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The Temple, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Gospel of Matthew

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It is good to be with you today in what we all may hope is the beginning of a new emphasis on Temple Studies in North America. Thanks to the conference organizers (especially Gary Anderson), our host Phil Barlow, and to our esteemed speakers who have come from England, from the London Temple Studies Group. We look to that group as a model of the high level of scholarship and insight that we hope to emulate and cultivate here in North America.

In this paper today, I hope to consolidate for you the several publications and presentations I have made about the Sermon on the Mount over the last twenty-five years and add some new developments to them. These range from my books, *The Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (1990) and *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (1999),[1] to the meeting of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics in Cambridge three years ago,[2] and at the meeting of the London Temple Studies Group at the Temple Church in London last June.[3] My work on the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew and its counterpart in the Book of Mormon, which has become widely known as the Sermon at the Temple, is still a work in progress, as are all good lines of enquiry, rewarding repeated examination and continuing to bear new fruit.

As we turn to the study of the Sermon on the Mount, which I propose to read as a temple text and through temple theology, I take you back to 1990 and the second edition of my book *The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple*, which you may have read. Some of you probably have not read *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*. I thank Margaret for seeing that this latter book was possible. She came here ten years ago to give a seminar at BYU, and I had the pleasure of driving her through Utah County. As we drove by Mount Timpanogos, we started talking about mountains and the mountain of the Lord, and she started making connections. Then I told her I had a done a lot of work on the Sermon on the Mount as a temple text. She wouldn't let me stop talking about it. We corresponded about it, and eventually I received an invitation to present the topic at Temple Studies Group in London and elsewhere in London. The book was published by Ashgate in 2009.[4] You'll see that it is in the series Society for Old Testament Studies, and Margaret was the head of that series at the time. I'm grateful that she encouraged me through all of this. She had a copy of *The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple,* which is of course all based on the Book of Mormon because that where the whole idea came from. What we get

1. John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), which is an expanded paperback of the 1990 publication *The Sermon and the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*, with additions throughout along with a chapter on ritual studies.

2. Published as John W. Welch, "Temple Themes and Ethical Formation in the Sermon on the Mount," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 22, no. 2 (May 2009): 151–63. The conference of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics on the Sermon on the Mount and Christian Ethics was held September 6, 2008, at the Westcott House, Cambridge. I express appreciation to Susan Parsons, Margaret Barker, Sarah Lloyd, and Jennifer Hurlbut for their encouragement and assistance with that publication.

3. Available on the web at http://www.templestudiesgroup.com/Symposia.htm#VI, last visited October 11, 2012.

4. John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (London: Ashgate, 2009). The first printing of this book has now sold out but, hopefully, it will appear before too long as a paperback second edition.

from the Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi that we don't get in the Bible, at least explicitly, is the context of the sermon: where was the sermon given, to whom, what kind of people, and for what purposes? In 3 Nephi we see that the sermon is a covenant making text: the sermon was given at the temple of Bountiful, it was given to a group of righteous people, and there is a clear temple context. At the end of that day in 3 Nephi all of the people enter into a covenant to keep the commandments which they had been given that day, which he had commanded them or that he should give to them (3 Nephi 18:10, 14). These are crucial clues for reading the text at that level. Margaret came back and said, "You must do for the rest of us what you have done for the Latter-day Saints. Can you make the same case for the Sermon on the Mount as a temple text without depending upon the Book of Mormon?" I would like to suggest that we certainly can. The Ashgate book demonstrates that temple themes saturate every stage of the Sermon on the Mount, and that this consistent confluence of temple themes gives the Sermon on the Mount a unified rhetorical voice and a powerful sense of authority, which significantly explains what makes—and always has made—that text so spiritually and ethically compelling.

What Is Temple Theology?

At the outset, I want to begin with a few comments about theology. What is theology? How many kinds of theology are there? What are their main concerns? Most commonly, people speak of what we might call philosophical theology. This involves systematically seeing God and what we know about God through such tools as deductive logic, working mainly in the media of words, concepts, ideas, systematics, and creeds, as well as the perpetual wrestling with questions regarding being, existence, timelessness, the unlimited attributes of God (the "omni"s we attribute to divinity), changelessness, eternity, infinity, unity or oneness, absolutes, as if the world existed in an idealized present. Philosophical theology thrives on questions—answers are always the death of philosophy.

Then there is natural theology, which involves seeing God and what we know about God through such tools as inductive reasoning, working primarily from the perceived natural order of things, scientific observation, analogy, and teleology. Natural theology focuses on origins, the past, order as it has emerged, attributes consonant with natural phenomena, development, change, time, process, plurality, diversity, society, ethics, and purposefulness. Natural theology thrives on data (incomplete though it always will be).

But there's more: there is also "temple theology," and we are indebted to Margaret Barker for coining this term. I hope in the future we will come to better understand how temple theology differs from other theologies. Temple theology is related to the schools of thought that emphasize the role of ritual in the development of religious narratives and beliefs. It may draw on the study of structuralism in myths and rituals, but it seeks more fundamentally the origin and shape of beliefs about God. It celebrates what can be known or represented about God, his attributes, and his manifestations as they are embodied in the signs, symbols, and patterns (semiotics) of religious practices, especially as they occur in relationships, shared emotions and communications in places of contact, of ritual instruction, and in human responses of thanks, praise, and covenant making, all of which serve the purposes of transforming mankind, of making atonement efficacious, and of binding man to God for purposes of protection, healing, blessing, and ultimate exaltation. Temple theology is concerned with, as Margaret has concisely defined, "what the priests believed themselves to be, or what their rituals meant,"[5] and "with Wisdom, and with the structure and harmony of the creation, . . . the figure of Moses and the history of Israel as the chosen people."[6] Because it is not limited to the examination of written documents, Temple theology has the potential to recover and project the fullness of the past, and thus is well-positioned to give bearings in answering the so-called terrible questions of where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going: things as they were, as they are, and as they will be. Temple theology strives to elucidate the thought patterns and spiritual experiences that come through the

5. Margaret Barker, *Temple Theology* (London: SPCK, 2004), 14.
6. Barker, *Temple Theology*, 35.

repetition of sacred ordinances in order to develop habits of body and soul that emulate and imitate the character and behavior of God. Temple theology is more interested in what God does (and what God asks us to do) than just in who God is (God's nature). It is interested as much in the God of nature as in the nature of God. Temple theology is dynamic, generative, and experiential, concerned with powers, possibilities, and emotions; with building, bridging, repairing, and preserving everlasting relationships; making one out of the many, and many out of the one. Because it focuses on God's agency, temple theology is more open to and interested in the physical representation of spiritual matters and the material reality of divine power than most other kinds of theology. Religious rituals typically enact ceremonies of transformation that take participants from one state, pass them through a liminal state, and then elevate them to a higher realm. In the temple, God appears, speaks, has a plan, loves, and wants to achieve a fullness of joy as universally as possible. Temple theology not only treats these themes with descriptive care. It also accepts and affirms ritual actions as a valid means of coming to know the divine. In other words, rituals carry real ontological and epistemological weight. In sum, temple theology thrives on principles, practices, and models. Temples themselves are templates that orient humans in relation to the cardinal directions in heaven and on earth, and thus guide us in the beginning of an eternal quest.

Thus, for Christianity, temple theology is all about contextualizing and situating concepts in a matrix of images and practices that go hand in hand with the faith, which is at home in the temple, that stands behind so many biblical texts. As Margaret Barker has said, we must not assume that New Testament texts were "being used out of context in order to dress new ideas decently in scripture. . . . Images and practice that most Christians take for granted such as priesthood, . . . sacrifice and atonement are all obviously derived from the temple."[7] Temple theology looks at religious experience as one great whole, with the Temple itself "as part of an organic whole," one that "cannot be studied in isolation, . . . integral to many of the institutional pillars"[8] of Israelite, Jewish, and Christian faith. And for these reasons, the premises, interests, and methods of temple theology undergird my reading of the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the Temple.

Temple Theology, Temple Studies, and the Sermon on the Mount

My interests in the dynamics of temple theology are shared by a rising number of very recent publications on temple studies, including Margaret Barker's *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* and her *Temple Theology*; Daniel Gurtner's "Matthew's Theology of the Temple and the 'Parting of the Ways;'" Alan Kerr's *The Temple of Jesus' Body: A Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*; Jonathan Klawans' *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*; and Andrew Mbuvi's *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter*, to name only a few.[9] This

7. Barker, *Temple Theology*, 11.

8. Joshua Berman, *The Temple* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1995), xx.

9. Listed alphabetically, a few of these publications in recent years include:

Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000);

Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London: T&T Clark International, 2007), and *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004);

G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004);

Joshua Berman, *The Temple* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1995);

George Braulik, "Psalms and Liturgy: Their Reception and Contextualization," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 24, no. 2 (2003): 309–32;

Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Books, 2010);

Daniel M. Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology of the Temple and the "Parting of the Ways,'" in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew,* ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 128–53;

William J. Hamblin and David Seely, *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007);

Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2006);

Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos, eds., *Psalms and Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2004);

Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: A Temple Theme in the Gospel of John,* Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement 220 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002);

Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006);

wave of potent studies shows that much remains to be learned from the ideology of the Temple and its influence on the New Testament in many formative Christian contexts, notably the Sermon on the Mount.

