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Leadership in Matthew’s Gospel: Jesus Trains His Disciples to Become Transformational Leaders and Spread the Gospel to All Nations (A Socio-Rhetorical Approach to the Sermon on the Mount, Mt 5-7)

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Matthew presents his readers with a vastly different style of leadership than that exercised by the Roman Empire administration. His style also veers in a different direction from the aspirations of the Jewish people in the first century AD. As a refugee, Jesus comes from a humble background, but he has a strong moral vision. Thus, he interprets the Law and the Prophets more accurately than do the scribes and Pharisees. Love and justice are an essential aspect of his teaching. Having effectively fought the devil’s traps seeking to undermine his moral character, Jesus teaches, inspires, and trains his disciples to transform them into the kind of leader he wants them to be. These new leaders will be ambassadors of the Gospel to Israel (Mt 10:4-24) and all nations (Mt 28:19). Using a socio-rhetorical approach, we thus examine how Jesus distinguishes himself as a leader. We focus on the Sermon on the Mount, examining how his disciples receive this discourse and how Jesus uses it to develop new leaders. Finally, we introduce the distinctive aspects of Jesus’ understanding of leadership. We believe Matthew can provide a wealth of valuable insight into the concept of leadership from a biblical and Christian

perspective.

Christians are those who choose to follow one person, Jesus of Nazareth, the one who proved himself a true leader through his life and death and continues to manifest himself through the instrument of the church (ecclesia). In this article, we trace the course of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew because this Gospel, which contains the word ecclesia, has profoundly influenced the preaching and life of the church over the years. It can thus be viewed as a manual for future leaders. The following verses conclude this first book of the New Testament: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20 ESV).¹

The disciples of Jesus witnessed throughout the Roman Empire. They did not wait for others to ascend to the holy mountain to offer their honor to the God of the exodus, the one whom the prophets of Israel had proclaimed (Isa. 60). Instead, they moved out into the world. Despite the dangers and risks (Mt 10:16), they spread the light of his glory with their actions and words, while also learning from the others about the “unknown god” (Acts 17:23), who is everywhere (Acts 17:28).

Their mission was unique. Unlike the journey of Odysseus, which ends with a return to Ithaca and his wife Penelope, the journey these disciples took to the end of the inhabited earth had no return. It was akin to the “archetypical” journey of Abraham and Sarah, the ancestors of Jesus. The disciples of Jesus and Paul established small communities throughout the Mediterranean, disseminating faith in accordance with their “national identity” without any nostalgia for their fatherland. Quite the contrary, they lived a life of perpetual jet lag, awaiting God’s new world of love and freedom—the “kingdom of heaven” as Matthew’s Gospel uses the term—to be established on earth. As a result, the communities they formed became known for amalgamation and diversity, a significant but often overlooked fact.

While the name Matthew in Hebrew means “gift of God” (*Mattityahu*), Matthew himself was a tax collector, a *publicanus* (Mt 9:9, 10:3). As evidenced indirectly by the text, he was also a Jew who worked not in the countryside but in the towns. His profession was notorious in ancient times because the Jews resented paying taxes to the Romans. It also called for the management of businesses such as brothels, which catered to the Roman invaders’ officials and soldiers by offering them prostitutes. Tax collectors were thus sinners in the eyes of most Jews. However, they did have management skills. Matthew not only had to organize in the best possible way the collection of taxes, but he also had access to valuable—and in some cases, perhaps even confidential—information.

Surprisingly or not, Matthew retained the disposition of a manager even after his conversion. His writing shows a special love for (a) the systematic organization of

¹. In ancient Greek “μαθητεύσατε” (Mt 28:19) can mean “make disciples” but also “be apprenticed.”

material,² (b) numbers, and (c) rewards and penalties. At the same time, his Gospel is also distinctive because of its “poetry” (in the broadest sense), vivid images,³ and emphasis on total forgiveness. His Gospel is primarily addressed to Jews who had suffered terrible mental and physical violence having been uprooted from their homeland after the fall of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 and transported to Antioch of Syria, in miserable conditions.

His text, which may have been derived from a Jewish proto-version, draws parallels to the Dead Sea Scrolls and similarly denounces the Pharisees and the Jerusalem high priests. Nevertheless, instead of writing a *logia* of Jesus’ sayings or a manual of discipline for the church,⁴ Matthew prefers to incorporate the Lord’s words and instruction for the church into a history, applying the principles of storytelling.

Aside from its content, Matthew’s Gospel can thus be read as a reminder of the value of narratives in conveying a message. It is not the commands or criticism of authority figures that change history over time, and not even the wars between nations, but the stories that people tell—the narratives that spark the imagination, provoke thought, and create participation in the narrated event. The myths we share and those with which we have been raised often deliver a significant dose of truth and a message that is more readily retained than simple historical facts. For this reason, the entire Bible, especially Matthew, conveys the great truths—the *instructions for existence*—not with a list of obligations from our “maker God” but with stories in which dialogue and action dominate, while didacticism and moralism are absent. The characters in these narratives—the role models such as Abraham and David to which we are meant to aspire—rarely adhere to the “black and white” paradigm of their Western equivalents. Instead, they are multifaceted, multilayered individuals with terrible failures and paradigmatic “resurrections.”

However, to understand these long narratives in our era, dominated as it is by slogans and images, so that we can finally draw fruitful conclusions about leadership, it is necessary to understand that the original texts were not initially structured into chapters and verses that break up the narrative. Neither were they meant to be read in piecemeal fashion, but as a whole, in “concert,” so to speak, and in community instead of individually. In terms of leadership language, the inference is evident: Attentive, active listening jointly with others synchronizes the hearts and actions of the team.

Of course, to impress an audience with the creative “long” memory of a narrative and to extract fruitful patterns capable of changing dispositions, several conditions are needed: artistry on the part of the animator-leader; openness on the part of the audience; a special textual arrow-like design with repetitions, breaks, periods of silence,

². In ancient Greek, this was called “economy.”

³. Cf. Barbara E. Reid, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005), 111.

⁴. The Community Rule, which was discovered in Qumran, served as a manual for the people residing in the Qumran community. They relied on this document as a guidebook to navigate their way of life.

indirect or direct references (hyperlinks) to other texts (intertextual and intratextual); and intermezzos. These all aid in memorization.

