

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 339

Exodus in the Gospel of Matthew

August 29, 2020

Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

We've noted many times how the New Testament draws on the Old Testament for its content. Some books stand out in that regard. The Gospel of Matthew is one of them. Long regarded as the most Jewish gospel due to its numerous hooks into the Old Testament, Matthew was especially fond of the book of Exodus. In this episode, we'll take a trip through Matthew to see how frequently Matthew utilizes Exodus and Moses imagery and episodes in his presentation of Jesus.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 339: Exodus in the Gospel of Matthew. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing this week?

MH: Pretty good. This felt like a fairly normal week. So that's welcome.

TS: Yeah?

MH: No chaos. Just the normal routine.

TS: Yeah. And last weekend, Mike, it was supposed to be our conference. So I shed a little tear about it.

MH: Yeah.

TS: How the world has changed.

MH: Yeah, that's true.

TS: I read an article saying that if there's any industry that may *never* recover, it'll be that one: the convention industry, and all the things that go along with that.

MH: Oh, yeah. Well, for sure... I don't know. Maybe the Democratic National Convention will propel people into coming up with a better idea. Because from everything I hear, that's just really flat. Zoom is just not cutting it.

TS: Yeah. You can't replace face-to-face.

MH: Yeah, that's true.

TS: And if the world stays the same... We'll have to entertain doing a virtual one next year for us, if we can't do a face-to-face one.

MH: Yeah, you never know. We can always learn from what was kind of lame in some of these things that are happening now, and what wasn't so lame. [laughs] "What would you do differently?"

TS: The article I read mentioned that it could go into the late 2020s and the early 2030s before the industry picks back up or recovers. I don't know. It's just depressing.

MH: Yeah.

TS: So that's why we listen to the show, Mike, to not be depressed. Because this show is supposed to lift us up. We need to switch gears here. Well, I notice today we're getting back into Exodus. I'm starting to think that the book of Exodus is kind of important in the Bible here.

MH: Yeah. I knew you were going to say something like that. I fiddled with the idea of chopping these things up and distributing them, but I thought, "No, I want to do something a little bit different today." So today's episode is Exodus and the Gospel of Matthew. I sort of have two goals with this. Slightly different than what we normally do. Not a whole lot, but a little bit. So the first one's kind of obvious. If we're going to do this, I want to show people how the Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus using Exodus and Moses material. The Gospels do this sort of thing routinely. They use the Old Testament in their presentation of Jesus and his mission. And that's the sort of thing we do regularly, even when we're not being intentional about it like we have been over the last few months, deliberately dipping into how the New Testament repurposes the Old.

But what's a little bit different here (I think people might sort of detect) is that I'm going to sacrifice some of the nuts-and-bolts depth of detail and this is going to feel more like a survey. Like to survey this Gospel's use of the Old Testament. And I would hope... I'm not being *this* intentional. I'm not planning on doing this as a series or whatever. I think this will be a periodic thing. But doing this, I think, might actually provide pastors and teachers something of an outline for presenting the material to their people.

So I want to show that using scholarly tools like the journal articles I'll reference in the episode can help a content provider (like a pastor or teacher) zero in on items of interest in a book (in this case). And that'll help people see that the New Testament is connected to the Old Testament and help them see things more as a story that repurposes another story.

So in the future, we're going to dip into Ezekiel. We're not going to stay in Exodus here, because we're doing it as a survey form. But there's lots of stuff going on with Ezekiel. I want to do an episode on the "cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12—dipping into that. But we're still going to do the kind of thing we're doing that's more detailed. But in this case, I just wanted to approach it as a survey and maybe people out there who, "Hey, I need two or three messages over the next month," or whatever, can sort of do a little miniseries on Matthew and connect it back to the Exodus, just to show their people that the New Testament writers do this sort of thing. And it actually helps understand what the Gospel writer is doing and why they're doing it.