Modern readers from all directions are approaching seminal texts such as the Sermon on the Mount looking for new leverage in strengthening its moral voice in today's world, whether in wrestling with deepening personal spirituality, inculcating morals in our societies, improving the station of those with disabilities, overcoming ethnocentrism and violence, working for social justice, and even in saving planet Earth. But where can faithful readers turn to reclaim and reinvigorate the power of this text, variously known by such popular labels as the Great Sermon, the Speech of Speeches, or the Magna Carta of the Kingdom of God, that has long stood at the bedrock of Christianity? My endeavor here is to suggest that the Sermon on the Mount is best understood and most powerfully implemented in a broad matrix of temple themes.

No text is more important or has had more influence on the history and character of Christianity than the Sermon on the Mount,[10] and yet giving a clear account of its literary nature and apparent eclecticism has remained disconcertingly elusive and paradoxically puzzling, even though, as Hans Dieter Betz has observed, during the entire history of all biblical interpretation "almost every author . . . [has] had one thing or another to say on the subject" of the Sermon on the Mount.[11] For this, the Sermon has come in for its share of criticism, from Martin Luther's rejection of it because of its emphasis on works (even "good works"),[12] to modern concerns about its excessively supererogatory demands. But seeing the Sermon on the Mount in a temple setting gives the Sermon on the Mount greater clarity, power, and vitality, helping it to be understood as it originally sounded especially to Jewish audiences, who lived in one way or another in awe or awareness of the Temple, which was far and away the dominant feature on every landscape in first-century Judaism—geographical, political, ethical or theological. Cut off from its spiritual roots in the sacred values of its traditional heritage, the legitimizing moral foundation of the Sermon on the Mount withers and shrinks in the face of modern permissive demands and secular challenges.

Indeed, some of the individual sayings of the Sermon on the Mount seem quite odd or make poor sense outside the temple context. One thinks particularly of the otherwise impossible demand to be perfect (*teleios*, Matthew 5:48) or the inexplicable instruction not to cast the holy thing (*hagion*) before the swine (Matthew 7:6), but these words make clear sense in light of their temple significance, as seen below.

Within, and perhaps only within, a temple framework does the Sermon on the Mount work as a unified whole, as a coherent and compelling text, consistently drawing on words, expressions, symbols, values, concepts, themes, covenants, remembrances, and sacred experiences that principally belonged to the Temple. While the following comments draw mainly from historical and literary observations, strong ethical and theological readings of the Sermon on the Mount can emerge still today through an effort to understand this text's original intent and to hear its messages in their initial rhetorical register. Because this foundational text is so concise and compact, yet expansive and suggestive, a reader must take particular heed to how one hears (Luke 8:18).

John M. Lundquist, *The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008);

Andrew M. Mbuvi, *Temple, Exile, and Identity in 1 Peter* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007);

Joshua L. Moss, "Being the Temple: Early Jewish and Christian Interpretive Transpositions," in *Midrash and Context*, ed. Lieve M. Teugels and Lumer Rivka (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2007), 39–59;

Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic Books, 2010); and

Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006).

10. Warren S. Kissinger, *Sermon on the Mount: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography* (Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association, 1975), xi.

11. Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 3.

12. Calling it even "the devil's masterpiece [ein Meister Stück des Teuffels]." *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar, 1906), 32:300.

What Is a Temple Text?

The first step in interpreting any text is to determine what kind of a text it is. Much is at stake in answering this question in regard to the Sermon on the Mount: Is this text held together by logic? Is it an example of Hellenistic philosophical moralizing? Or is it a scrapbook or anthology of random sayings, growing out of peasant folk wisdom or Jewish hyperbole? Or is it something entirely different, fundamentally grounded in the faith, hopes, grace, redemption, purity, and theology of the Temple? In its temple elements we can find the answer.

Some temple texts are easier to identify than others, especially if they mention the temple explicitly or are written to serve a temple function. Thus, the dedicatory prayer offered by Solomon at the dedication of his temple in 1 Kings 8 is clearly a temple text. Other temple texts may be less obvious, yet they report sacred events, such as the appearance of Jehovah to Moses in Exodus 19, or may stipulate the terms for the making of a holy covenant between God and his people, as in Exodus 20–23, or its renewal, as in Joshua 24. Such texts become temple texts when they are used to comprise the historical, theological, or covenantal underpinnings of the ceremonies, symbols, or purposes behind the construction or liturgies of the temple. Elsewhere, even more broadly, I have defined a temple text as one that contains the most sacred teachings of the plan of salvation that are not to be shared indiscriminately, and that ordains or otherwise conveys divine powers to participants, through ceremonial or symbolic means, together with commandments received by sacred oaths, all of which allow the recipient to stand ritually in the presence of God.

Any number of clues may signal to readers that a text has temple connections. These clues might include the location of the delivery of the speech at a temple (I see Benjamin's speech in the Book of Mormon as a temple text because it happens at the temple) or revered place or holy mountain, as well as the mention of such things as preparations of purification, separation from the world, searching for atonement, and ascent. Coded vocabulary, as well as sacred teachings, revelations, or holy pronouncements belong especially to the temple. Silence, awe, and pondering are signal characteristics of temples. One's orientation with respect to the cosmos, one's transformation from one spiritual state to another, and the bestowal of new names marking such transformations, as well as the imposition of laws, conditions, and obligations within a covenant community, all may reflect temple connections. Ritual theory people, as Phil Barlow talked about, will see temple texts involved in covenant making, a method of taking people from one state to another, and filling a social function of binding together.

Temple texts, like temples themselves, build unity and unleash spiritual power, allowing the participant to access the Divine and stand in the presence of God. Such texts would include the Mount of Transfiguration narrative in Matthew 17, Jacob's covenant and atonement speech in 2 Nephi 6–10, Benjamin's coronation speech in Mosiah 1–6, and Alma's plan of redemption speech in Alma 12–13. By these criteria, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 and the Sermon at the Temple in 3 Nephi 11–18 are also to be understood as temple texts.

The Sermon and the Temple Mount: A Tale of Two Mountains, or One?

For many reasons, the Sermon on the Mount should be read as a temple text. This point is made especially clear in the Book of Mormon (which is where I first observed it and began to speak of the text in 3 Nephi 12–14 as the Sermon at the Temple), precisely because that text is delivered explicitly at the temple and in a covenant making setting. But even in the New Testament, the evidence is clear enough that the Sermon on the Mountain is a text that belongs on the Holy Mount.

There is no better place to begin one's reading of the Sermon on the Mount than where Matthew sets this text. Matthew begins, "And Jesus went up into *the* mountain (*eis to oros*)" (Matthew 5:1). By the way, it does not say that Jesus "went out on a gentle hillside." When you visit Galilee and the guide takes you out on a gentle, rolling hill and says the Sermon occurred at a place like this, it's probably not correct. This key language in Matthew's introduction to the Sermon on the Mount is precisely the same as the language in the Septuagint text of Exodus 19:3 and 24:12, when Moses and the elders go up into the sacred mountain. Indeed, Jesus "went up (*anebē*)" just as Moses

had gone up (*anebē*, Exodus 19:3 and 24:12) "into the mountain" (*eis to oros*). One should not diminish Matthew's allusion to Moses here. In the mountain, the seventy elders "saw God" (Exodus 24:11) and received the law (Exodus 24:12). Jesus will similarly promise his disciples, if they are pure in heart, that they too "shall see God" (Matthew 5:8), and he likewise dispensed to them the law, exemplified by three of the Ten Commandments and two other key provisions of biblical jurisprudence. W. D. Dumbrell rightly notes that while these "points of parallelism with Sinai are not to be overstressed," the import of these connections "clearly cannot be ignored."[13]

Mount Sinai, of course, is a prototype of the Temple, the natural dwelling place of the Most High God. In Israelite religion, as in ancient Near Eastern thought generally, "'sanctuary' and 'mountain' became conceptually identical."[14] Thus when Psalm 24 asks, "Who shall ascend into the hill (*anabēsetai eis to oros*) of the Lord?" (which is to say, "Who is worthy to enter the Temple, the house of the Lord?") this psalm equates the Temple in Jerusalem with the mountain of the Lord, using again the same wording which was used in the sacred ascent texts in Exodus and which Matthew also used to introduce the Sermon on the Mount.

This is only the first of many verbal links that forge a solid bond between the Sermon on the Mount and the Temple, showing that, in order to read the Sermon the Mount authentically, people must see themselves—as all temple worshippers and participants did—as being in a holy place, presenting themselves in a holy state, having clean hands and a pure heart, ready to listen in the sanctuary of silence, personally prepared to renew or accept the Lord's covenant, promising and vowing to keep its stipulations, enabling them to receive its promised gifts and blessings but also requiring them to hear and take seriously its warnings and curses. Temple theology and this temple-mount context invites all interpreters of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple to look further into the many relationships, as several levels, between these texts and the temple.

Word-level Relations with the Temple, Especially with the Psalms (Table 1)

I begin at the word level.[15] Table 1 is the cumulative verbal evidence of the Sermon's temple register. Indeed, the Sermon's vocabulary, as shown on Table 1, is extensively temple-related, with over 120 temple elements found in the Sermon on the Mount. These can be linked readily with broadly recognized temple themes. Fully two-thirds (86) of these elements in the Greek text of the Sermon on the Mount can be strongly linked to words or concepts in the Septuagint version of the Psalms that were sung in or about the Temple.

Let me remind you of what Margaret said regarding which version of the Old Testament we should use. We can't always rely on the Hebrew to give the earliest version of what was going on in the temple of Solomon. The Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint or LXX, which was translated in the second and third centuries BC, preserves older readings which don't always agree with the Masoretic. So again we have to look at both. But more than that, the Christians who wrote their texts used the Greek Bible as their Bible, so whatever Hebrew words they may have had in mind, they in fact used the Greek version. Bible scholars have yet to do much research on the use of the Septuagint in the New Testament.