Chiasmus is a memorization technique that was featured in antiquity. It appeals to our brain function through repetition and the strengthening of specific patterns in its second part. In the case of Matthew's Gospel, a structure is evident whereby teaching alternates harmoniously with narration, and the action is mainly healing and not punitive, vastly unlike a scenario involving Moses and his plagues,⁵ for instance. In the center of the grand narrative—the heart of the big story—there are small stories, and these are the parables. Figure 1 presents the chiastic structure of Matthew's Gospel based on C. H. Lohr's research.

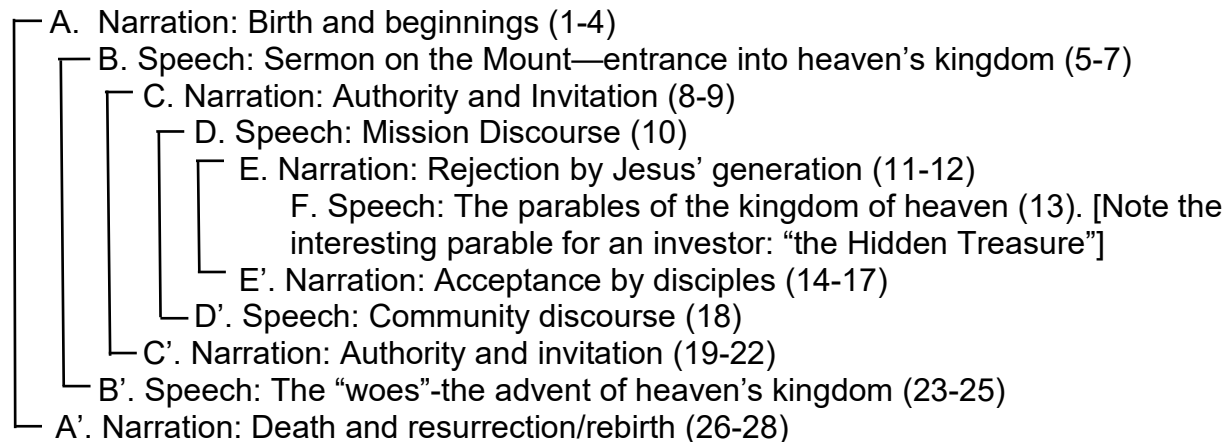


Figure 1. Outline and division of Matthew's Gospel, based on C. H. Lohr's analysis. Charles H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (October 1961): 427. Adapted with permission from the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

In addition, oral presentations were common in antiquity since most people could not read. For an oral presentation lasting over ninety minutes, which would be the case with a reading of Matthew, words should be transformed into images in order to be indelibly recorded in the memory. For this reason, Matthew includes *repeated themes and symbols*.

1. One of the recurring themes in Matthew is that of servanthood, as indicated by the name "Emmanuel" (God is with us). The theme of servanthood provides us with certainty that the protagonist of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus, is the God of (re)creation, the God of the exodus who is with us to liberate us from sin and oppression, especially that of our own making.
2. The symbol, which unites this extensive text of the ex-tax collector in one symphony is the mountain, the point where earth and heaven seem to meet and embrace each other. This symbol is fascinating because mountains and

⁵ Benedict Thomas Viviano, "The Gospel according to Matthew," in *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Geoffrey Chapman (New Jersey: Prentice Hall 1992), 632–333.

climbing go hand-in-hand; people want to ascend mountains, despite sweat and toil, so as to obtain an enlarged horizon, a “revelation,” as did Moses and Elijah, the protagonists of the Old Testament who climbed mountains to encounter God and enter into a covenant with Him. To this day, mountains symbolize aspiration and achievement, especially in the corporate world: companies want to climb high mountains and experience the collective conquest of an “Everest.”

3. While the pyramid was another “climbing spot” in the Mediterranean world where Matthew wrote his gospel, he completely dismantles it by turning the “pyramid of honor” with its secular norms and standards upside down through the Nazarene’s cross and resurrection. On both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the pyramid of honor is still revered today, just as Matthew’s message is still relevant.

With respect to the third point, it is worth noting that in the ancient world, honor was conferred by a noble background and property (i.e., land).⁶

Of course, in Greco-Roman times, as well as today, someone of humble origins without any property could climb the hierarchy pyramid, utilizing their unique gifts and acquaintances in upper social circles (i.e., their network). That person was called “a new man” (*novus homo*), although when he reached the “top,” he reproduced the very *old* patterns of patriarchy (command and enforcement). Thus, the aggressor and victim roles could be swapped, as is still the case today.

Matthew’s dismantling of the honor pyramid undoes these machinations, revealing them as futile and false. In essence, his narrations aim to convey the extreme newness of another type of people—deacons or servants patterned on the alternative Son of Man. The title “Son of Man,” which originates from Daniel’s symbolic world, is also a suffering servant. We should not forget that in the eyes of his contemporaries, Jesus Christ did not possess the aforementioned traits of honor and reputation. On the contrary, his curriculum vitae revealed disturbing facts about him that were inconsistent with any attempt to present oneself as a “respectful” person. Matthew, who presents Jesus as a refugee, highlights these items of information:

1. Jesus descends not only from Abraham and David. In his genealogy, four women also appear who are prostitutes and foreigners. Is it any wonder that the infant Jesus was not recognized (worshiped) as Messiah by the political and religious elite of Jerusalem, but by magicians-astronomers from the East (Mesopotamia)?
1. The upbringing of Jesus puts the spotlight on an insignificant village of Galilee called Nazareth, far away from Jerusalem, the capital and Holy City.
1. For several years, Jesus manually worked as a builder (*tekton*) in a society where manual labor was not considered respectable by religious scholars and

⁶. See Jerome Henry Neyrey, “Honoring the Dishonored: The Cultural Edge of Jesus’ Beatitudes,” *University of Notre Dame*, accessed July 7, 2023, <https://www3.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/loss.html>.

philosophers in the upper echelons of the society.⁷ He may also have practiced this trade in the city of Sepphoris, built in the first century AD., which would have made him well acquainted with Greek culture, which had as its center the city (with the agora/market, theater, gymnasium, and conservatory).

In order to draw conclusions about leadership today from these observations, we will need to examine: (a) the view of the Hebrew Bible on the association of men with leadership and the subordinate role of women (not forgetting that the appointment of a king in ancient Israel was not God's idea nor his will for Israel); (b) the temptations of the future leader (the Lord Jesus) in the desert; (c) the formation of a team who would spread his message to all nations; and (d) Jesus' programmatic sermon on the mount of Galilee among foreigners. This sermon is essentially his principle of action—a model for leadership, which we argue can inspire today's leaders in managing a team of people who can meet goals with enthusiasm and charisma.