5:00

So with that in mind, I am going to be guided by several articles as we are wont to do, to introduce people to other scholars' research that they can tap into themselves (on occasion—some of these are available online). There's going to be at least one commentary here that people could get. But I just want to go truck through Matthew, and we're going to do it quickly. We *are* going to span the book. And so we're going to sacrifice some nuts-and-bolts details. But I think people will find this interesting, just how often Matthew does this sort of thing, specifically with Exodus. He dips into a lot of other places in the Old Testament, but Exodus is a big deal for him.

1. So the first item is the genealogy. It's Matthew 1. Many listeners will already know that the genealogy of Jesus is artificial in its construction. What I mean by that is, it's intentionally not complete. Like, if you compare the names in the genealogy with Old Testament genealogies that include those people, you will notice there are omissions. So there's some intentionality happening on Matthew's part for a specific reason. And of course, the question is, "What is his rationale behind the way he handles the genealogy?"

So Jesus' genealogy is arranged into three groups of 14 names (many listeners will know that), although some would quibble with how consistent the numbering is. (We'll get to that in a moment.) Some see a cryptic message in these three groups of 14, something that we would call gematria (of sorts), or at least relates to gematria. Now R.T. France, in his commentary on Matthew (which people already probably know is a favorite of mine) writes this. He says:

It is often suggested that this [MH: structure of the genealogy] is an example of *gematria*, the Jewish interpretive technique which depended on the numerical value of Hebrew letters: the name David (the fourteenth name in the list) consists

of three Hebrew consonants, DWD, the numerical value of which is respectively 4, 6 and 4, giving a total of 14 [MH: so it's the 14th name and the letters in the name add up to 14]; fourteen is thus the symbolic number of David [MH: and Matthew has three sets of 14 in his genealogy]. For a reader of Matthew's Greek gospel to recognize any such numerical symbolism [MH: Matthew's written in Greek] would have to depend on quite a sophisticated awareness of Hebrew numerology. There is certainly evidence for *gematria* in Jewish and early Christian writings, sometimes involving Hebrew letters, sometimes Greek, but usually it is signaled by an explicit link drawn between the letters and their numerical value. Matthew has made no such explicit connection, and it can be at best a matter of conjecture whether he intended or would have recognized it.

Now I think that's fair, although unfamiliarity doesn't rule it out, either. I think that's equally fair. A writer may do things knowing only a few readers (only sophisticated readers) would pick up on it. For example, would most readers (your average reader of Matthew in the first century) readily see that Matthew can be set in a large chiasm? The whole book can be arranged (and has been arranged by scholars) in chiastic structure. Or that it contains multiple chiastic structures within the big chiasm? Well, nobody's going to notice that. But it is. So the fact that people may not notice something doesn't rule that something out.

But let's stick to the Exodus connections here. If one looks at the context of the names in these three sets of 14, it is noteworthy that from the exile to the birth of Jesus, there are 13 names (not 14). France explains:

To explain the number fourteen in the middle section as therefore the result of two happy accidents also ignores the fact that even so the three groups are not equally balanced: the first group has fourteen names if both Abraham and David are included, the second has fourteen if David is not included again, but after Jehoiachin [MH: that's the point of the exile] there are only twelve names down to Joseph, so that even with the addition of Mary's son there are only thirteen generations in the third group unless Jehoiachin, unlike David, is counted twice.

So it depends how you divide up the names, is France's point. Now I want to bridge that and go to a different source here. This is something I'm going to reference throughout this episode: Wayne Baxter's article, "Mosaic imagery in the Gospel of Matthew." It's a *Trinity Journal* article, volume 20 (1999). This one's available online. All you've got to do is google "Baxter" with some of the title key words and you're going to find it. Baxter takes this "short form" of the 13 names in the last set to say that "by Matthew's reckoning Israel is still in exile." There's a shortening. And so there's a signaling there that something's wrong. If this is all about David, and the messiah is the son of David, to shorten the name list would signal that something is amiss. So Matthew's point would be Jesus, like Moses, is born into an exile context. Here's what Baxter writes, to unwrap this:

10:00

It is an exile into which Christ is born (Matt 1:17b–18a) and out of which he is called by God (Matt 2:15; cf. Hos 11:1). Matthew's perception of Israel's sustained exile aligns closely with the prophets, who frequently use exile/exodus imagery...