In table 1, column 1 lists words or phrases in the Sermon on the Mount. Column 2 shows locations in Psalms that use the same words. It is immediately clear that the Sermon draws heavily from the Psalms. In fact, some phrases are immediately recognizable as verbatim quotations from the Psalms. Many examples can be given, ranging from the beginning to the end of the Sermon on the Mount:

The phrase "blessed are the pure in heart" in Matthew 5:8 draws directly on Psalms 24:4, "clean hands and a pure heart."

13. W. D. Dumbrell, "The Logic and the Role of the Law in Matthew 5:1–20," *Novum Testamentum* 23, no.1 (1981): 5.

14. S. Talmon, "*Har*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (trans. D. Green; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 4:444.

15. The connections between the temple and these key words and phrases are discussed in detail in chapters 4–6 of my *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*. For sources in support and development of these temple connections, see the footnotes in that book.

Psalm 37 conjoins the words the words "meek" and "inheriting," just as is found in Matthew 5:5.

The words "filled" and "righteousness" stand together in Ps 17:15, as in Matthew 5:6.

In Psalms 32:11, ancient Israelites sang, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice (*agalliasthe*), O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" As Betz says, in his 1995 commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, the "double call [rejoice and be exceeding glad, again *agalliasthe*] appeals to the hearers or readers for what amounts to a liturgical response, much like 'hallelujah' or similar exclamations."[16] The verb *agalliaomai* ("hallelujah"), whose use is obviously temple-related, appears here in Matthew 5:12 and otherwise almost exclusively in the Psalms (53 times) and in Isaiah (11 times).

The phrase "heavenly throne" (Matthew 5:34) is in Psalms 11:4, and the companion phrase "city of the great king" (Matthew 5:35) comes directly from Psalms 48:2.

In connection with the Lord's Prayer, calling God "Father" is in Psalms 89:26.

"Holy is [hallowed be] his name" is in Psalms 111:9.

"In heaven and on earth" is in Psalms 136:6.

Glory, kingdom, and power are all in Psalms 145:6.

A plea for forgiveness of all our trespasses is in Psalms 25:18.

The warning in Matthew 7:6, "lest they trample [your pearls] under their feet, and turn again and rend you," echoes Psalms 50:22, "lest I rend and there be none to deliver."

The two diverging ways in Matthew 7:13–14 (wide way *hodos* and the narrow way *hodos*) emerge right from Psalms 1:6, "the Lord knows the way (*hodos*) of righteousness, but the way (*hodos*) of the wicked will perish."

Verse 8 of Psalm 94 contrasts the wise man and the foolish man, using the same root words, *phronimos* and *mōros,* found in Matthew 7:24–26.

Words as distinctive as "depart you workers of iniquity (*anomia*)" in Matthew 7:23 come straight from Psalms 6:8, "Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity (*anomia*)."

16. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 151.

Dominant vocabulary words also give the Sermon on the Mount a strong ring of temple psalmody. For example, the Beatitudes begin with the word *makarioi* (blessed), which is also the very first word in Psalm 1, and that word goes on to appear twenty-five more times in the Psalms. Whereas "makarisms" are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the Enoch literature (2 Enoch 42:11), in proverbial sayings (Proverbs 8:34–36) and in the Old Testament Apocrypha (Tobit 13:14; Sirach 26:1), one may rightly suspect that the average Galilean or Judean audience would have been most familiar with this distinctive word's prominent use in their temple Psalms, but this fact is usually completely overlooked. Other key Greek words in the Sermon on the Mount that appear multiple times in the Psalms range from mercy (171 times), enemies, righteousness, and glory, to love (even *agapaō*, 50 times), and prayer (37 times), down to meek, filled, serve, and even "trodden under foot" (*katapatein*) (6 times). This extensive and consistent use of temple vocabulary from the Psalms is most noteworthy.

The sounds of the Psalms especially would have sounded in a temple register for those with ears to hear, for there can be no doubt that the Psalms were chanted or sung in the Temple by Levitical cantors and lay worshipers, by pilgrims as they went up to make legally required appearances at the Temple, by individual worshippers in the Temple, by dispersed Jews yearning for the Temple, and by families giving thanks for the blessings of the Temple. While psalmodic poetry served several purposes in many settings, including sacral coronations, weddings of kings and priests, anointings, banishment of evil, triumphant processionals, and Sabbath worship (as the Psalms of Solomon, the Dead Sea Thanksgiving Hymns and Sabbath Songs, and the Odes of Solomon, in addition to the Psalms in the Old Testament show), it is clear that the Temple is the dominate factor that unites and animates the biblical Psalms.[17] They all have something directly or proximately to do with the Temple, and by extension, the same is

17. See the extensive discussion and demonstration of this in LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord? The Psalms in Israel's Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2009).

Table 1. Temple Themes and Texts in the Sermon on the Mount

Sermon on the Mount	Psalms	Other Temple Texts	Pertinent Temple Themes
Into the mountain	24:1	Isa 2:2	Mountain of the Lord
Blessed (*makarioi*)	1:1 (+25 more times)		Celestial beatification
Rewards	19:11		Source of heavenly rewards
Poor (*ptōchoi*)	69:32 (+15x)		Beseeching and bowing down
Kingdom of God	145:11–13		God as eternal king
Mourning		Ezra 10:6	Sadness over covenant breaking
Comfort (*paraklēsis*)	94:19		Comfort and joy
Meekness (*praeis*)	76:2–9 (+8x)	Num 12:3	Like Moses, waiting on the Lord
Meek inherit the earth	37:9, 11, 18		Receiving peace and prosperity
Hungering	37:19; 107:9		Needing and seeking righteousness
Thirsting for God	42:2; 63:1; 107:9		Needing and seeking God
Righteousness	17:15 (+80x)		Divine justice
Filled (*chortasthēsontai*)	17:15 (+8x)		Beholding God's glory
Receiving mercy	5:7 (+171x)		Through covenantal fidelity
Pure in heart (*katharoi*)	24:4 (+6x)	Ex 25–Lev 24 (101x)	Entrance and purity requirements
Seeing God	17:15; 24:6; 63:2		Encountering God's glory
Peace, peacemakers	147:14 (+23x)	Isa Jer (49x)	Peace of complete atonement
Sons of God	2:7; 82:6	Job 38:7; Dt 32:8	Sonship, angels, deified beings
Persecution	7:1; 31:15; 35:3		Deliverance from persecution
Exclusion (*aphorisōsin*)	69:28; 109:13		Blotting out the wicked
Unjustly cursed, reviled	119:86, 161		Imprecations, swearing of oaths
Rejoice, rejoice	32:11 (+60x)		Cultic joy
Hallelujah (*agalliasthe*)	5:11; 32:11 (+51x)		Cultic exultation, singing
Salt of the earth	60:1	Lev 2:13	Salt of the covenant
Casting out (*ekballein*)	78:55; 109:10		Excluding evil, excommunication
Trodden underfoot	7:5 (+5x)	Isa (14x)	Judgment, humiliation
Light of the earth	27:1; 104:1-2		Light to the world
City on a mountain	48:2		Holy city, temple city
Lamp (*luchnos*)	18:28; 119:105		Word of God, God's Torah
Lampstand (*luchnia*)		Ex 25 (9x)	The Menorah (*luchnia*)
Letting light shine	31:16	Gen 1:1–3	Creation, Let there be light
Decalogue	19; 50:18-20	Ex 20:13, 14, 16	Daily temple Decalogue recitation
Anger	7:6; 56:7		The anger of the Lord
Prohibition of anger	37:7–9		Vengeance is only of the Lord
Judgment	(24x)		Judgment by temple councils
Gift (*dōron)*		Lev 1–9 (30x)	Sacrifice
Altar (*thusiastērion*)		Ex 27–Lev 10 (125x)	Altar of the Temple
Reconciliation		Lev 6:1–7	Unity and harmony
No adultery	50:14–19	Lev 18; Ezek 23:37	No infidelity, impurity, or idolatry