Leadership in Protohistory (Genesis 1-11) and in Matthew

Matthew's opening (Mt 1:1) contains a reference to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which chronicle the creation of the universe and, in particular, man and woman, as well as their ultimate ability to exercise leadership qualities. The problem is that they do not obey their "manufacturer's manual" but operate autonomously and demonically. Despite this failing, every human being is created by the Trinitarian God in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). This means that every Adam (i.e., every human being, male and female)⁸ has been created to become a leader in a world intended as a *colony* of heaven on earth. Here is where the kingdom of God is to be established, not in the platonic expectation of a life after death.⁹ In this context, we should clarify—with the help of Hebrew Bible scholars—what is meant by creation in the image of God, as well as the meaning of the mission or job assignment given to Adam to cultivate the earth.

We can discern the Hebrew meaning of "image and likeness" by referring to the passages that follow, which have been compiled by Israel Bible Center researchers. According to Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg,

⁷. "Τέκτων" (tekton) means a roofer and builder, not only a furniture maker. Today, we tend to be more aware of the fact that the ultimate secret to success is to do one's work, regardless of what it is, with an inquisitive and open attitude. This approach instantly elevates the work to the status of a "profession," and contributes to the beauty of the world. Furthermore, thankfulness for what one has been given is a crucial component of joy! Leaders are seldom elected because they graduated from a top-class university or are considered experts on a specific topic. Their vision selects them and determines the degree of cooperation they receive. Vision is not always cultivated in large institutions, places where the motto "your death is my life" sometimes applies. The Lord came from Galilee, a foreigner's land.

⁸. On the relationship between the words *Adam* and *human* in the Hebrew Bible, see Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg, *Becoming Israel* (Israel: Independently published, 2019), 2.

⁹. Ashley E. Lyon, "What Was Adam's Job in Eden?" *Israel Bible Weekly*, July 30, 2021, accessed July 10, 2022, <https://weekly.israelbiblecenter.com/what-did-adam-do-in-the-garden/>.

like many other languages of the world Hebrew is a poetic language. It has its own poetic conventions and constructions. One such construction is Hebrew parallelism. This is a literary device whereby the second line (or in this case, word) says something synonymous or complementary to the first, thus expanding the meaning of the first concept. . . . מְלֶאֱמָה (*tselem*) is connected with the idea of a “shadow” צֶלֶל (*tselel*), an imperfect image resembling that which casts it. דְּמוּת (*demut*) is parallel to *tselem* and is connected with the ideas of “similarity” and “imagination.”. . . Thus the Torah begins its story-telling, seeking to persuade former Egyptian slaves – the Israelites – that not only the Pharaoh of Egypt, but they, too, have great divine origins. All humans were created in the image and the likeness of God.¹⁰

Also, Nicholas J. Schaser notes that

when the God of Israel creates humans in the divine “image,” God places physical representatives into the Temple of the world. This explains the prohibition against making graven images (cf. Exod 20:4-5; Deut 5:8-9): humans themselves are already the images of God. As God’s image-bearers, we humans are not divine ourselves, but we are made according to the physical image—the structure, likeness, and shape—of God’s own body.¹¹

Finally, in Eden’s Garden, Adam undergoes a transformative journey as he assumes the role of God’s steward, entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding and nurturing all of creation (Gen. 2:15). Through his fulfillment of these duties, Adam not only fulfills his role as a caretaker but also deepens his bond with God.¹²

In other words, each Adam is formed in the divine image. God the Father created each Adam personally out of love (rather than caprice or boredom) to nurture and protect the earth and the environment, and thereby glorify him. Every person, regardless of gender, race, or caste, has a “dowry,” a package loaded with gifts to be given away to others, just as a tree never survives on the nutrients of its fruit. Even the so-called “passions” are positive forces of the soul, which we should not uproot but transform to serve others, meaning all life forms, including the earth, so that all can thrive.¹³

The problem, however, is that human leaders succumb to the temptation of arrogance. The test of the “knowledge of good and evil,” which Adam failed, was not due to faulty “instructions” dictated by his maker/creator and required for the “guarantee” (i.e., of life) to apply. Instead, Adam—and Eve—failed because they did things their own way, the motivation for their actions being supplied by a snake.

¹⁰. Lizorkin-Eyzenberg, *Becoming Israel*, 4. See also, cf. Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg et al., *40 Days of Hebrew Devotions* (2020), 16.

¹¹. Nicholas J. Schaser, “What’s So Wrong with Making Images of God?” *Israel Bible Weekly*, June 10, 2018, accessed June 25, 2023, <https://weekly.israelbiblecenter.com/whats-so-wrong-with-making-images-of-god/>.

¹². Lyon, “What Was Adam’s Job in Eden?”

¹³. See Aristotle, *Poetics* 4.1448B4-19.

However, this is how they finally sever their relationship with God, the Garden (i.e., the universe), and themselves. The terrible fall leads to attempts to bridge the divide between heaven and earth and preserve a name for oneself through cutting-edge initiatives such as the tower of Babel, all of which fail. Finally, instead of agreement and unity, there is a complete absence of communion, both with God and others. However, the God of the exodus wishes to interact with his world through a “new Adam,” namely, Abraham. Thus, the forefather of all three monotheistic religions appears as Emmanuel in Matthew’s genealogical tree; arranged in three sets of fourteen generations (Mt 1:17), among which David, whom God loved, is included. Nonetheless, Matthew also adds the names of four foreign females—plus some prostitutes—to Emmanuel’s genealogical tree. As previously stated, this inclusion overturns the prevailing concept of honor.

In antiquity, prior to entering the public space and before being accepted as a citizen of equal measure, a person needed to prove their bravery through a ritualistic rite of passage that involved three stages: (a) separation, (b) liminality, and (c) reaggregation (incorporation).¹⁴ In the case of the Lord Jesus, he refuses to perform a miracle to gain acceptance by the masses as a leader. Instead, he is symbolically immersed in a river together with a large throng of sinners and outcasts, sharing the fate of not only the people in the desert, but also that which befell Adam in the Garden. Immediately after, he embarks on a preaching tour throughout the region of Galilee (Mt 4:23).