So, for instance, he cites Isaiah 10, Isaiah 43, Jeremiah 2, Jeremiah 11, Ezekiel 20, Hosea 2. Those prophets, when they talk about the exile (the whole problem), they use stuff from the book of Exodus. Why? Because Israel, in the book of Exodus, when it starts, is in exile. They're in bondage. They're in a foreign land. They need to be delivered. That's the whole point of the book of Exodus. So Baxter then refers to France (this is a different book from the commentary I just referenced) and quotes him as saying:

"The prophets frequently looked forward to a 'repetition of the acts of God.' The Exodus especially provided a model for prophetic predictions both of acts of deliverance within the national history of Israel, and of the more glorious eschatological work of God..."

That's from *Jesus and the Old Testament*. Now this is Baxter's view of how the author is initially going to telegraph that there's something amiss, even up to this point in history—in the whole history of Israel transmitted or described through the genealogies here. It doesn't quite work out. And so his argument is that Matthew does that intentionally leading up to Jesus to show that Jesus (the one whose genealogy this is) is born into exile.

Now I would say, to understand this we sort of have to get the exile into our heads—how a first century Jew would look at this. Because most evangelicals would say, "Didn't the exile end? They returned from Babylon, right?" Yeah, two tribes. But that is not how an Israelite, even if you were living in those two tribes, defined the end of the exile. The Persian return did not end the exile. There were only two tribes. If you look at Ezekiel 37:15-28, it's very clear that the return from exile (the end of the exile, the forgiveness of God for the national apostasy) results in a return of *all* of the tribes (not just two). Plus, if you look at descriptions of the return or the solution to the exile (the end of the exile), there's no Day of the Lord that happens in the first century. There's no New Jerusalem. This is the kind of stuff the prophets described. And if you're a first century Jew, you ain't seen any of that. You certainly didn't see it in the Persian era. So as far as they were concerned, they're still unforgiven. They're still in need of atonement because the Lord had not returned to dwell with his people, a la Leviticus 26, which describes why the exile would happen, and if there was repentance, what would happen in response. They've not seen any of this. Leviticus 26 forecasts the exile due to apostasy and then describes God's forgiveness and restoration, where God returns to dwell with his people. They have not seen any of that and didn't in the Persian era.

And so what this means is that Matthew wanted his first century readers, who were still psychologically and spiritually in exile, (here's the key point) to be expecting a new exodus from exile when Jesus was born. "We're still in exile. The messiah, son of David, the new Moses..." Because Matthew is going to spend a lot of the rest of the book describing Jesus as the new Moses. And so they're supposed to listen to this (or read it) and expect a new Exodus. This is how Matthew starts off his book.

15:00

2. Now the second thing is when you get past the genealogy, you get the birth and the infancy story. This one's kind of obvious. There's a clear resemblance between Herod's attempt to kill Jesus as a baby and the story of the Hebrew newborn/infant boys killed by the pharaoh in the first two chapters of Exodus. That's easy. It's hard to miss that. The parallel is explicitly telegraphed in Matthew 2:15, where Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1. "Out of Egypt I have called my son." Because the baby Jesus and his parents... The angel tells them to go to Egypt. And when it's okay, they come back. And Matthew has this quotation. "Out of Egypt I have called my son." It's a direct linkage of what's going on by analogy to the Exodus. Israel in Hosea 11:1 (the passage Matthew quotes) is "son of God." Israel was called the son of God in Exodus 4:23. This is the whole point. So there's a parallel between Israel as the son of God and Jesus as the son of God. Now Baxter writes of this verse... And he kind of focuses on or draws attention to some of the Greek text. Baxter says this:

Matthew writes that, after the death of Herod, an angel tells Joseph to take the child and his mother back to Israel, τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (*tethēkasin gar hoi zētountes tēn psychēn autou* - "for those seeking his life are dead" [2:20]). This is nearly identical [MH: the Greek is nearly identical, so Matthew's going to be using the Septuagint] to Exod 4:19, where God tells Moses, [MH: there's only one difference in the Greek wording here] τεθνήκασιν γὰρ πάντες οἱ ζητοῦντες σου τὴν ψυχὴν (*tethēkasin gar pantes hoi zētountes sou tēn psychēn* - "for all those seeking his life are dead"). Thus, as at the end of the opening narrative of Exodus, Matthew's readers, at the end of the infancy narrative, are left anticipating a new exodus, i.e., they are left anticipating the rise of a new deliverer to lead Israel out of exile."

Because "the ones who sought his life are dead," just like Moses. If they know the Exodus story, they're going to read this line and they're going to remember Exodus 4:19. They're going to remember the same verbiage. The last line, of course, of Baxter's quote is the takeaway. This would be easy to teach people about what's going on in the story, by connecting these two things: Matthew's presentation and the Exodus. Why? Why would Matthew do that? Because Jesus is the new Moses, and this is going to be a new Exodus. It's also going to be the end of exile, because that's what the condition was for Israel in Egypt. They were in exile. They were not in Canaan. They were not in the Promised

Land. They were prisoners. They were slaves in this other place—all these themes connecting together through the use of the Exodus story.

3. The third element (we're just trucking through Matthew) is Matthew 3:13-17. This is the baptism of Jesus. And I discussed this in *Unseen Realm*, so I'm not going to spend much time on it here. The presentation of the baptism of Jesus uses Exodus imagery. It's the passing through the water. And it uses the passing through the water... Israel goes through the water and becomes a new nation. They're delivered. There's a new birth idea going on there. They've got to pass through the water to get to where God is, at Sinai, to receive the covenant—all this sort of stuff. Again, I discuss it in the book. So Matthew uses this imagery. And in Jesus' case, when he gets baptized, this is a public event. It's not done in secret. It's a public declaration that Herod's plot to kill him years earlier had failed. I mean, he's been living in total obscurity. I mean, nobody knows really even about this kid who was born, except, okay, there's the shepherds and then they talk about the angels appearing to them. And then everybody's got to wonder, "Who's this kid? Where is he?" They might connect an edict by Herod to kill the young boys with this birth. Maybe they'll make that connection. But at any rate, nobody knows where he is. He goes down to Egypt, he comes back, and then he grows up in his house with Mary and Joseph. Joseph is a carpenter. He's in obscurity. He's not doing anything public until this point. And when he does this... The way Matthew presents what's going on here, it's like, "Oh! Okay. Herod tried to kill Moses. And now we've got the same situation here. Jesus is the new Moses." He comes out of obscurity. The plot to kill him had failed. Here he is, after years of not knowing where he is. Because Moses, of course, escapes, goes to Horeb, and then Midian, and then all the way back. So again, you have these parallels.

20:00

4. Four, you have the temptation in the wilderness. Now we've already spent a good deal of time on this one as well. We did that episode on Psalm 91, which is quoted in the second of three temptations that Satan puts to Jesus. However, we want to focus on the Mosaic elements here. The parallel up front is pretty obvious. In Matthew 4, the son of God is sent out into the wilderness to be tested. Well, that's what happened in the Exodus story. Israel is called God's son (son of God). The corporate son of God (Israel) went out, passed through the sea, and out into the wilderness. Just like after the baptism, Jesus goes into the wilderness. After the passing through the sea, they're out in the wilderness.