Purity of heart	24:4		Complete purity
Covenant marriage		Mal 2:14; Ezek 16	The creation of man and woman
Divorce (*apostasion*)		Hos 4; Lev 21	Requiring purity of priests
Right hand	16:7 (+38x)		Priest's use of right hand
Yes, yes		Dt 27; Num 5:22	Amen, amen
Oaths	50:5, 14	Num 30	Solemnizing obligations
God's throne in heaven	11:4 (+5x)		Throne of God, ark
In the name of the earth		Isa 66:1	Connecting heaven and earth
City of the great king	48:2		Holy city of Jerusalem
Make hair white (*tricha leukē*)		Lev 13:2-10 (5x)	White hair of leprosy
Talion		Ex 21; Lev 24	Divine justice
Repay good for evil		Ex 23:4; 1Sam 24:17	Divine mercy
Slap on the cheek	3:7	Isa 50:6; Lam 3:30	Ritual humiliation of the king
Coat (*chitōn*)		Ex 28-Lev 16 (12x)	Linen garments of priests
Lend and give generously	37:26; 112:5	Dt 15:7-8	Caring for the poor
Love people (*agapaō*)	(+50x)	Lev 19:18	Love, peace, holiness
Pray for enemies	(*echroi* 108x)		Intercessory prayers
Sons of God	82:6		Fatherhood of God
God gives to all		1 Kings 8	Life-sustaining blessings
Sun over all	84:11		The Lord is a sun
Rain on all the earth	147:8		Ensuring rain
Perfect (*teleios = shalom*)	1:3; 65:1; 119:165	Dt 18:13; 2Sm 22:26	God's nature, gift for doing his will
Perfect (*teleiōsis*)		Ex 29-Lev 8 (11x)	The ram of "consecration"
Giving in secret			The Chamber of Secrets
Trumpets	81:3; 105:3 1	Chron 15:24	Music, heralding God
Glorify (*doxazein, doxa*)	22:23 (+65x)		Glorifying God
Prayer in secret	55:1	1 Kings 8 (hear 12x)	Being heard of God
Prayer	(37x)	Isa 56:7	House of prayer
God as Father	89:26; 103:13		Nomina sacra
Hallowed name, make holy	72:17; 103:1; 111:9		Sanctification
Kingdom come	22:28; 45:6		Praising God
On earth as in heaven	135:6		Connecting heaven to earth
Daily bread	105:40	Ex 25:30	Manna, Bread of the Presence
Kingdom, glory, power	145:10–12	1 Chron 29:11	Doxology
Forgive	25:18; 32:1 (+6x)	Kings 8:30	Forgiveness
Fasting	35:11–14; 69:10	Lev 16	Self-abasement, humility
Anointing		Ex 40:15	Ritual anointing
Washing		2 Sam 12:20	Ritual washing
Treasures		Neh 10:37	Temple treasury, making vows
Light	27:1; 56:13		The Lord is Light
Seeing in the light	36:9; 119:130		Understanding, enlightenment
Reflecting the light	34:29	Ex 3:2	Transfiguration

Eye single (*haplous*)		Prov 11:25	Purity
Radiating light	38:10		The Temple as a beacon, lighthouse
Full of light	139:12		Driving away darkness
Serve the Lord only	2:11; 22:30 (+6x)	Ex 20:3	Temple service
Love the Master (*agapaō*)	(+50x)	Dt 6:4–5	Loving God
Cleave unto (*antechō*)		Prov 3:18; Isa 56:4	Loyalty to God
Necessities of life	23:5	1 Kings 8:35–39	Providing sufficient abundance
Anxiety	38:18		Worrying about sin
Stature, life span (*hēlikia*)		Sira 26:17	Unimprovable life, excellence
Cubit (*pēchus*)		Ex 25-38; Ez 40–46	Temple measurements (+120x)
Spin (*nēthousin*)		Ex 26-39 (10x)	Temple veil, garments, curtains
Clothes (*endumata*)	93:1; 104:1	Ex 28:2; Job 40:10	Holy garments
Grass is temporary	37:2 (+3x)		Temple is eternal
Seek first, all else added	37:4		Eternal promises
Judgment	7:8; 35:24 (+22x)		Eternal judgment, the Mercy Seat
Measure (*metron*)		Ezek 40–48 (+40x)	Divine order of creation
Measure for measure (talion)		Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20	Principle of divine justice
Speck, chip (*karpos*)		Gen 8:11	Evidence of divine peace
Beam (*dokos*)		1 Kings 6:15–16	Beams in the Temple
The holy (*hagion*)	2:6 (+59x)	Ex 26–Num (300x)	Guarding sacred things
Tear in pieces	50:5, 22		Punishing covenant breakers
Seek	69:32; 105:4	Isa 2:3	Seeking the Lord in his Temple
Bread, fish	23:5; 132:15		Sacred meals
Others (*plēsion*) as the self	15:3 (+10x)	Lev 19:18	Community, collectivity
Two ways (*hodos*)	1:6	Dt 30:19	Separating polar opposites
Gate (*pulēs*)	24:7-10; 118:19-20	Ex Num Ezek (38x)	Temple gates
False prophets		Jer (9x); Zech 13:2	Mismanagers of the Temple
Tree as archetype	1:1-3	Gen 3:3, 22	Tree of Life, individuals as trees
Works judged as fruits	58:11; 104:13; 128:3		God's judgment
Vine and fig		1 Kings 4:5	Blessing the righteous
Thornbushes and thistles		Gen 3:19	Cursing sinners, the fallen state
Lord, Lord	116:4		Invoking the name of the Lord
Knowing God		Amos 3:2	Covenant making
Entering	118:26	Isa 33:17	Entering into the Lord's Presence
Excluding iniquity (*anomia*)	6:8, 141:4		Defeating evil
Wise man (*phronimos*)	94:8	Prov, Sir (26x)	Wisdom
Upon the rock	27:5	Num 20:8; Jdg 13:19	Temple, mountain, altar
Foolish man (*mōros*)	94:8	Sira (28x)	Lack of Wisdom
Upon the sand		Ezek 13:10–11	Chaos, false prophets
Floods	78:16; 93:3; 105:41		Cosmic floods, destruction of evil

John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (London: Ashgate, 2009), 184–87.

true of the elements that comprise the Sermon on the Mount. Never before have these temple themes in the Sermon on the Mount been thoroughly catalogued and analyzed. Yes, it seems to me that no one immersed in Jewish culture could have listened carefully to Jesus and missed the connecting verbal register between these words in the Psalms and the Sermon on the Mount.

Further Connections with Other Old Testament Temple Texts

Moreover, as shown in table 1 column 3, forty-three of the eighty-six psalmic elements are also tied to technical terminology used in other Old Testament texts that are also related to the Temple and temple settings, such as the instructions for the construction and operation of the Tabernacle or the Temple in the last dozen chapters of Exodus, as well as in the prayer dedicating the Temple of Solomon in 1 Kings 8, and the futuristic vision of the ideal temple in Ezekiel 40–48.

And in addition, another thirty-four elements appear significantly in the Old Testament in temple-related passages—and sometimes exclusively so. For example, words such as *luchnia* (lamp stand, menorah, which appears 8 concentrated times in Exodus 25) or *nēthousin* (as in "neither do they spin," which occurs 10 times in the Septuagint, all in Exodus 26–39) would have been known to scripturally literate listeners as words that were distinctively associated with the Temple. Other key words and phrases in temple-related sections include purity, *katharos*, which appears in the important phrase "pure in heart" (101 times in Exodus–Leviticus); gift, *dōron*, meaning sacrifice (30 times in Leviticus); altar, *thusiasterion*, in bringing one's gift to the altar (125 times between Exodus 27 and Leviticus 10); white hair of leprosy, which one cannot make white or black (5 times in Leviticus 13). The word for the garment that one gives with the cloak is the same as the word for the priest's *chiton* (Exodus–Leviticus 12 times). Being perfect, *teleois*, recalls the technical term that describes complete initiation into the mysteries,[18] and also *teleiōsis*, the word used for consecration in Exodus–Leviticus (11 times). The holy thing not to be cast before the swine most clearly evokes temple sanctity (appearing 300 times from Exodus 26 to Numbers). And the narrow gate in Matthew 7 is identified with the same word that describes the gates of the temple, *pulēs* (which appears thirty-eight times in the temple sections of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel).

Other temple themes present in the Sermon on the Mount include such things as the Creation, light, salt, the altar, the Decalogue (which was recited twice each day in the Temple at the time of the Daily Whole Offering[19]), oaths, purity, perfection, alms, fasting, a holy thing, entering into the holy Presence, and containing the cosmic floods. All of these are temple themes—some of them decisively so.

In short, readers may well be surprised by the number of words and phrases in the Greek Sermon on the Mount that repeat or allude to temple texts in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. I count 383 words in total vocabulary of the Sermon on the Mount; one-third of them cast a long temple shadow. These intertextual harmonies show ways in which the original listeners of the Sermon on the Mount would have heard, over and over in the Sermon on the Mount, a temple register of strong allusions and frequent quotations of temple themes and texts from the Old Testament. Diana Woodcock, who reviewed my Ashgate book in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, was not convinced by everything suggested in that book, but she sees this book as having "promoted one new, legitimate, methodology for reading the SM; and [as having]

18. Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 817, citing sources and referring to Philippians 3:15 and Colossians 1:28. See Demosthenes, *De Corona* 259, in *Demosthenes*, trans. C. A. Vince (Cambridge, 1971), 190–91, where *telousei* is translated as "initiations" into the mystery religions. Orphic books spoke of the *teletai* (rites of initiation) which if performed prevented dire pains in the world to come; see Plato, *Republic*, 363C and 364E.

19. Moshe Weinfeld, "The Decalogue: Its Significance, Uniqueness, and Place in Israel's Tradition," in *Religion and Law: Biblical Judaic and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Edwin R. Firmage, Bernard G. Weiss, and John W. Welch (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 26–7, 34 (citing Tamid 5:1), and 37.

emphasized the importance of referring to the LXX to elucidate the NT."[20]

While the individual effect of any single element may not be strong, the cumulative effect of these verbal echoes significantly increases the likelihood that attuned listeners would have readily sensed and deeply appreciated the temple register of the Sermon on the Mount. I do not mean to imply that this is the only way in which the Sermon on the Mount can be heard and understood, but in its temple register one finds its deepest voice. Jesus typically spoke in two registers: One at an obvious, ethical level, and the other at a more veiled, esoteric level.[21] Those with initiated ears would hear both, while those without would not fully understand. Thus, while the Sermon on the Mount can be read in a purely secular way, doing so is like reading the parable of the wheat and the tares as if Jesus were talking about farming.