The Temptations of the Leader

The three greatest temptations of Jesus are found in a single chapter in one book of the Bible, the book of Deuteronomy. Found in chapter six, this miniature drama intimately connects his baptism and, ultimately, his final journey to the cross. In the first phase of his public action, Jesus’ submersion into chaos’s depths concludes with the prospect of inheriting the whole Roman Empire atop a cosmic mountain.¹⁵

At the beginning of the public undertaking of the Lord Jesus (Mt 3:13), an answer is unfolding regarding (a) the leader’s identity and (b) his destination. The voice of God the Father confirms that Jesus is the chosen one, the blessed one, precisely because he is the suffering Son of God who will bear the sins of all humanity. But why, then, did Christ have to be baptized? D. Gibson and M. Mc Kinley advance a thought-provoking theory. Their hypothesis suggests that Jesus’ submission (Mt 3:15) and immersion in

¹⁴. See Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.

¹⁵. These temptations might be compared to an outdated passport ritual, which the Lord must go through to gain admittance to a new stage of existence. In this case, having previously mastered the fundamentals (family-professional rehabilitation), attention turns to adulthood, that time when a human’s self-conception should center on who they are instead of what they have or what they have accomplished. A healthy human adult should reconcile their ego with their essential self while also managing and maintaining the relationship with their mysterious Father. Unfortunately, both myth and ceremony have lost their potency in the modern era. Nevertheless, as Matthew’s Gospel indicates, this trial is split into three stages: (a) separation; (b) desert training; and (c) reintegration into the community.

the Jordan River (Mt 3:16) validates his human identity.¹⁶ Jesus, at the beginning of his public rite of passage, not only submerges himself in the abyss of human sin but is also tested by the three core temptations human beings face, as well as those specific to leadership. These temptations escalate. The first temptation occurs in the wilderness, where the future leader faces his true self and God; the second takes place in the temple on the hill of Moriah; and the third upon a “very high” mountain, where Jesus is shown the splendor of all the kingdoms of the earth, or, according to Luke, the universe in its entirety.

The First Temptation

The devil’s first temptation, to respond to his own natural need for food by turning the stones into bread, elicits an immediate response from Jesus. The speculation that precedes the temptation, “If you are the Son of God” (Mt 4:3), echoes the Wisdom of Solomon 2:18, “for if the righteous man is God’s son, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.” It also foreshadows the crucifixion temptations: “he saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him” (Mt 27:42; cf. Lk 23:35). In this temptation, Jesus is challenged to demonstrate his messianic skill. It is obvious that he is easily able to satisfy the masses’ corresponding need for bread, as well as their desire for a spectacle or circus (cf. Mk 6:30-44; Jn 6:1-15).¹⁷ Challenging Jesus in this way was the established political method for ruling the masses in the Pax Romana. Octavian Augustus perfectly implemented it in Rome, and Herod, his officer, carried it out in the Jewish kingdom.

Therefore, the first temptation reflects humanity’s utopian imagination, specifically humanity’s inclination to turn all beings into objects for one’s own pleasure and tools for self-preservation (Faust syndrome).¹⁸ It reflects the utopia of effortless complacency, the removal of Adam’s curse, and the discovery and recovery of the lost paradise. Jesus recognizes this human need, but provides a new perspective on it, as shown in the Beatitudes speech which follows: Man is nourished by the word of God because it is the creative, sustaining “logos” (word) of everything. Amos prophesied, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11), and here Jesus emphasizes to his disciples: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (Jn 4:34).

The Second Temptation

¹⁶. See David Gibson and Michael McKinley, *Finding Jesus: Faith. Fact. Forgery* (New York: St. Martin 2015), 33.

¹⁷. The Jewish desire for “manna” as a heavenly sign is so intense that in John 6:14-16, when the five loaves and two fish magically multiply, the Jews want to seize the “prophet” Jesus and install him as their king. In the next chapter, Jesus’ brothers challenge him to travel to Jerusalem during the feast of Tabernacles to reveal himself in the temple and attract followers by performing miracles.

¹⁸. For information on the Faust Syndrome, see Benjamin Ramm, “What the Myth of Faust Can Teach Us?” *BBC*, September 26, 2017, accessed July 10, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20170907-what-the-myth-of-faust-can-teach-us>.

Satan's second challenge to Jesus is to tempt him to fall from the temple's pinnacle so as to be saved by angelic intervention. This challenge meets the requirement of human existence to suspend and transcend the natural laws of incorruptibility and immortality. At the same time, it expresses the subconscious longing of a savior to suddenly appear in a moment of peril—a "god from the machine" (*deus ex machina*) who is destined to be the benefactor of humanity down the line.¹⁹ The biblical background to this temptation is noted: "for he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Ps. 91:11; Mt 4:6).²⁰ At the time of his arrest, Jesus says that, if he wanted, he could be rescued with the help of twelve legions of angels (Mt 26:53); however, he voluntarily surrenders to the passion and to the cross, which replaces the temple and its sacrifices.

The Third Temptation

The third temptation focuses on the tragic existential dilemma about "having and being" in a memorably dramatic scene. Jesus is transported by Satan to a very high mountain to notice all the kingdoms of the world, which probably mean all the provinces of the Roman Empire. Satan promises Jesus sovereignty over these kingdoms.²¹ This challenge to aspire to political power and fame is demonic because it breaks the first and most important commandment of the Decalogue to worship God alone (see Justin, *Dialogue* 125.4). Israel disobeyed this prohibition by worshiping the golden calf (Exod. 32), and similar events will take place at the end of days in the adoration of the Antichrist (cf. Rev. 13:4-15).

Jesus confronts the devil, however, with the "sword of the Spirit," a weaponized representation of God's word (cf. Eph 6:17). Initially, Jesus responds with the command "Get behind me, Satan!"²² This translation is not identical to the words of the Septuagint and the Masoretic text: "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Mt 4:10; cf. Deut. 6:13, 10:20). In the context of the Shema, this quotation—an exhortation repeated daily by the Israelites—implies a promise of political independence and financial prosperity to Yahweh's people. Surely that will happen, if only they

¹⁹. According to Matthew (21:12) and Luke (19:45), Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem ends on the same day in the sanctuary. He wants to purify the holy site in response to all those who "traded" faith. In the same place, the Messiah cures everyone excluded from Yahweh's veneration and perfects the worship befitting the creator of the universe from the mouths of newborns.

²⁰. On the reasons behind Satan's use of Psalm 91, see Nicholas J. Schaser, "Why Did Satan Cite the Psalms?" *Israel Bible Weekly*, November 2, 2022, July 10, 2023, <https://weekly.israelbiblecenter.com/satan-cite-psalms/>.

