

ABSTRACT

The Abrahamic covenant and the nations tradition is a key to understanding Matthew's schema of Jewish salvation history: beginning with Abraham and culminating in Jesus Christ. Evident in Jesus' designation as υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ (1:1), Jesus' genealogy (1:2-17), Jesus' interaction with a Gentile Centurion (8:5-13), and Jesus' two commissions to his disciples (10:5-15; 28:18-20), this tradition depicts Matthew's twofold (centripetal-centrifugal) plan of salvation history: (1) the restoration of Israel, and (2) the inclusion of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (cf. Gen 12:2-3).

Although a lack of consensus surrounds the beginning and end of Matthew in regards to the meaning and significance of Matthew 1:1 (Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ) and the identity of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Matthew 28:19, Matthean scholarship has not fully grasped the significance of the Abrahamic covenant for the Gospel. First, Matthean Christology has primarily focused its attention on Jesus' designation as Χριστός (Christ or Messiah) and υἱὸς Δαυίδ with little attention given to Jesus' identification as υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ that extends beyond the initial chapter(s). Second, Matthew's outlook concerning Gentiles or nations seems somewhat contradictory with both negative and positive statements concerning their inclusion into Jewish salvation history and Jesus' missional strategy (10:5-6; 28:18-20): David Sim, Anthony Saldarini and Warren Carter propose a negative portrayal of the nations by emphasizing a number of hostile sayings from Jesus (5:46-47; 6:7-8, 31-32; 18:15-17; 20:19), the Gadarenes and swine (8:28-34), Jesus' first commission (10:1-42), and the Canaanite woman (15:21-28) while Meier, Byrne, Hare and Harrington, Levine, and Senior propose a positive view by citing the Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy (1:2-17), the Magi (2:1-12), Jesus' ministry in "Galilee of the Gentiles" (4:15-16), the Centurion (8:5-13) and Jesus' second commission (28:18-20).

Matthew's identification of Jesus as υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ and other connections with the Abrahamic covenant and nations tradition—the formation of a great nation and blessing all the nations of the earth—have not been fully recognized or explored in the Gospel (cf. Gen 12:2-3; 18:18). Filling this vacuum, this thesis proposes that the Abrahamic covenant and nations tradition is found in Matthew and signals a twofold (centripetal-centrifugal) schema of Jewish salvation history (1:1-17; 8:5-13; 28:18-20; cf. 10:5-15).