Column 4 lists pertinent temple themes that one can relate to the specific phrases in the Sermon on the Mount and their counterparts in the Psalms and other temple texts in the Old Testament. The themes in the column are broad headlines or elements of temple practices in general, which may be found in temples throughout the ancient world and in many sacred traditions. Many of these themes populate the writings of Margaret Barker, and most of these items are explained in my discussions of these elements in the Sermon on the Mount in *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount*, or in *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*.

Sermon on the Mount as Preparation for a Ritual of Initiation

By embedding its messages in a temple framework, the Sermon on the Mount forged community bonds and defined social identity. In the Temple of Jerusalem, vast numbers of people were involved in the cooperative activities of the Temple, including builders, gatekeepers, priests, chief priests, Levites, singers, worshippers, scribes, wood gatherers, and many people in an elaborate temple infrastructure. Richard Bauckham has rightly said that the Temple was "central [to] Jewish self-identity."[22] In a temple community, the collective took precedence over the individual, and duties overshadowed rights. By working within in a temple framework, the Sermon on the Mount readily communicated a firm sense of belonging, the support of healthy social pressure, and durable bonds of community relationships (see Matthew 5:21, 47; 6:2; 7:3) within the otherwise fragile new Jesus movement. In the established Christian community two thousand years later, social justice and peace can be achieved, beyond normal individual abilities, through praying for enemies, seeking and granting forgiveness, and strengthening commonalities as children of God. After all, the Temple was all about becoming sons of God, obtaining forgiveness, and praying for help in facing challenges that exceed our own abilities.

The main themes and structure of the Sermon on the Mount compare well with the Giyyur ritual required, according to the Talmud, of all persons desiring to become Jewish converts.23 While it is unknown how early this particular practice was in place, it stands to reason that it (or something like it) would have been in use during the first century C.E., when proselytism was favored by certain Jewish groups. According to the Giyyur ritual, the following interrogation and instruction preceded circumcision and immersion, by which the Jewish convert became an Israelite in all respects:

First, the proselyte was told to expect to be persecuted: "Do you not know that Israel at the present time is persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions?" Likewise, early in the Sermon on the Mount, Christian disciples are warned that they will be reviled, reproached, insulted, persecuted, and cursed (Matthew 5:11).

If the Jewish proselyte accepted that first burden, he or she was next "given instruction in some of the minor and some of the major commandments."

20. Review by Diana Woodcock, in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33, no. 5 (August 2011): 52–53.

21. Guy G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom—Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 34.

22. Richard Bauckham, "The Parting of the Ways: What Happened and Why?" *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993) 141.

23. TB, *Yebamoth* 47a–b. See A. Sagi and Z. Zohar, "The Halakhic Ritual of Giyyur and Its Symbolic Meaning," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 1–13.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples are likewise next instructed in some of the rules of ordinary life as well as in major laws of highest consequence (Matthew 5:17–47).

Next, the Jewish inductee was "informed of the sin" of neglecting the poor by not observing the law of gleanings, the law of the corner, and rule of the poor man's tithe. In the Sermon on the Mount, the subject also turns next to almsgiving, serving God and not Mammon, and understanding how the Lord cares for his children by providing them with what they need to eat, drink and wear (Matthew 6:1–4, 24–34).

The Talmudic ritual continued by telling the candidate clearly "of the punishment for the transgression of the commandments." The person was reminded that, before conversion, he was not subject to stoning for breaking the Sabbath laws or liable to excommunication for eating the forbidden fat. Likewise, on several occasions in the Sermon on the Mount the consequences of failed discipleship are articulated in graphic imagery and with similar terminology: the salt that becomes impotent is taken out, cast away, and trampled down (Matthew 5:13); the affronting brother is subject to the council (Matthew 5:22); and the one who defiles the holy thing is trampled, torn, and cut loose (Matthew 7:6).

At the same time, the Jewish candidate was told "of the reward granted" to those who keep the commandments. In the same manner, interspersed throughout the Sermon on the Mount, great rewards are promised to the faithful (Matthew 5:2–12; 6:4, 6; 7:25).

Finally, the Rabbis concluded by making it clear "that the world to come was made only for the righteous," while being careful not to persuade or dissuade too much. In a similar tone, the Sermon on the Mount states its case firmly and unequivocally but without any spirit of coercion or compulsion, concluding unambiguously that the kingdom of heaven will be open only to those who do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

While the precise date of this Jewish ritual is uncertain, these parallels raise interesting questions about the origins of the pattern it shares with the Sermon on the Mount. Both texts yield a clear idea of the kinds of admonitions, instructions, and stipulations that likely were typical of initiation rituals in early Jewish-Christian days. In this regard, David Daube has argued expansively that early Christian catechisms followed the same five phase structure as did the Tannaitic catechism: namely (1) testing the candidate's commitment, (2) accepting the commandments, (3) assuming a duty of charity, (4) imposing penalties, and (5) promising future rewards.[24] Daube educes evidence for each of these five elements from scattered Christian sources but pays no particular attention to the Sermon on the Mount, as well one might.

The Sermon on the Mount as Ritual Ascent (Table 2)

More widely known is my argument that the Sermon on the Mount may well have been used in preparation for a ritual of initiation and as a ceremony of ascent text leading the initiate, stage by stage, up a ladder of covenantal progression into the presence of God. In the end, the Sermon emphasizes that not everyone shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; only those who do the will of the Father, and who are "known" to God—to whom he need not say, "I never knew you," or in other words who are not recognized by him as a legitimate son or daughter. As shown on Table 2 and as discussed in my books, temple theology helps in trying to reconstruct how this text may originally have been understood and employed.

In overview, the Sermon on the Mount builds step by step through its twenty-five stages in an overall crescendo. Its progression is understandable, each point leading to the next. The Sermon begins in Matthew 5 with the Beatitudes, which set forth the entrance requirements along with God's promises if initiates obey the charge. Next, the commission to become the salt of the earth and to be a light to the world includes a warning about false teachers, which raises the question of what to teach, beginning with an explanation of the Ten

24. David Daube, "A Baptismal Catechism," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1956), 106–40, reprinted in *New Testament Judaism*, vol. 2 of the Collected Works of David Daube (Berkeley:Robbins Collection, University of California, 2000), 501–28.

Table 2. The Sermon on the Mount Seen in Twenty-Five Stages of Ascent

Jesus and his disciples go up "into the Mountain" (5:1; compare Exodus 19:20; 24:13)

1: A promise of ultimate heavenly blessings is given (the Beatitudes, 5:3–12)
2: A charge is given, with a warning, to become the salt of the earth (5:13)
3: A calling is given to be a light unto the world to the glory of God (5:14–16)
4: Obligation imposed to obey and teach the fullness of the law and prophets (5:17–20)
5: Anger, ill-speaking, and ridicule of brothers are prohibited (5:21–22)
6: All animosities are reconciled before gifts are given at the altar (5:23–26)
7: Sexual fidelity is required before, during, and after marriage (5:27–32)
8: Oaths are sworn along this path only by saying "yes, yes" or "no, no" (5:33–37)
9: Disciples agree to do good and to pray for all people, including enemies (5:38–47)
10: Gifts of sun and rain upon all are promised as blessings from heaven (5:45)
11: Passing from that first level into a higher order of perfection (5:48)
12: Donations are given voluntarily and inconspicuously to the poor (6:1–4)
13: Prayers are offered without fanfare, both in private and as a group (6:5–13)
14: Forgiveness is given and is commensurately received (6:14–15)
15: Fasting, washing, and anointing are done in a secret setting (6:16–18)
16: Treasures are consecrated with singleness of heart in loving service to God (6:19–24)
17: Assurances of sufficient food, drink and glorious clothing are received (6:25–34)
18: In preparing for the final judgment, people judge themselves, not others (7:1–5)
19: A curse is placed on those who inappropriately disclose that which is holy (7:6)
20: A threefold petition is made: asking, seeking, and knocking (7:7–8)
21: Good gifts are received from the Father, and gifts are given as he gives (7:9–12)
22: The righteous enter through a narrow opening that leads into life (7:13–14)
23: They enjoy and bear the fruits of the tree of life, not of corruptness (7:15–20)
24: Doing God's will, they are allowed to enter into his presence and kingdom (7:21–23)
25: They then build upon this rock by hearing and doing these things (7:24–27)

Based on John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (London: Ashgate, 2009), 41–182.

Commandments, including the need for obedience and sacrifice, for men to reconcile with each other and how to behave with chastity toward women. That leads to the need for honesty and keeping one's word, honestly swearing vows and promises; and not only doing what one promises, but then some, being dedicated to serving God and none other. In stages 5 to 9, we have what I call the Aaronic priesthood stages: Jesus explains that the heavenly law is a higher order of understanding than the law of Moses. The Decalogue was only a beginning. Then initiates should keep going and become complete. In chapter 6, they go into another order of the initiation where they are told to give of their money, lay up treasures in heaven, serve one god only, and are taught how to pray. Note that they are told "when thou prayest" (alone), go to your closet, but when ye (as a group) pray, pray in this manner. The Lord's Prayer is a ritual prayer to use in sacred contexts. Scholars believe that early Christians used the Lord's Prayer in group prayer, but we do not have the exact prayer that they used; there was apparently some latitude in the words they used to meet the group's circumstance. Then, continuing in Matthew 7, they are told how we will be judged. We must ask, seek, and knock. If we do this, we are received by the Lord (who offers bread) , and not by Satan (who offers a stone). When we ask properly, we will receive. Those who have done his will, will be allowed to enter into the kingdom of God and into his presence. If not, they will be told to depart. Tightly stitched together, this sequence culminates in the final divine destination. There are many ascent rituals in the ancient world, but this one is the real path back.