²¹. God also gave Moses the opportunity to glimpse the Promised Land from mount Nebo (Deut. 34:1-5). Another similar incident is recorded in 2 *Baruch* 76.3, where the apocalyptic prophet is invited to observe the world in order to comprehend what he leaves behind and where he is headed (cf. 1 *Enoch* 87.3-4). Finally, in Revelation 21:10, John sees the new Jerusalem descend from a mountain (cf. Ezek. 40:2; *Testament of Abraham* 9; 1Qap Gen 21:8-14).

²². This exact phrase is used in Mk 8:33 (cf. Mt 16:23). According to Matthew, Peter (who had just been blessed for his identification of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, which he perceived through divine revelation) tries to prevent his teacher from going through the agonizing and humiliating passion of the cross. He considers the passion inappropriate, especially for someone who walks to Jerusalem to be enthroned.

exclusively praise him as the God who granted them freedom through their departure from Egypt, here understood as a symbol of human exploitation accepted in exchange for basic survival.

The quoted verse differs notably from that written in the original source due to the replacement of the word “worship” with the word “fear,” as well as the addition of the word “only.” As previously noted, worship in Hellenistic times was not merely a manifestation of respect; it was an expression of subordination and rendering of divine honors to the Hellenistic and Roman leaders. The prescriptive character the verse becomes evident when it is spoken by Jesus, and the addition of the word “only” makes it clear that his words (and by extension, God’s *logos*) is taking aim at those political systems and management methodologies that usurp divine titles and commandeer the concept of worship for themselves. A little later, on another mountain, this time that of the Beatitudes, Jesus will declare that the only way for someone to conquer (inherit) the earth is *meekness* (Mt 5:5; cf. Psalm 37:11; *Gospel of Thomas* 54). Meekness in the Bible relates to the social and moral humiliation and empathy which distinguishes the Messiah—the true leader—from all others (Mt 11:29, 21:5; cf. Zeph. 9:9).

Jesus’ war with the devil is a battle related to political messianism/zealotism. Of course, the narrative has a typological²³ and exemplary/pastoral character. This becomes especially evident in the temptations narration, which follows his baptism and precedes the Sermon on the Mount. The central message of the story revolves around a holy, new (and wholly new) type of leader—the kind of leader who, when revealed, constitutes the complete opposite of the world’s messianic idol.

The Formation of a Company as an “Alternative Family”

Only after his long trial as a craftsman and assistant to Joseph; his experience in the harsh desert; and his resistance to the highest temptations of every type of “messiah” does Jesus emerge as a leader in the public sphere. He proceeds to choose a total of twelve disciples and plans to preach on the outskirts of Galilee among the foreigners. In this way, he proves that a true leader is defined *not* by the simple addition of new disciples but instead by the complexity of their multiplication. Specifically:

1. Authentic leaders do not want followers—they are looking for successors. They focus first on a prospective employee’s character, their talents, and their potential. A leader pays hardly any attention to minor flaws—after all, everyone’s got them. Nor does a leader spend money as a way to display status. Leaders invest in people, building relationships and trust as they lead—and teach—by example.

²³. Its typological character is evident from the fact that Jesus is tested by the same temptations that Adam and Israel in the book of Exodus suffered. Where humans have failed individually and collectively, God’s promises are fulfilled in his person (i.e., Jesus). The narrative’s typological character is further supported by the fact that, like Jesus, Christian catechists and gospel listeners fasted and were tested throughout their preparation for baptism; thus, this narration might be a prototype of their battle. After all, passion and ambition have always been a persistent challenge to both the church and individuals.

2. A leader helps their employees do more than just gather and regurgitate facts. It is not enough simply to know—a leader worth working for also teaches others how to *act*. These leaders understand that everyone is different and so their approach is always evolving.²⁴ Jesus' group of Twelve was not encamped in a desert, or sequestered away in a convent, like the community of Qumran; quite the contrary, they toured all of Galilee, traveling to every region. They were a new family (Mk 3:34 ff.) who, despite preaching the kingdom of God, did not refer to God as King (unlike the typical practice in Judaism), but instead called him Abba-Father (Mt 23:9). Furthermore, they recognized Jesus as their one and only master. In sum, Jesus, by his word, chose the disciples according to the apostolic principle, equipped them with the gifts of healing and exorcism, and fashioned them into judges of Israel (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30). This unique event—the transference of messianic characteristics to the Twelve—is known as “collective messianism.”²⁵

Through the assemblage and actions of the twelve tribes' future judges, Jesus “signaled” the *reconstruction* of all of Israel, returning to the structure which had existed *before* the establishment of the monarchical institution. Jesus exhorted his traveling disciples against carrying a sack (backpack), any copper (the lowest value coins), and/or a second tunic (Mk 6:8), signifying their liberation from all means (and every center) of economic power and any associated social recognition. Thus, they were absolutely dependent on God and proceeded by faith, trusting that he had come to usher in a new world (kingdom). As their leader, Jesus himself operated in the same way, as evidenced in his temptations.

The group's chief characteristic was its *variety*. The Twelve disciples, all personally invited courtesy of Jesus himself, included Simon the Canaanite (Mk 3:18), also known as the Zealot (Lk 6:15).²⁶ The Zealots were aggressive, as their name suggests. At the beginning of Jesus' journey to the passion, the sons of Zebedee wanted to send fire from heaven to destroy the inhospitable Samaritans, a desire which revealed their zealous attitude (Lk 9:54). According to Eissler and Cullmann,²⁷ Peter's name (Bar-Jona; Mt 16:17) had a zealous connotation, as well. After all, the Tiberias Lake fisherman belonged to the sailors and the poor who were the first to revolt at the start of the Jewish War (see Josephus, *Vita* 66). The old Latin translation describes Judas as a Zealot. According to one interpretation, Judas's surname—Iscaiot—came from the Latin word “sicarius,” which the Romans used to characterize those who tried to sow panic by holding the sica (a small sword).²⁸

²⁴. This might also be shown in the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-35) and in the choice of three from the circle of Twelve to experience specific events, such as the transfiguration or the Gethsemane night of darkness.

²⁵. Sabine Bieberstein, “Maria aus Magdala, Simon der Fischer und Viele Andere: Jüngerinnen und Jünger aus Galiläa,” *Welt und Umwelt der Bibel* 24, no. 2 (2002): 52.

²⁶. For further information on the Zealots, see Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur Jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I* (USA: Brill 1976), 55–57.

²⁷. Oscar Cullmann, *Der Staat im Neuen Testament* (Germany: Mohr 1956), 11.