As Baxter notes, even before Sinai, the people were tempted by hunger. Think about the Israel story, on their way to Sinai. Exodus 16, they complain that they don't have enough to eat (or they complain about what they have to eat). So they're tempted by hunger. They're also tempted to test God in Exodus 17. (This is the rock incident.) At Sinai, Israel then gets tempted into idolatry. (It's the golden calf episode.) Now if all that sounds familiar (temptation linked to hunger, temptation linked to testing God, temptation linked to bowing down to another

god) in your memory of Jesus' temptation, it's supposed to. That's the point. Here's Baxter's summary of this:

Whereas God's firstborn son [MH: Israel] failed in the wilderness, Jesus, the Son par excellence, emerges from his wilderness period in victorious obedience to God. The Evangelist [MH: Matthew] is careful to parallel Jesus' wilderness experience with Israel's. First, like Israel, Jesus is in the desert for a period of time marked by the number forty ("forty days and forty nights"). Jesus is tempted with hunger, but unlike Israel, he resolutely clings to God's Word for his sustenance. He is tempted to test God, but unlike the first son, he chooses to trust and obey. He is tempted to commit idolatry but instead chooses to serve and worship God. Hence, Jesus proves to be the true Son of God by his perfect obedience to the Father (which is again tested near the end of his earthly ministry; cf. 27:40). The temptation pericope demonstrates that Jesus' Sonship is not merely ontological [MH: who he is] but functional [MH: as well]. Jesus is the true Son of God because he obeys God perfectly. It is precisely at this point that the Son of God and Servant themes intersect. These themes first converged in 3:17, where the heavenly voice [MH: at Jesus' baptism] doubly alluded to Ps 2:7 and Isa 42:1 [MH: which is one of the servant songs]. Ps 2:7 refers to Jesus' Sonship while Isa 42:1 refers to his servanthood. Jesus' Sonship, then, is superior to Israel's both ontologically (Israel was God's son by adoption but Jesus by nature) and functionally (Israel was disobedient but Jesus was perfectly obedient). Clearly for Matthew, then, the first son merely pointed to the last Son. The first exodus, led by Moses and ending in failure, anticipated the final exodus accomplished by Jesus, who never fails.

Now the fact that Jesus cites Deuteronomy in all three temptations (along with Psalm 91 in the second temptation, as we covered before) is noteworthy. Again, this is Mosaic stuff.

Now I'm going to bring up another source here. This is Michael Morris. There's an article called "Deuteronomy in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation..." He's going to compare the temptation accounts of Matthew and Luke. "Deuteronomy in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation in the Light of Early Jewish Anti-Demonic Tradition." This is an article from *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78.2 (2016). Now Morris in this article adds some thoughts to the temptation that dip into the Deuteronomy stuff. He writes this:

Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-2). The subsequent depiction at its most basic level is of a righteous figure who is confronted by demonic temptation. Jesus is faced with three separate enticements, each of which challenges in some way the nature of his "sonship" and mission. Jesus is portrayed as responding to each temptation with scriptural

25:00

citations from Deuteronomy. In Matthew the order is Deut 8:3; 6:16; and 6:13, while Luke reverses the order of 6:16 and 6:13.

Jesus, like the Israelites, is tested in the wilderness, and commentators have long noted that the temptation is a recapitulation [MH: a repetition] of the original wilderness accounts. Quoting from Deuteronomy accentuates this recapitulation and depicts Jesus as a representative of the true Israel; he is faithful to the Torah, whereas the people of Israel are not...

A final parallel that suggests that the temptation is a recapitulation of the Israelites in the wilderness is the correspondence of the types of tests faced. Yet, whereas the Israelites fail their tests, Jesus prevails. When Jesus is hungry (Matt 4:2-4; Luke 4:2-4), he does not grumble against God as Israel does (Exodus 16; Numbers 11) but rather relies on God for sustenance. Whereas Israel puts Yhwh to the test (Exod 17:7), Jesus refuses to do so (Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12). Jesus' repudiation of idolatry (Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8) calls to mind Israel's weakness in this matter (Exodus 32). The allusion in Jesus' temptation to Israel's wilderness wanderings is, according to some, made explicit by Jesus' quotations from the law [MH: of Moses] in response to Satan...