A typical ancient ascent ritual begins with promises of eternal blessedness, or of beatification. For example, in *2 Enoch* 42, one reads of an ascent into "the paradise of Edem [*sic*]," where a divine figure appears before Adam and his righteous posterity and rewards them with eternal light and life. Among the nine beatitudes he speaks to them are these:

> Blessed is the person who reverences the name of the Lord; . . .
>
> Blessed is he who carries out righteous judgment; . . .
>
> Blessed is he who clothes the naked with his garment, and to the hungry gives his bread; . . .
>
> Blessed is he in whom is the truth, so that he may speak the truth to his neighbor; . . .
>
> Blessed is he who has compassion on his lips and gentleness in his heart;
>
> Blessed is he who understands all the works of the Lord, performed by the Lord.[25]

This connection with the Temple becomes explicit in *2 Enoch* 51–3, where one is further taught that "it is good to go to the Lord's temple" three times a day to praise God by speaking a matched list of seven blessings and curses, including: "Blessed is the person who opens his lips for praise of the God of Sabaoth; . . . cursed is every person who opens his heart for insulting, and insults the poor and slanders his neighbor, because that person slanders God; . . . Happy—who cultivates the love of peace; cursed—who disturbs those who are peaceful. . . . All these things [will be weighed] in the balances and exposed in the books on the great judgment day."[26]

In the ancient sources of this genre, the adjective *makarios* "designates a state of being that pertains to the gods and can be awarded to humans *post mortem*. Thus in Hellenistic Egyptian religion, the term plays an important role in the cult of Osiris, in which it refers to a deceased person who has been before the court of the gods of the netherworld, who has declared there his innocence, and who has been approved to enter the paradise of Osiris, even to become an Osiris himself."[27]

Seeing the Beatitudes "as stages in the ascent of the soul," Augustine explained, "Seven in number, then, are the things which bring perfection; and the eighth illuminates and points out what is perfect, so that through these steps others might also be made perfect, starting once more, so to speak, from the beginning."[28] But Augustine may have stopped too soon. The ascent presaged in the Beatitudes is

25. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 1:168. For consistency with the standard translations of Matthew 5, I have changed the word "happy" to "blessed" in this quote.

26. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 1:178–81.

27. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 93.

28. Augustine, *De serm. dom. in monte* 1.3.10, quoted in Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 107.

carried out throughout the Sermon. Temple themes provide an ultimate unity to the Sermon on the Mount by allowing readers to see it as an ascent text. More than ethical wisdom literature and more than a text centrally structured on a midpoint,[29] this text begins by placing its hearers in a lowly state and then, step by step, guides them to its climax at the end, entering the presence of God.

Texts and rituals of ascent were common enough throughout the ancient world, from Enoch's ascent into the tenth heaven, to Paul's or Isaiah's being taken up into the seventh heaven.[30] Roots of the heavenly ascent motif reach deeply into Akkadian mythology, Egyptian funerary texts, Greek processions and magical papyri, initiations into the mystery religions, and Gnostic literature.[31] Whether the architectural features and the progressive rituals of the temple were patterned after this basic spiritual yearning, or the cosmic journeys and the esoteric experiences described in these texts assumed the temple as the stage on which these events were orchestrated, texts of ascent are deeply intertwined with the Temple.

Moreover, Augustine's insight that the Beatitudes chart the stages of ascent for the soul[32] can and should be extended to the entire Sermon on the Mount. John Climacus' *Ladder of Divine Ascent* similarly guides the monk's life up thirty steps, from humbly renouncing life (step 1), mourning for sin (step 7), being meek and not angry (step 8), not judging (step 10), being totally honest (step 12), living a life of complete chastity, including no sexual thoughts (step 14), conquering avarice, not having money as an idol (step 16), seeing poverty as a life without anxiety (step 17), shunning vainglory and being seen of men (step 22), praying devoutly (step 28), to being perfectly united with God in faith, hope, charity (step 30). Quite a number of these thirty steps correlate with the themes and instructions of the Sermon on the Mount. Interestingly, John Climacus draws rarely on the Sermon on the Mount, but he turns extensively and explicitly to the Psalms for authority and inspiration.[33]

Similarly, the Sermon on the Mount builds step by step, through its twenty-five stages in an overall crescendo. Its logical and sequential progression is now better understandable, each point leading to the next. The commission to be a light to the world would naturally bring up the warning about false teachers are are the least in the kingdom, which raises the question of what to teach. The answer begins with an explanation of the Ten Commandments, for men to reconcile with each other, and how to behave with chastity toward women. That leads to the need for honesty and keeping one's word, honestly swearing vows and promises; and not only doing what one promises, but then some, being dedicated to serving God and none other. However, this leads to the point those actions should be done inconspicuously, and so on. Tightly stitched together, this sequence culminates in the final divine destination.

Themes Escalating up the Path of Ascent in the Sermon on the Mount (Table 3)

Table 3 shows the ascent in a different rubric: there are three levels, and there are common themes across each of these levels. Individual thematic escalations accentuate the overall path of ascent in the Sermon on the Mount, as concepts take on new dimensions of elevated religious and moral importance over the course of the Sermon. Often these steps build from an initial concern about one's obligations toward others, which is an Aaronic priesthood level (mainly in Matthew 5), to a second concern about personal and secret virtues

29. As others have typically viewed the Sermon on the Mount; see discussion in chapter 1 of Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount*, notes 23, 37–42 and accompanying text.

30. For example, in 1 Enoch, 2 Corinthians 12:1–4; Ascension of Isaiah. See, for example, Margaret Barker, *On Earth As It Is in Heaven: Temple Symbolism in the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 18–21, 64–67; Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven* (London: SPCK, 1991), 150–71.

31. James D. Tabor, "Heaven, Ascent to," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 3:91–94, citing a host of leading sources.

32. Discussed in *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 61, note 90.

33. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell (London, 1982). This edition of this identifies 179 passages of scripture quoted from throughout the Bible, 96 of which (54 percent) come from the Psalms. See *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 205–6.

Table 3. Individual Themes Escalating in the Path of Ascent in the Sermon on the Mount

Theme	Regarding Others (Matthew 5)	Regarding One's Self (Matthew 6)	Regarding God (Matthew 7)
Kingdom	Teach others (5:19)	Help Kingdom come (6:10)	Enter the Kingdom (7:21)
Reconcile	With brother (5:24)	Remove own mote (7:4)	Not cast out by God (7:21)
Prayer	For enemies (5:44)	Seeking forgiveness (6:12)	Asking gifts from God (7:11)
Generosity	Give if asked (5:40)	Give in secret (6:3)	Give as God gives (7:12)
Punishment	Salt is useless (5:13)	Cut off hand or eye (5:29)	Trampled and torn (7:6)
Punisher	Community (5:13)	Personal protect self (5:30)	Divine instruments (7:6)
Talion	Good for evil (5:44)	Forgiven as forgive (6:14)	Judges as we judged (7:2)
Bread	Daily for all (6:11)	Life is more (6:25)	Father gives if asked (7:9)
Love	Love thy neighbor (22:39)	As thyself (22:39)	Love the Lord thy God (22:37)

See John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 205–7.

(mainly in Matthew 6), and finally culminating in qualities related to God and his holiness (mainly in chapter 7). This pattern involves others, the self, and God.[34]

For example, the focal theme of the Kingdom of Heaven arises several times in the Sermon on the Mount. After the promises in the Beatitudes that the righteous will obtain the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3, 10), the initial concern is about those who might teach others to break even the least of the commandments of God; such teachers will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:19). The next mention of the kingdom comes in the Lord's Prayer, where members of the righteous community submit their individual wills to God's will (Matthew 6:10), where the focus is on personal commitment. A few sections later the emphasis shifts as the listeners are admonished to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), making the divine objective the supreme goal of their existence, and thus at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, those who do the will of the Father are told that they will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 7:21). The progression here is from community instruction, to complete individual commitment, to doing God's will and entering into the divine presence.

Similarly, prayer is featured three times in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:44, people are told to pray for other people, particularly their enemies, having love for their neighbors and doing good to all. This is an obligation of a person entering a covenant relationship and is concerned with how we deal with even the worst of our brothers and sisters. Second, in the Lord's Prayer, people are now pray for themselves, seeking forgiveness of their own transgressions (Matthew 6:12). Finally, in Matthew 7:11, prayers seek gifts from the Father in Heaven. In particular, those who ask and knock and enter in at the strait gate are promised that the divine presence will be opened to them.[35]

The same pattern of intensification surfaces in the admonitions about generosity. In the first instance, people are told to give generously to

34. See Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 205–7.

35. For more on this topic, see my "Temple Themes and Ethical Formation in the Sermon on the Mount."

others if they ask for clothing or assistance (Matthew 5:40–41). The obligation to give arises if someone asks. In Matthew 6:3, however, the obligation to give becomes an affirmative obligation of the righteous to give, of their own accord and in secret, for their own eternal benefit. Anonymous charity purifies the soul and allows for open rewards in heaven. Finally, in the culmination of the Sermon on the Mount, the person has reached the stage of being able to give good gifts in a divine fashion, doing all things unto others that one would have them do to him (Matthew 7:12).

