

The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel

John P. Meier



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In this volume Father Meier explores how Matthew remodeled the form, the Christological message, and the moral demand of the gospel. Part I shows Matthew's church in crisis. It was experiencing a shift in its Christian existence: from a narrow Jewish-Christian past to a universal Gentile future. To preserve yet reinterpret the particularistic traditions of that Jewish-Christian past, Matthew drew up a model of salvation history and then reshaped the gospel message to fit it. Part II offers a mini-commentary on the whole gospel to illustrate this reshaping of the message. Pericope by pericope, Matthew presents Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man, and therefore as 'the' definitive teacher of his Church. Indeed, the nexus between Christ and his Church emerges as the outstanding characteristic of Matthew's gospel. Part III studies Matthew's construction of a unified moral vision on the basis of this connection between Christ and Church. The basic stance of Jesus and his disciples towards the Mosaic Law is one of fulfillment - a 'prophetic' fulfillment which involves at times a deepening of, at times the abrogation of, the letter of the Law.

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