²⁸. Joachim Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History* (USA: Hendrickson, 1997), 186.

To demonstrate the true purpose of his kingdom, Jesus also included a tax collector, Matthew-Levi, among this group of Zealots from Galilee.²⁹ He wanted to show that the kingdom is given as a gift and intended for society's most sinful and disadvantaged individuals, miscreants such as prostitutes and tax collectors. Thus, he never hesitated to use examples from the behavior of the ruling class to project slides of the kingdom of God, as the parables in Luke 19 and Mark 12 demonstrate. The parable of the minas (Lk 19:11-27) echoes the events accompanying the ascension of the kingdom by Herod Archelaus' noble descendant (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.9). According to the parable in Mark 12 (v. 1-12), the conduct of the plebeian farmers who slaughtered every envoy and eventually murdered the son of the vineyard's owner, is roundly condemned. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:19-31), Lazarus—the only eponymous figure in this parable of Jesus—endures unrighteousness but somehow avoids breaking out into a social fight. His justification, as inferred from the Gospel of Luke, is posthumous. Jesus himself, while fighting against wealth, mingled with the rich and was also served by women, who eventually became apostles to the (male) apostles after the resurrection.³⁰

By electing the twelve tribes' representatives primarily from a circle of fishermen and ordinary folk, Jesus sought to exalt the role of these everyday people in the new kingdom of God. Thus, he indirectly questioned the existing hierarchical regime of the Jerusalem aristocracy, headed by a high priest, a vassal of the Romans. In this way, his selection of the Twelve was an act of "opposing society" (*Kontrastgesellschaft*).

Unlike the sacramental societies of the Hellenistic period, the circle of close disciples did not operate secretly. Its visibility meant the disciples were constantly imposed upon by an array of random people—many with wildly different social backgrounds, overlapping (or opposing) religions, and nothing in common with those around them. They were in among the followers of Jesus for one of two reasons: They either liked Jesus and craved his company or they were there to spy on or somehow harm him. Discipleship close to Jesus prevented any genuine exclusivity or isolation from the secular environment. To one of his followers, who wanted to prevent another person from exorcising a demon in Jesus' name, Jesus answered: "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us" (Mk 9:39-40).

²⁹. Celsus had the same derogatory view of the social and spiritual status of Jesus' circle (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.62). The disciples, of course, were not poor and did not belong to the Roman Empire's lower social class; they had employees, were "shareholders" of organized fishing groups and owners of fishing boats (Lk 5:2). It should also be noted that "human fishing" in the Bible is an indictment of the rich (Amos 4:2) and powerful (Ezek. 29:4) but also of the people themselves in the context of their promised land restoration (Jer. 16:16).

³⁰. Women's apprenticeship is referenced twice in the Gospels: in Mark 15:40 ff. (cf. Mt 27:55) and in Lk 8:2. Mark notes near the end of his Gospel that at the time of Jesus' gradual and then complete abandonment by his disciples, and apparently by God the Father himself, several women who had come up with him to Jerusalem remained at the scene of the crucifixion, looking on from afar while passersby were mocking him. These women included Mary Magdalena, Mary the mother of James (the younger) and Joseph, Salome, and some other women who are not named.

The formation of the Twelve (Mt 4:18-22) was the means to practically applying the vision Jesus had. His moral teaching and preparation of the disciples; his contempt for social status and the prejudices of the time; and his disregard for personal pursuits and collective action all illustrate his way of life, which served as an example for his disciples.

The Leader's Vision in His Programmatic Speech

In Galilee and the countryside, the sermon of Jesus (Mt 3:2) initially created the false impression that the coming of a worldwide national kingdom was imminent. This likely disturbed the disciples, because even though the rabbis practiced the observance of the Law (including its worship provisions) and the worthy moral acts of man were believed to constitute a condition for the coming of the kingdom, the preaching of Jesus implied something different: the kingdom is a treasure that is given, and the joy of acquiring it produces the new behavior (note the use of the tense: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"). The faithful feel the presence of the kingdom as a gift, and morality appears as the fruit of this gift. This sequence is illustrated by the parables of the Treasure and the Pearls (Mt 13:45-58).

In his programmatic speech, Jesus declares that his presence has inaugurated a new age of grace that brings healing and liberation. This gospel for the poor throws into question the gospels of the Roman emperors, positioning Jesus as the only person who has received from God the power to heal and save all the multitudes of weak and marginalized people.³¹

The rhetorical structure of the Mount Sermon³² is artful: Its proper interpretation rests on an understanding of its core component and corresponding passages, as shown in figure 2:

³¹. To develop this point, Matthew uses three completely different images: First, he recalls Moses' descent from the mountain to the sound of a trumpet (Exod. 19:16-19) in his reference to Jesus' second coming. Second, he recalls the image in Daniel (7:13) of one "who looked like the Son of Man coming with the clouds" from heaven to earth, vindicated after torture and exalted to supreme dominion. According to Matthew, those belonging to the Lord will be exalted in the same way: they will be justified and able to share the Lord's throne. Third, he recalls what happens when an emperor or high-ranking official pays a formal visit to a city or province. Seeing him arrive, citizens in leading positions go out to meet him in the countryside in order to accompany him with a royal procession to the city. Just like that, he says, "we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (cf. 1 Thes 4:17). Evidently, Matthew is attempting to describe the meeting of heaven and Earth. From this, there is no need to infer that we will be snatched from the earth and taken into heaven. As we often see in Paul's letters, this is never Paul's view. The significance of Matthew's imagery is that it indicates the coming together of heaven and earth, a new reality that will take place at the end of time (cf. Eph 1:10) and one in which we will participate (Mt 24:29-31). See also Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire* (USA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 73.