Punishments are mentioned three times in the Sermon on the Mount. It is significant that punishments appear in the text. The Sermon is often read as a simple ethical, moral text, but if that's true, what are the punishments doing here? It says, If you don't live up to your commission, you will be cast out and trampled. This is evidence that the Sermon is not just a moral text. It fits in the first level of relationship to others: the salt that is cast out is trodden underfoot by men because it has become useless to other people (Matthew 5:13). The punishment concerned with living the higher law of chastity is to not commit adultery in your heart. It's better to cut something out than to jeopardizes his own eternal well-being, better for him to cut off his own hand than to lose his entire soul, thus tending to your own self (Matthew 5:30). Third, those who cast the holy thing—and note that the Greek here is singular—before the dogs and the swine—those who are not prepared to have it—will find themselves torn and trampled by instruments of divine punishment; divine retribution will work vengeance upon you (Matthew 7:6). Just as the offences here are against others, oneself, and God, the punishments are inflicted by men, oneself, and divine agents respectively.

Similarly, the law of talion progresses through three stages. Socially, one is instructed not to return to others eye for eye, or evil for evil, but good for evil (Matthew 5:44). Personally, this virtue turns inward as one must be forgiving in order to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14). Finally, in relationship to God and his divine judgment, the principle of talion emerges as the fundamental concept of divine justice by which all people will be judged according to the same measure by which they have measured (Matthew 7:2). In this repeated pattern of progression, one encounters the two great commandments, "thou shalt love [1] thy neighbor as [2] thyself," and "[3] the Lord with all thy heart."

Other themes intensify as the Sermon on the Mount builds in a crescendo to its final culmination. Concerns about food move from a petition for daily bread (Matthew 6:11), to an awareness that life is more than food and drink (Matthew 6:25), to a personal delivery of bread and fish from the Father himself (Matthew 7:9–11). Reconciling with brothers at the outset (Matthew 5:24) eventually leads to being able to help the brother by removing a flaw in his eye, but only after one has removed the greater flaws from one's own eye (Matthew 7:4–5), allowing one to see clearly and judge properly, even as will the Lord.

In bringing to light the experiential nature of this ascent, temple theology exposes the fundamental unity of the Sermon. Its pieces work together and belong together. Progressively, there comes fulfillment, perfection, and completion as the culminating goal of the Sermon on the Mount is reached.

Ceremonial Actions That Could Have Accompanied Performances of the SM (Table 4)

As we have learned from our British friends, it may be that Latter-day Saints understand ritual better than those who have not experienced a ritual. Latter-day Saints know what ritual elements looks like: ritual involves doing physical actions. There's a ritual drama that Nibley talked about. As it plays out, we perform in response to the narrative. We don't just sit and listen. Thinking of this aspect of ritual leads me to ask if early Christians participated in such rituals in some ways. Did they sing some of the Psalms at the appropriate point in the ritual? We know that the last thing Jesus did before going to the Garden of Gethsemane was to sing a psalm, a hymn. Singing was a standard part of the temple, so one can easily imagine that early Christians also sang these and other hymns as part of their ritual.

Then think about the words "Blessed are the poor." The poor doesn't mean without money, but those who have debased and humbled themselves.

Table 4. Ceremonial Actions that Could Have Accompanied Uses of the SM

Singing pertinent psalms at certain points in the ritual
Hand gestures of blessing to accompany the pronouncing of "blessed"
Making themselves "poor" by falling prostrate before God
"Mourning" over problems, followed by embraces of "comfort"
Receiving a new name (compare Rev 2:17) as part of being "born" as "sons of God," name transmission being frequently found as part of rituals
Responding with a shout of joy as do the sons of God (see Job 38:7); shouting "hallelujah" in the face of impending maledictions and persecutions
Pouring out salt on the ground and dramatically trampling it underfoot
Lighting lamps in a dark room and setting them on a menorah
Reciting the Ten Commandments
Pausing to reconcile with others in preparation for making some offering
Accepting the covenantal requirements by repeating back "yes, yes" or "no, no"
Slapping an initiate on one cheek (as in the ritual humiliation of the king), and having the initiate then turn the other cheek
Asking an initiate to surrender a tunic and, in response, having him give not only his undergarment but also his outer garment, thus becoming stripped of all worldly things
Offering a prayer of blessing for enemies and opponents
Anonymously collecting alms or offerings
Allowing some time for private meditation and secret prayer
Reciting a collective prayer (one recalls that the Lord's Prayer immediately became part of early Christian liturgy)
Having come fasting, the participants are washed with water and anointed with oil
Making vows to consecrate or treasure up property to the Lord
Marking the initiates as slaves who belong completely to the true Master
Receiving a garment more glorious than Solomon's (Mt 6:29)
Standing before a judge and confessing one's sins (thereby removing a beam from one's own eye)
Tearing to pieces, trampling on, and throwing out something that represents the initiate, dramatizing the fate of those who inappropriately talk about the holy thing
Making a threefold petition (knocking, asking, and seeking) requesting admission into the presence of deity
Eating food and drink, fish and bread, figs and grapes, in a sacred meal
Passing, one by one, through a narrow opening into the symbolic presence of God, and being there received and recognized by God

See John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 202–5.

Did people bow down at some point in the ritual? And did they shout hallelujah when called to rejoice?

Table 4 gives a list of possible actions that may have accompanied the ritual. The ritual may have included a person pouring out the salt. Did all trample on it? Perhaps initiates were slapped the initiate on the cheek. We're heard today about bishops doing that; new kings and priests in other societies were slapped, undergoing insult as a sign that they were ready to take that burden upon themselves. We're going to make oaths but we're only going to make them in a certain way, with a simple yes or no. Was there a ritual response? One can certainly think so.

With this ritual ascent perspective in mind, temple theologians and ritual theorists readily wonder next if this text might have had, somewhere in connection with its possible initial uses, some ceremonial application that involved, as most ritual texts do, some form of ceremonial actions.[36] Temples of the ancient world were intrinsically ritualistic, and thus it should not be surprising that one can easily, if creatively, imagine an array of actions that could have potentially accompanied ritual uses or ceremonial recitations of the Sermon on the Mount. Consider a few of the following actions, listed on Table 4, as possibilities:

- Singing pertinent psalms at certain points in the ritual
- Hand gestures of blessing to accompany the pronouncing of "blessed"
- Making themselves "poor" ("down-fallen") by falling prostrate before God
- "Mourning" over problems, followed by embraces of "comfort"
- Receiving a new name (compare Rev 2:17) as part of being "born" as "sons of God," name transmission being frequently found as part of rituals
- Responding with a shout of joy as do the sons of God (see Job 38:7); shouting "hallelujah" in the face of impending maledictions and persecutions
- Pouring out salt on the ground and dramatically trampling it underfoot
- Lighting lamps in a dark room and setting them on a menorah to let the light so shine
- Reciting the Ten Commandments
- Pausing to reconcile with others in preparation for making some offering
- Accepting the covenantal requirements by repeating back "yes, yes" or "no, no," as in the affirmation with everyone saying "amen" in Deuteronomy 27
- Slapping an initiate on one cheek (as in the ritual humiliation of the king), and having the initiate then turn the other cheek
- Asking an initiate to surrender a tunic and, in response, having him give not only his undergarment but also his outer garment, thus becoming stripped of all worldly things
- Offering a prayer of blessing for enemies and opponents
- Anonymously collecting alms or offerings
- Allowing some time for private meditation and secret prayer
- Reciting a collective prayer (one recalls that the Lord's Prayer immediately became part of early Christian liturgy)
- Having come fasting, the participants are washed with water and anointed with oil
- Making vows to consecrate or treasure up property to the Lord
- Marking the initiates as slaves who belong completely to and serve only the true Master
- Receiving a garment more glorious than Solomon's (Mt 6:29)
- Standing before a judge and confessing one's sins (thereby removing a beam from one's own eye)
- Tearing to pieces, trampling on, and throwing out something that represents the initiate, dramatizing the fate of those who inappropriately talk about the holy thing
- Making a threefold petition (knocking, asking, and seeking) requesting admission into the presence of deity

36. See the discussion of this subject in Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple*, 239–50; and Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 202–5.

- Eating food and drink, fish and bread, figs and grapes, in a sacred meal
- Passing, one by one, through a narrow opening into the symbolic presence of God, and being there received and recognized by God

Temple Floor Plan of the Sermon on the Mount (Table 5)

Temples, as we know, are physical spaces. Might there be some connection between the Sermon on the Mount and the floor plan of the temple itself? As shown on table 5, as you walk through the Sermon on the Mount, you see that almost all of its elements are locatable in the temple. When the Sermon has a person come to the altar who realizes that a brother hath aught against him, he was to leave the offering at the altar and go reconcile. A person in Jesus's world hearing that would position themselves at the entrance before the two pillars at the altar. When the Sermon talks about the bread—the "daily" of daily bread is untranslatable—it is a bread of some odd kind, *epi-ousion*, "above being." Perhaps it is a new understanding that Jesus is the bread of the temple, a shew bread in the Hekal. The Holy of Holies is where it all ends, in perfection, the holy name being there. The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer, "For thine is the glory and power and the kingdom forever, amen," is used to end a prayer only in a holy place, according to the rabbis. Thus, when Luke teaches about prayer and he is out in the wilderness, not in a holy place, he just ends the prayer with "Amen," not with a doxology. That gives us an indication of the Sermon belonging in a holy place. When you build upon the rock, this is not any old rock, it's *the rock*. We know from ancient cosmology that this is the Shetiyyah-stone, which is the plug that holds the floods back and holds the temple on a firm foundation. When you build your house on *this* rock, it will not fall. All of this is architecturally connected with the temple.

