cited:

Adams, Connie. "The Gospel of Luke." [Http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com](http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

"The American Heritage Dictionary" (AHD). 3rd ed., ver. 3.6a (CD-ROM). Cambridge, MA: SoftKey International Inc., 1994.

Barton, Bruce & Comfort, Philip & Osborne, Grant & Taylor, Linda & Veerman, Dave. "Life Application New Testament Commentary." Wheaton, IL.: Tyndale House, 2001.

Bible. "The Believer's Study Bible." Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, 1991.

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." The Bible Library CD-ROM. Oklahoma City: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

Bratt, Bill. "Jesus As Man!" [Http://.zoomnet.net](http://.zoomnet.net); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

Brown, Raymond. "His Simple Truth." [Www.hissimpletruth.com](http://www.hissimpletruth.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

Bruzzese, Michaela. "Living the Word: Wake Up!" [Www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Washington, DC: Sojourners, 2001.

Burdette, Dallas. "False Prophets: Who are They?" [Www.freedominchrist.net](http://www.freedominchrist.net); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

Burridge, Richard A. "Four Gospels, One Jesus?: A Symbolic Reading." Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994.

Chamblin, J. Knox. "Matthew." 'Baker Commentary on the Bible.' Edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1989. pp.719-760.

Constance, N.E. "Gospel of Luke: Lesson 1." [Www.explorerbiblestudy.org](http://www.explorerbiblestudy.org); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. 1998.

Foutz, Scott. "New Testament Study Helps: Luke's Gospel". [Www.theologywebsite.com](http://www.theologywebsite.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Theology Website, 1998-2003.

Graves, David & Graves, Jane. "Gospels." [Www.abu.nb.ca](http://www.abu.nb.ca); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Electronic Christian Media, 1995.

Herrick, Greg. "Jesus and the Religious Leaders." www.bible.org; Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Biblical Studies Foundation, 2000.

Herst, Jim. "Read the Gospels." [Www.wcg.org](http://www.wcg.org); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Worldwide Church of God, 1998.

Hogan, Martin. "The Passion and Death of Jesus." [Www.materdei.ie](http://www.materdei.ie); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

Paulk, DiAnna. "Luke: The Son of Man". [Www.path-light.com](http://www.path-light.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. 1998.

Robredillo, Lope. "The Innocent Righteous One." [Www.tsinoy.com](http://www.tsinoy.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Tsinoy.com, Inc., 1998-2003.

"A Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." [Www.vts.edu](http://www.vts.edu); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

Senior, Donald. "The Gathering Storm." [Www.cptryon.org](http://www.cptryon.org); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Union City, NJ., Passionist Publications, 1997.

"The Son, so it was Thought, of Joseph." [Www.csd.uwo.ca](http://www.csd.uwo.ca); Internet; Accessed in September 2003.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." The Bible Library CD-ROM. Oklahoma City: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"The Tenants in the Vineyard." [Www.wollongong.apanal.org.au](http://www.wollongong.apanal.org.au); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Lectionary Bible Studies and Sermons. Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Services.

Ulrich, Daniel. "Resistance, Reproof, and Love of Enemies in Matthew's Narrative Ethic." [Www.peacetheology.org](http://www.peacetheology.org); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Bienenberg, Switzerland, 2001.

Younce, Max. "Please Explain 'And Call No Man Your Father . . . !'." [Www.heritagebbc.com](http://www.heritagebbc.com); Internet; Accessed in September 2003. Heritage Baptist Bible Church. Walnut Grove, MN, 2002.

Zodhiates, Spiros. "The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament." Chattanooga: AMG, 1992.

Copyrights:

Scriptures taken from Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Copyright © 2019 Tina A. Coddington and Mel W. Coddington, and permission is hereby granted that this document may be used, copied, and distributed non-commercially to non-profit organizations, individuals, churches, ministries, and schools worldwide, provided the copies are distributed at no charge and retain this sources documentation as supplied herein. This document is not for sale, resale, or for use as a gift or premium to be offered in connection with solicitations or contributions.

File name: PortrayalOfJesus,TheDisciples,AndTheReligiousLeaders-Essay.____ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)
Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document
Source: www.BelieverAssist.com