Now the effect of this should be obvious. It's a deliberate, intentional contrast between Jesus' victory with Israel's failure. One son of God succeeds; the other one failed. The earlier one failed. Even under Moses' leadership Israel failed. And Moses himself will also fail toward the end of his life, if you remember. Jesus does not. This Son of God and this new Moses will succeed. It's as though Satan knows the earlier Son of God was weak along certain lines and tries the same lines with this one. And he meets his match this time. And, as noted in our Psalm 91 episode, Satan learns *nothing* about God's plan in the exchange.

Now one additional note on the temptation and Moses connections. This is from another source. This is an article by Daniel Gurtner. It's called "'Fasting' and 'forty nights': The Matthean temptation narrative and Moses typology." This comes from a book. The book is entitled *What Does Scripture Say?: Studies in the function of Scripture in early Judaism and Christianity, Vol. 1, The Synoptic Gospels*. Now Gurtner's focus is specifically the forty (the forty days and the forty nights). He writes this:

All three Synoptics record Jesus' being in the wilderness forty days (Mark 1:13//Matt 4:2//Luke 4:2), but they differ in other points... Matthew's rendering is expansive on several important fronts. First, he explicitly mentions Jesus fasting and emphatically repeats his lack of sustenance... [W]hereas Mark/Luke both read the *tempting* as lasting 40 *days*, Matthew explicitly says it was the *fasting* which lasted that long. Moreover, his expansion includes not only forty days, as in Mark

and Luke, but also forty nights. The primary question raised here, however, is: Why the inclusion of “fasting” and the expansion to include “and forty nights”?

Why does Matthew do this? Now Gurtner is going to argue that these features were prompted by two references concerning Moses: Exodus 34:28 (so there’s our Exodus connection) and Deuteronomy 9:9. In both of those, we read that Moses ate nothing for forty days and forty nights. Here’s the observation. In both these scenes (quoting Gurtner again)...

... Moses is presented not as the “Law-giver” but as the “Law-receiver” and, more specifically, as a “mediator” [MH: of the law, a mediator of the covenant] ... the primary typology in view is one of covenant mediation. We will see that even Jesus’ quotations from Deuteronomy in response to his tempter likewise draw from a covenant mediating context.

Gurtner is trying to make the point that Moses in these two episodes was not a Law-giver but a Law-receiver or covenant mediator on behalf of Israel. He discusses both of those elements, and here’s his conclusion. He says:

This is not to deny Jesus as a Mosaic Law-giver in Matthew.

You’re going to get the Sermon on the Mount. You’re going to get some of that.

It is instead to attend carefully to how Jesus is portrayed in the temptation narrative and to make sense of his Mosaic typology in the rest of Matthew. Perhaps this, in some sense, anticipates the events of Matt 26:28, where Jesus institutes [MH: he mediates] the new covenant in his blood, poured out for many for the remission of sins.

Now to summarize that, if you’re thinking of Moses in these two scenes as a covenant receiver, and then he mediates it.... He’s the intercessor between God and Israel, that involves this covenant with the nation. If you’re thinking of Moses in that way in those two episodes, and you notice that in both those episodes we have this fasting and the forty nights, and then you notice that Matthew includes both elements (whereas the other Gospels don’t), that telegraphs that Matthew is trying to connect Jesus to Moses as the mediator of a covenant (specifically, this one is the new covenant).

30:00

5. Number five, the Sermon on the Mount. This is Matthew 5-8. Baxter writes this:

The setting of Jesus’ first detailed proclamation in Matthew’s gospel seems reminiscent of Moses on Sinai for several reasons.

Okay. We have the Sermon on the [pause]... Mount. Okay. Baxter says:

First, the Evangelist begins the pericope by stating that Jesus [MH: went up onto a mountain] ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος – *anebē eis to oros* (5:1).

He goes up on a mountain. Okay? Now Baxter cites other scholars (Luz and Allison) who contend that the phrase should likely be associated with the ascent of Moses on Mount Sinai. Now just catch this. Allison (who is cited by Baxter in his article) in particular notes that the phrase “appears twenty-four times in the LXX...” So *anebē eis to oros*. He went up on a mountain. Okay? That phrase appears 24 times in the Septuagint,

...eighteen of which are in the Pentateuch. Fourteen of these refer to Sinai, with eleven applying directly to Moses. Thus, the phrase, while not exclusively Mosaic, would seem to be a predominantly Sinaitic motif.