³². For comprehensive surveys analyzing the rhetorical structure of the Sermon on the Mount, see Dale C. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount: Inspiring the Moral Imagination* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 36; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007), 173; Brandon D. Crowe, *The Obedient Son: Deuteronomy and Christology in the Gospel of Matthew*

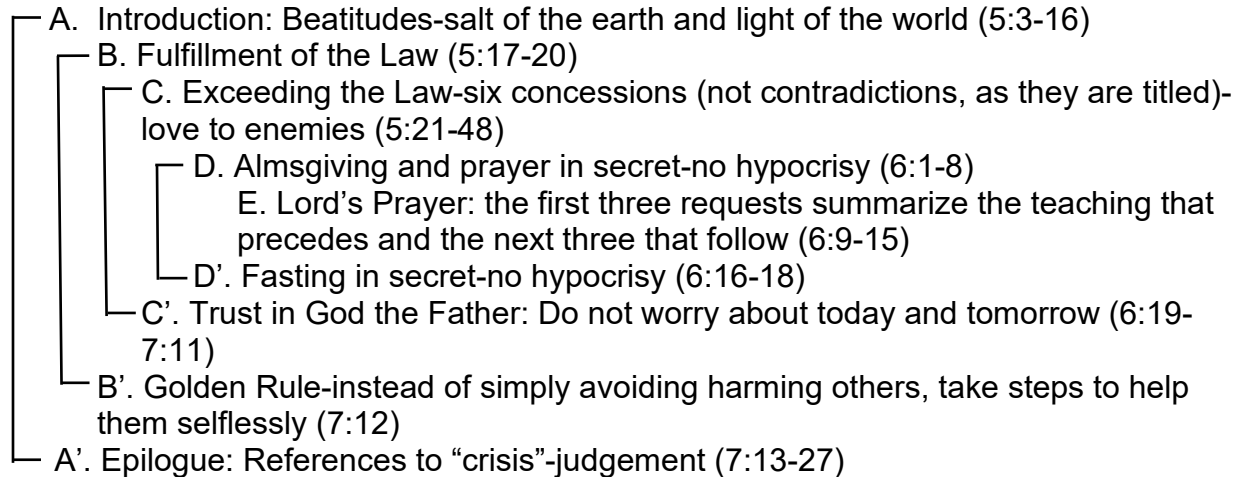


Figure 2. The chiasmic structure and division of the Beatitudes in the book of Matthew.

The Beatitudes might be viewed as a list of gifts that leaders should possess, gifts that produce fruit, meaning behavior that contrasts with the actions of the scribes and Pharisees.³³ This behavior mainly consists of forgiving others and being of service (ministry) to them.³⁴ However, it also includes expressions of gratitude, whose corollary is the understanding that one has been accepted by God, unconditionally, as an act of love. Acceptance enables a person to create conditions of safety and motivation for others while continuing to express their own ignorance and need for help, yet not in a way that is demanding, but rather in humility. In this way, the Christian community survived and prospered for three centuries without ever having (or needing) the official sanction of any political power.

Additionally, the introductory Beatitudes present a particular harmony.³⁵ They form two stanzas with 36 words each, creating a correspondence between the verses (1 and 8, 2 and 7, and so on). Unfortunately, modern scholarship on the Sermon on the Mount has generally ignored the high poetic art of Matthew, even though it stands in contrast to Luke's writing. Table 1 reveals the poetic structure of the Beatitudes.

TABLE 1. Poetic harmony in the introductory Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10)

(Germany: De Gruyter, 2012), 169; and Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 121–122.

³³. K. C. Hanson, "How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew's Makarisms and Reproaches," in *Semeia 68: Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible*, ed. C. Camp (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1996), 101. In the above construction of the Mount Sermon, all sections after (C) and up to (B') refer to the ways in which the righteousness of the Lord's disciples will prevail over the scribes and Pharisees (5:20).

³⁴. The concepts of self-forgiveness and other-forgiveness are positioned at the core of this framework. Repentance, not self-flagellation, is how a person changes their conduct. Up until this moment, guilt has offered a reasonable argument for itself. Now the Lord himself reveals how letting go of the weight of the past can save one's soul.

³⁵. See Sirach 14:20-27; 1QH 6:13.

Beatitude sequence	First stanza	
	The blessed	Their reward (indication)
1.	Blessed are the poor in spirit,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2.	Blessed are those who mourn,	for they will be comforted.
3.	Blessed are the meek,	for they will inherit the earth.
4.	Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,	for they will be satisfied.
	Second stanza	
	The blessed	Their reward (indication)
5.	Blessed are the merciful,	for they shall receive mercy.
6.	Blessed are the pure in heart,	for they will shall see God.
7.	Blessed are the peacemakers,	for they will be called sons of God.
8.	Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Note: The chiasmic correspondence occurs between the verses: 1 and 8, 2 and 7, 3 and 6, 4 and 5. Furthermore, both the first and second stanzas contain four verses (or beatitudes) of 36 words (according to the Greek text).

The epilogue verses in the Beatitudes' speech (Mt 5:11-12) also include 36 words (according to the Greek text). Thus, the epilogue has a strong poetic correlation to the introductory section: "blessed are you when [a] others revile you, [b] and persecute you [c] and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

While these blessings point toward the kingdom of God, wherein individual gifts are exercised to address the needs of all, the entrance of the Messianic kingdom is unrelated to any visible, dynamic presence of a Messiah, contrary to the expectations of the Israelites. As Jesus emphasizes in the parable of the sower (Mk 4), the kingdom resembles in size and dynamics the tiny mustard seed, which, despite being smaller than all the seeds of the earth (Mk 4:31; Mt 13:31; Lk 13:18), and despite the adversities encountered in its vegetation, slowly but steadily grows (Mk 4:27). Ultimately, it

becomes “larger than all the garden plants” (Mk 4:32). The picture of the big branches, where the birds congregate, is reminiscent of the depictions of the vast empires of Egypt and Babylon in Ezekiel 31:6 and Daniel 4:12, respectively, while simultaneously fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel (17:23) about Israel. In terms of the modern organization, the image suggests that its growth does not follow a linear development but an organic one that takes place through honest discussion, recognition of contribution, and the cultivation of relationships.

As Theissen and Merz note,

we learn only a little from the sayings about the future kingdom of God about life in it. It is striking what is missing. National needs are not addressed, nor are there any liturgical dreams of worship in the eternal presence of God. The Torah is not studied by enlightened scholars. The fulfilment of the longing is a good meal – not as a sacrificial meal in the temple but as a festal meal in the circle of the patriarchs. The ritual separation of Gentiles and Jews no longer plays a role here. Indeed, ‘the kingdom of God is not an empire, but a village’.³⁶

Jesus also proclaims that this eschatological kingdom, with his preaching and his presence, is already here in an anticipatory way that few recognize, and this is not of our doing (Mk 4:28). The new age does not succeed the old one but invades and transforms it like dough transforms leaven (Lk 13:21). The mystical character of the kingdom is underlined by Jesus’ command to his disciples to conceal his miracles. This secrecy is also suggested by the only two miracles in which Jesus tames the elements of nature (Mk 5:39, 6:48-50) thereby demonstrating his divinity; both take place only in front of his disciples. The kingdom first appears to the three disciples at the northernmost point of Jesus’ travels, near a place nominally associated with Augustus, Caesarea of Philip. Six days later, Jesus leads Peter, James, and John up a high mountain (not mount Zion) where he is transfigured by God’s glory and revealed as the only Son of God, not only to the three disciples but also to Moses and Elijah, two representatives of the Old Testament (*dei filius*). According to Luke (9:28), the transfiguration, which reveals Jesus as one who deserves absolute obedience, occurs after eight days of teachings. The uncreated light that surrounds Jesus stands in stark contradiction to the highly humiliating and painful passion that Jesus will undergo. At the very moment when his tormentors think they are exhausting him, by hanging him as king of the Jews on the cross, the whole land is covered in darkness, a terrible eschatological darkness (Mk 15:33-34), symbolizing judgement, and the curtain of the temple is torn in two, from top to bottom (Mk 15:38).

