

1. Every author has an intention in writing
  - a. I have talked a lot since I got here about how we must be willing to do more than just read the words of the bible and immediately apply them to ourselves. Basically I have been trying to get out there the idea that the bible isn't just a self-help book for building a better you. And in terms of what it says, you or I aren't the audience the various authors had in mind while writing.
  - b. I bring this up time and time again because what we want is to truly know what the bible says. And in order to do that, we have to spend time getting to know the authors and what it is that the authors wanted to convey.
    - i. Post-modernism devalues the author's intentions. (Joe struggles with the meaning of passages because he is given to a post-modern worldview.)
  - c. A great place to see this is when looking at the gospels- particularly the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). Each gives many of the same accounts. But often those accounts focus on different aspects of Jesus because each author has a slightly different purpose in what they are trying to accomplish. It isn't that they are changing the accounts to fit their goals. It is that they are sharing the details that are relevant to their message.
  - d. Consider the following two accounts of the same story:
    - i. Two friends go out for the evening leaving their wives at home. Upon getting home, each wife asks what the two friends did that night. Friend number one tells his wife that they went to Buffalo Wild Wings, went to the football game, went to BP for gas, and came home.
    - ii. Friend number two tells his wife that they grabbed some wings, headed to BP for a fill-up and a few coffees, went to the football game, stopped by the pro-shop and bought some sweatshirts on the way out, and came home.
    - iii. Do these two accounts constitute the same story? Sure. Is there any reason to assume that one or the other is lying? No. Does the fact that one friend mentions BP last and the other mentions it first mean that we shouldn't trust either account? Absolutely not. Did the first friend lie because he didn't mention the pro-shop? There is no reason to believe that.
  - e. The point is that each person telling a story has an objective and a mind-set. One friend mentioned BP first and the other last, but there is no reason to believe that either one was strictly chronological. Maybe the one friend remembered the stop at BP and added it on at the end. It took place in the evening, but wasn't particularly relevant to the story so chronology didn't matter.
  - f. As for the pro-shop reference, maybe the friend who didn't mention it didn't buy anything. Maybe he bought something for his wife as a gift and didn't tell her because she would find out as a surprise later. There are a dozen other reasons why one friend may have included it and the other left it out.

- g. The point here is that the gospels don't always share the same information but that doesn't mean they aren't true or can't be trusted. It usually reflects the purpose in what each author was trying to convey.
2. Matthew presents Jesus as the new Moses and the new (or true) Israel
- a. As we start a new liturgical year we switch gospels. Now we are back into the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew tends to give us some significant details about Jesus, particularly his early life, that Mark and Luke don't share. But the absence of them in Mark and Luke doesn't mean they aren't true. Instead, we have to understand what Matthew's intent was.
  - b. Matthew goes to great lengths throughout his gospel to show Jesus as the new/true Israel- the fulfillment of everything Israel was called to be yet failed to live up to. Likewise he goes to great lengths to show that Jesus is the new/perfect Moses. Just as Moses was the leader of Israel in her exodus from Egypt, so Jesus is the perfect Moses as the leader of Israel in her exodus from sin.
  - c. It is with that understanding that the events of Matthew 2 are so important, in particular, as we look at the second half of that chapter today.
  - d. In the previous verses, the wise men had come to see baby Jesus to worship him. Herod was the Jewish ruler and King and heard from the wise men that they were seeking a baby (Jesus) to worship him as King of the Jews. This infuriated Herod so he asked the wise men to let him know then they found him- so that he could go worship as well, of course.
  - e. So the wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod because, as it turned out, he had dishonorable intentions. He was king of the Jews and didn't want anyone else threatening his crown- not even a newborn.
  - f. God came to Joseph in another dream and told him to go down to Egypt to protect Jesus as Herod was about to begin a search for him. All of this reflects events in Israel's past. Things happened to Jesus in the same way they did for the Israelites and Moses, and thus God was showing that Jesus was fulfilling the "type" of those events.
    - i. In this case, this directly reflects Moses' infancy in the early chapters of Exodus. Pharaoh had heard a prophecy of an infant that would usurp his throne, so he declared that infant males had to be killed. So Moses' family had to send Moses away to protect him from Pharaoh.
    - ii. Later Moses again had to flee, but was eventually brought back with the words, "those that have sought your life are dead." This is almost word for word what was said to Joseph about Herod's death and being able to bring Jesus back out of Egypt.
    - iii. Of course we are told that Herod killed all of the infant males in Bethlehem to stop this "King of the Jews" from growing up and usurping his crown. Bethlehem was a very small place, so it is likely that Herod only had a 20 or so kids killed- which was small in scale compared to what Pharaoh did. Yet the parallel can't be denied- two kings protecting their power by murdering infants while God intervened and protected the one set aside for the fulfillment of his plans.
  - g. Matthew rounds all of this out with the OT quote that Jesus fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." Matthew was writing as a Jew to a Jewish audience

to show people how Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for, the fulfillment of all OT prophecy. Thus he uses a great number of OT quotes and draws as many parallels as he can from Jesus' life to that of OT events. Here, in addition to this direct parallel with Moses' childhood, we also have a parallel to Israel as a whole being taken into Egypt, later called out of Egypt, and the Passover event with the slaughtering of infants. But the more direct connection Matthew is making is to Moses- which he makes throughout his gospel.

- h. From here Matthew draws another OT quote, this time from Jeremiah about the crying out and mourning at the events that had taken place. In particular, Matthew was referencing the weeping and mourning over Herod's slaughter of the innocents. But the quote is taken from a larger OT context that speaks of suffering with an eye on future redemption, and this is a connection Matthew wanted his readers to make. Despite these early events and trials, ultimately this same baby who was being pursued by Herod would eventually bring the long-awaited redemption of Israel.
  - i. In thinking about Jesus not just as the second Moses but also as the true Israel, consider that he came to deliver Israel once and for all as the fulfillment of all of their hopes. Yet it is the King of the Jews himself, Herod, trying to kill Jesus to stop God from fulfilling his plan. This is no minor point, as it embodies what was wrong in Israel in the first place. Despite Israel looking forward to the fulfillment of God's plans for them, their entire history reflects a people working against that very fulfillment. Thus why Matthew can present Jesus as the new/true/perfect Israel, for as we know from scripture, Jesus lived a life in perfect accordance with the will of the Father.
3. We take part in the new Israel
- a. So Matthew presented Jesus as the new or second Moses (and we will see more of that as we work through his gospel) and as the new or true Israel. Jesus was able to perfectly live and accomplish what Israel as a nation had failed to do throughout its history.
  - b. But this wasn't limited to Israel. We as humans are always at odds with God on our own, no matter how fervently we strive to be otherwise. Thus we too seek and find redemption in the perfection of the new Israel, Jesus Christ. His perfection of God's plans were not just for Israel, but for the whole world. On our own, we are more like Herod, working to thwart the very plans of God that we long for, than we are like Jesus, the one who fulfilled everything according to God's plan.
  - c. And so we must come to Christ, to the second Moses and new Israel and seek not to simply be like him, but to be in him. We come and kneel at his feet, being washed by his blood, so that we can take part in his perfect fulfillment of God's plan. In seeing Matthew's picture of Christ as new Israel we realize that it isn't of our own works that we could ever find favor with God, but in coming to Christ, we take on his works and perfection, so that when we stand before God in the end, he doesn't see us as the old, rebellious Israel of King Herod; but only as the new and perfect Israel embodied in Christ Jesus.