“Sinaitic” refers to Sinai and Moses. So again, we’re just trucking through Matthew. And I would say to this, “Well, what could be more obvious? The new Moses (Jesus) goes up on a mountain or a hill. *Oros* can refer to the same thing. There’s no foot scale to the term. The new Moses goes up on the mountain to give people God’s word. What could be more transparent and obvious? But we don’t think about the Sermon on the Mount that way. But the point is that Matthew’s audience would have.

6. Number six, Feeding of the Five and then the Four Thousand. This is Matthew 14 and then Matthew 15. Now these episodes have an obvious connection to Moses and Exodus: the miraculous manna—the miraculous feeding. Baxter again summarizes. He writes:

Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves of bread is reminiscent of Moses’ giving the Israelites manna (Exodus 16). The strength of Mosaic imagery here lies not in any specific linguistic parallels but solely in the nature of the miracle itself, viz., the supernatural appearance of bread. The miracle of manna (which God called “bread from heaven” [Exod 16:4]), was forever etched in the hearts of Jews (cf. Ps 78:23–25; 105:40; Neh 9:15; John 6:14, 31). It is clear from John’s account of the feeding that when the multitudes saw the miraculous multiplication of loaves they immediately connected it with Moses’ manna miracle...

The people in the scene actually connect it to Moses and manna. Then Baxter quotes John 6:14 here.

Therefore, when the people saw the sign he did, they said, “Truly this is the prophet who is to come into the world” (John 6:14).

Again, the prophet like unto Moses—drawing on that. So the Feeding of the Five and Four Thousand have a direct Mosaic Exodus connection.

7. Number seven, the Transfiguration (Matthew 17). I'm going to read Matthew 17 just because I think in this instance it'll be useful to have it in our head. I think you'll be able to pick out some things right away. Matthew writes:

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

So there's the Transfiguration account. Now there are some things that will immediately pop out. I'm just going to list them. I mean, Baxter references a number of these story elements. So I'm just going to give you a bullet point list here. It's obviously connected to Moses, because Moses is in the story. That's the one that sticks out the most. But here's the list:

35:00

- The Transfiguration occurs on a "high mountain." Now again, you're supposed to be thinking of Sinai, but what's the mountain from *Unseen Realm*? If you haven't read that, you can find the discussion there. It's Hermon. So what we have here is we have a contrast between Mount Hermon and Sinai, which takes us ultimately back to Psalm 68 as well, which is the mountain of Bashan, and guess what, that's the region where we're at. I don't specifically draw the Exodus material into *Unseen Realm*, but there it is.
- Next you have a mention of "after six days" in Matthew 17:1, right at the outset. Now that's reminiscent of Exodus 24:16, where "the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai for six days." Again, it's just a numerical connection.
- Third, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up to the mountain. That is reminiscent of Moses taking Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu up Mount Sinai in Exodus 24.

- Fourth, Matthew 4:2 has Jesus' face "shining like the sun." Moses' face also shone after a trip to Sinai (Exodus 34:30).
- Fifth, the cloud in Matthew 17:5 reminds us of the cloud that covered Sinai (Exodus 24:15–18), and the voice of God coming out of the cloud reminds us of God's call to Moses out of a cloud in Exodus 24:16.
- Sixth, God says, out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased," which takes us back to Matthew 3:13–17, which is his baptism, which again has very obvious new exodus motifs. So there's an interconnection there.
- And then lastly, the phrase "listen to him" in Matt 17:5 positions Jesus as a prophet. He's a spokesman for God and may, therefore, be an allusion to Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses tells the people that when God raises up a new prophet like him, "to him you shall listen." And it's the same verb ("listen," the command) in the Septuagint as we get in Matthew 17:5.

Again, there's the whole list right there for the Transfiguration. Let's move on.