According to Mark 13:24-26, the kingdom of God will become universally visible and known only at the *second coming* of Jesus. Nevertheless, the fact that the kingdom does not merely await us, as an earnest expectation, but has already come and is here among us is proved by the words of Jesus in Luke 17:20-21: “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” Not only the Pharisees, to whom

³⁶. Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 255–56.

Jesus responds, but also the disciples themselves, precisely at the time these words were spoken, were neither possessed by faith in his person nor convinced of his appropriation of the kingdom. In this quotation, the phrase “in the midst of you” means that the kingdom of God is already present among the questioners in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Immediately after speaking these words, Jesus refers to the final coming of the Son of Man and the judgment that he will carry out. These references to judgement are in accordance with his apocalyptic vision; they are intended to dispel any thought of self-sufficiency and show the need for vigilance.

The following is a summary of the leadership principles we can learn from the Sermon on the Mount:

1. Redefine the goal/vision in a way that is commensurate with the kingdom of God. Jesus offered his followers a new purpose, which required reinterpretation of the Law. The Pharisees’ interpretation was incorrect and needed to be rectified.
2. Adopt ethical practices. Ethics, a word that comes from the Greek *ethos*, implies a specific way of living. Jesus taught his disciples and the public only that which he had already practiced. It follows that Jesus is more than a moralist; he is a visionary who can inspire others.
3. Implement a shared vision. Jesus gave his audience a glimpse of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven on Earth.
4. Ensure that everyone has a place in the fulfillment of the goal/vision. All who listened to Jesus were potential members of the kingdom of heaven, people who could become messengers for the coming of the New World.

By investigating all of Matthew’s Gospel, we might uncover evidence of several styles of leadership, including visionary leadership. However, we believe that the Sermon on the Mount supports a transformational approach to leadership more than any other since it aims to alter the prevailing social structure but also have an impact on each individual listener. The arrival of the heavenly kingdom, which is the vision of Matthew, is the impetus for this transformation.

Conclusion

In this socio-rhetorical approach to the Sermon on the Mount, we have examined the public appearance of the leader Jesus throughout the Gospel of Matthew. According to Matthew’s narrations, Jesus is transformed from an exhausted refugee into a leader. His mission begins with humility and obedience. First, he becomes Israel’s leader. Second, his disciples spread his message of salvation to all nations (Mt 28:16-20).

The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ leadership charter, presupposes the following events:

1. The baptism of the Lord, which takes place in community with all sinners and marginalized persons.

2. The temptations in the desert: the struggle with syndromes of (a) Faust or Everyman; (b) a savior; and (c) a superman.
3. The return to the “place of slavery,” to Galilee, for those who were hiding out in darkness and despair.
4. The sermon of repentance.
5. The selection of the twelve “fishers of men”.
6. The extensive healing activity of Emmanuel—the new Moses.

In the Old Testament, the freeing deed of God prevails before the Decalogue. In the New Testament, the giving of the “charter” of the nation—the kingdom of God proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount—is preceded by the audience’s release from agony. Matthew emphatically insists on this sequence of events as it underscores the complete remission of sins.

In particular, we note the staggered triple test in which the tempter faces the Lord, who responds by denying egocentric behaviors and opportunistic pleasure. We also note the way the Lord chooses his collaborators, both men and women, as the Lord (contrary to the customs of his time) also had female disciples who appeared at the resurrection to be apostles to the apostles. These are examples to be imitated by future leaders, all of whom are his disciples. The Twelve disciples (a number linked with the tribes of Israel) are chosen by Jesus to represent various socioeconomic groupings: Zealots, public officials, fishers, and more. Jesus teaches them the moral principles that Matthew analyzes in the Sermon on the Mount and draws their attention to spiritual traps (such as those he encountered on the mount of temptation). He then dispatches them to proclaim the Gospel of salvation. The Sermon on the Mount promotes the vision of the leader Jesus. Matthew’s Beatitudes—in poetic form—list the virtues the disciples and all faithful people should acquire. Of course, Jesus’ life is the perfect exemplar.

According to this analysis, the leader should not only do the right thing but should also adopt moral values. In other words, leaders should become moral visionaries; anything less means they will not be leaders but only managers who work for themselves, selfishly trying to fulfill their own interests. In the Gospel of Matthew, leadership, as it is exercised by Jesus, has as its goal the participation of people in the kingdom of heaven, which has already begun with his preaching and actions. This goal also becomes the focus of the disciples, who work to draw other new disciples into the kingdom of heaven (multiplication—the emergence of new leaders).

In summary, Matthew can teach everyone the following valuable lessons about leadership:

1. True leaders do not get elected; they emerge.
2. True leaders inspire their followers and help them develop their charisma.
3. The leader’s actions and words (Sermon on the Mount) presuppose spiritual purity (mount of temptation).
4. The team and the leader should share the same vision.

5. If the vision is expansive, the value of team diversity is especially significant. Regardless of the size of the team, every team member is valuable and deserves respect (Sermon on the Mount).
6. Instead of attracting followers, the aim of leadership is to create new leaders.
7. As Matthew's rhetorical practices demonstrate, communication is the key to effective leadership.

In terms of current leadership models, we conclude that Jesus' teaching and actions portray him as a transformational leader. Of course, Jesus is more than this. However, the term "transformational" describes his leadership style. In Matthew, transformational leadership requires spiritual purity. Those who study the Gospel of Matthew for insights into leadership would do well to closely examine Matthew's fascinating and unique presentation. The spreading of the Gospel over the centuries has not happened randomly: wherever its success has been evident, for example, in personal and social metanoia, certain principles of leadership—the kind that Matthew describes—have been put into practice.

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