

**The Gospel of Matthew: Study Questions**  
**Hum 110, Reed College**  
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1. Jesus as the Fulfillment of Prophecy. As you read the Gospel of Matthew, make a note in your bible (or make a separate list) of all of the instances in which Matthew says that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament Prophecy. Choose five of them according to your interests. Look them up in the Old Testament (a study bible should supply the reference) and ask what meaning they have in the original context. Does Matthew's use of Old Testament prophecies seem "natural" or "forced"? In other words, do his re-interpretations seem to grow out of and hence be natural extensions of the original meaning of the prophecies or does he wrench them out of context and give them strange and unnatural twists? On the basis of your answers, come to a preliminary judgment of how effectively the Old and New Testaments come together to make an internally coherent and stylistically consistent book.

2. Gospel as Literary Genre. During the first two centuries of the Christian era many gospels were written. Four came to be recognized by the church as reliable biographies of Jesus. What are the narrative and stylistic hallmarks of this genre? Outline the plot of Matthew. What are the turns? What is the climax? What is the denouement (the wrapping up)? Bring this to the level of abstraction--in other words, what is the archetypal or mythical plot here? How is Jesus the hero characterized? Does he grow, learn anything, or undergo a transformation in the course of the story? What role do Jesus' sidekicks play in the narrative? What is the attitude of the narrator toward them? Who are Jesus antagonists? Are they all bad or do they possess good traits as well?

3. Matthew as Theology. What is Jesus' role in the world? What is his relationship to the Law--the "ancient and unchangeable source of authority"? How does this divine figure compare to the God of the Old Testament? Does Jesus promise to do anything new for us? What is our relationship to God and Jesus? How is this relationship formulated in the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 24? What are the predecessors for this relationship in the Hebrew materials we have read so far? Christians often refer to the covenant between Abraham and God as the "covenant of works" and the covenant between man and Christ as the "covenant of faith." What is the difference between the two covenants?