8. Number eight, the Last Supper. This is Matthew 26. This is our last one. The Last Supper (Matthew 26). This was a Passover (I think most listeners will know that) and, thus, there is an explicit connection to Exodus and Moses. Because that's the Passover. Baxter quotes D.A. Carson's Matthew commentary here. It's a nice quote.

As the bread has just been broken, so will Jesus' body be broken; and just as the people of Israel associated their deliverance from Egypt with eating the paschal meal prescribed as divine ordinance, so also Messiah's people are to associate Jesus' redemptive death with eating this bread by Jesus' authority.

Again, we don't have to belabor the point here between Jesus, the new covenant, the Last Supper, and Passover. I mean, that's well-traveled territory. But we've just gone through Matthew. This is the whole point of the exercise. I wanted to do something a little bit different in this episode, sacrificing some of the density and detail for just the coverage. And hopefully those of you who listen to this can repurpose this episode in your own preaching and teaching. That's the whole point. I just wanted to try it and see if it's helpful.

So the overall point to make here is look for the Old Testament as you read the New Testament. This is what we've been trying to do in recent episodes. And I think if you preach this kind of content intentionally... If you preach this kind of content or teach it to your people and reinforce the idea over and over and over ("Hey, Matthew's dipping into Exodus! Jesus is the new Moses. This is the new Exodus, the new deliverance.") and all these connections between the Exodus

40:00

material (the Exodus event and, of course, Moses), that people will start learning to think this way by example. People need to be trained to ask these kinds of interpretive questions. Look for the Old Testament as you read the New Testament. People in your church can obviously read these episodes and understand their basis. There's no impediment just to picking up your English Bible and reading any one of these chapters in Matthew. I get it. But the Old Testament component in all of them teaches and reinforces the superiority of Jesus to Moses and his superiority to the Torah. *That* is their context. It's also their importance to Matthew's audience. Jesus is to be our focus. Not the Law, not Moses.

And let me just add, we're reading *Matthew* here: the most Jewish Gospel. We're not reading Paul. There are some out there who think this emphasis on Jesus' superiority is a Pauline invention or trajectory, and that we need to go get back to the Law and all this... Look, this is Matthew—*Matthew*—making exactly the same point that Paul does. And Matthew makes the same point over and over and over in his Gospel. I just don't know how much clearer he could be. And for his first century audience (he's writing to the Jewish community to convince them that Jesus was the messiah), these points are unmistakable. You can't miss them, if you know the Exodus material, if you know the Torah material. They are un-missable. And so I think that's something we need to get into our heads. It puts a new layer to this whole thing about the Christians' relationship to the Law. It's not this "all or nothing, just drop everything, and we don't have any ethical basis now for anything we do." That's ridiculous. Neither Matthew would say that, nor would Paul say that. No place in the New Testament is going to make this an all-or-nothing proposition. But what every place in the New Testament *will* do is say that Jesus is superior to Moses and to the Torah. And again, it really packs a wallop when you link it to *the* most Jewish book in the whole New Testament, and that is the Gospel of Matthew.

TS: Alright, Mike. I really liked this episode for sure. Man, what a concept. If pastors out there teach by example and start connecting these dots with the Old Testament and show how it impacts the New Testament, that would be awesome. And if anybody out there *does* use this episode to do that, we would love your feedback on how it goes.

MH: Yeah. I mean, this episode to me is just giving people a bit of a road map. You know, here it is. Have a series on it. Any one of these things.

TS: Yeah, absolutely. Well, hopefully we're going to have more of these.

MH: We'll do it again. We'll certainly do something like this again.

TS: I know you mentioned some other topics that are coming our way. Do you have any idea about next week?

MH: I think next week I'm going to do the Cloud of Witnesses passage from Hebrews 12. We did a series on Hebrews and we talked about some of these things before. But I just think it needs to be developed a little bit more and with a specific eye to connecting things back into the Old Testament. So I think it's worth revisiting for that point as part of this (sort of) series.

TS: Love it. Alright, we'll be looking forward to that, Mike. With that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.