Furthermore, if the Sermon on the Mount was read in conjunction with physical actions of any kind, those actions must have taken place in some location. And, indeed, connections between the Sermon on the Mount and the Temple may be seen not only verbally but spatially. Table 5 physically locates the main elements of the Sermon on the Mount within the architectural floor plan of the Tabernacle and Temple. It offers a new illustration of the Sermon on the Mount based on a cut-away of the Temple of Solomon.

In *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, I have shown how each element in the Sermon on the Mount can be seen to have some bearing on the Temple. But now, as I first presented at the meeting of the London Temple Studies Group in June, 2012, as one walks into the Sermon on the Mount using the lens of the layout of the Temple, one can see, even more clearly, these temple connections. For example, the Beatitudes function at the beginning as temple entrance requirements. This is most obvious in expressions such as "blessed are the *pure in heart*," which is connected with Psalm 24, "who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, he who has clean hands and *pure heart*." The Sermon on the Mount is weakly read by those who see it merely as an ethical text, epitome, or antinomian diatribe. Indeed, the Sermon on the Mount deals with nothing less than "*to hagion*" (i.e. with some holy thing), or with what is done in *tōi kryptōi* (in the hidden holy place).

Moving next on the diagram, approaching the Temple and its inner courts, one encounters the Decalogue, which was read daily in the Temple before the morning sacrifice, and the Decalogue figures prominently in the next part of the Sermon on the Mount. The meeting place of the Sanhedrin is also close by in the Hewn Chamber, and the council (*sunhedrion*) is mentioned in Matthew 5:22. According to Mishnah Sotah 2:2, the procedure followed for testing a suspected adulteress in Numbers 5 was posted on a metal plate in the Temple, probably (one might assume) in the court of the women. The legal topic of adultery is also here in the Sermon, and indeed insuring righteous judgment is an important theme throughout this text.

At the altar, one brings a "gift" to sacrifice (the altar is mentioned explicitly in Matt 5:23). At the altar one needs salt. This is the place of sacrifice, always connected with oaths, vows, dedications, alms, prayers, and forgiveness for sin, all of which are Sermon on the Mount elements in Matthew 5–6.

5. Temple of Solomon, Mountain of the Lord, and the Sermon on the Mount

Entrance Requirements (5:3–11)
Self-effacing, mourning
Meek, hungering for righteousness
Merciful, pure in heart (cf. Ps 24)
Making peace, suffering
Fasting, washing, anointing (6:17)
Entrance denied to some (5:13; 7:23)

Hidden Place
In *tōi kryptō* (6:4, 6, 18)
to hagion (7:6)

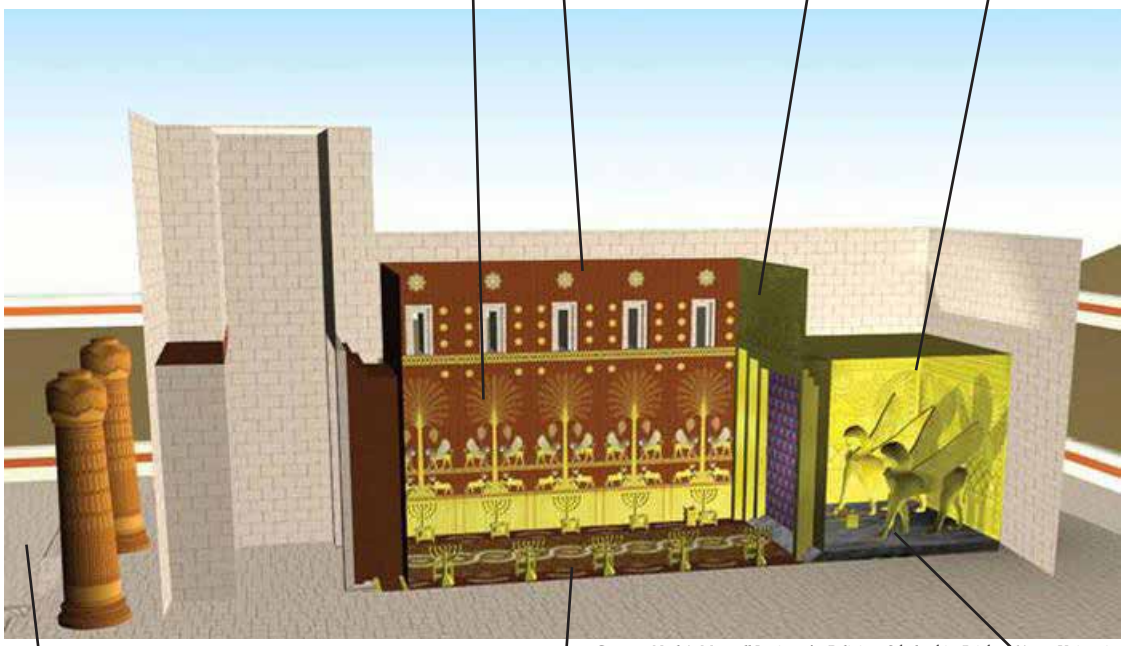
Ark of the Covenant
Law Tablets (5:18)
Manna (cf. 6:11)
Mercy-seat (5:45; 6:14, 30; 7:11)

Ten Commandments
Read daily (5:21, 27, 33)
Judgment, Sanhedrin (5:22)
Adultery (Num 5, M Sotah 2:2)
Return good for evil (5:38)
Judge righteously, if at all (7:1–5)

Menorahs
Candlestick
(*luchnia*, 5:15)

Shewbread
(cf. daily bread, 6:11)

Veil
Entering through a narrow gate (7:13)



Courtesy Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University

Altar (5:23)

Sacrifice, salt (5:13)
Oaths (5:37)
(yea, yea, Num 5:22)
Alms (6:3)
Vows, dedication
(treasures in heaven, 6:19)
Prayer (6:5–13)
Atonement for sin
(forgiveness,6:14)

The Hekal, Holy Place

Days 2–6 of Creation, Eden
Light (5:14)
Light and darkness (6:23)
Sun, rain (5:45)
Grass, flowers (6:28, 30)
Two trees (7:18)
Tree yielding fruit (7:17)
Fowls of the air (6:26)
Man and wife (5:27–32)
Garment of skin/light (6:29–30)

The Holy of Holies

God's presence (7:21)
Perfection (5:48)
Name hallowed (6:9)
Will of God (6:10)
Doxology (6:13)
Purity (6:22)
Asking God (7:7)
God will give (7:11)
The Rock (7:25)
(cf. shetiyyah-stone)

Moving into the Hekal, we find in the Sermon on the Mount not only the key elements of the creation (light, darkness, sun, rain, grass, flowers, birds, man and wife, glorious garments, two trees, and good fruit), but also the implements of the menorah/candlestick (the word for the menorah in Exodus and in Matthew 5:15 in the Sermon on the Mount being *luchnia*) and also seemingly the shewbread. Might this connection shed light on the otherwise mysterious word *epiousion*, which traditionally gets translated as "daily" but would seem to point to something well beyond that, something beyond (*epi*) being (*ousion*)?

Passing through the veil of the temple, a narrow opening, as opposed to the broad way of the world that leads to death and destruction, the Sermon on the Mount finally takes us into the Holy of Holies. Here the Ark of the Covenant contains the tablets of the law (which Jesus has quoted and interpreted) and the manna; and recall that the Sermon on the Mount mentions bread twice, once in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 and then in Matthew 7 (if you ask for bread, will the Father give you a stone?), just as bread is found in two positions in the Temple, first with the showbread and then here in the Holy of Holies. Upon the Ark was the mercy-seat, mercy above all else being the attribute of God mentioned most often in the Sermon on the Mount. Finally, as in the ending of Matthew 7, it is in the Holy of Holies that one enters into God's presence, sees God (as promised in Matthew 5:8), hallows his name (as in Matthew 6:9), and beseeches God for blessings (Matthew 7:7–9). Here one finds protection from the floods and chaos of the unruly cosmos when one builds upon this Rock and not upon the sand.

Other Texts Based on the Temple Floor Plan (Table 6)

The suggestion that the Sermon on the Mount or, might we now say, the Sermon in the Temple (of the Temple in the Sermon), was articulated with some progression through a physical space in mind raises the question whether others have ever suggested that any other biblical texts were somehow connected with the floor plan of the temple. In this connection, the work by Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*,[37] sees the book of Leviticus as following a temple structure, shown on Table 6. Of course, the spatial importance of the Temple in general is well known. As Joshua Berman has said, "At the spiritual center of the land of Israel lies the Sanctuary. Within the Sanctuary, the most sacred place is the Holy of Holies, and within the Holy of Holies—the site endowed with the greatest *kedushah*—rests the Ark of the Covenant, bearing the tablets of the covenant."[38] But, more than that, as seen on Table 6B, Douglas, who is followed in this regard by Duane Christiansen,[39] and who (interestingly enough) was influential on Margaret Barker as she began formulating her basic approach to temple theology, has seen the structure of entire book of Leviticus as having been based on the floor plan of the Tabernacle. As a projection of the Temple, the book of Leviticus is formed in three sections; they diminish in size as the text moves from a large block of provisions dealing with ordinances performed in the court of the altar (chapters 1–17), then moves into a smaller section of requirements dealing with holiness (the Hekal, chapters 18–24), and finally moves into the smallest section dealing with the state of complete peace and happiness idealized by the jubilee laws (the Holy of Holies, chapters 25–27). Moving between these three domains, one passes through two narrative transition veils, the only two narrative sections in the entire book, both acting as warnings, one against the improper performance of sacrifice and the other against blasphemy, the defilement of the holy name. Douglas explains this temple-related meta-structure of the book of Leviticus as follows:

> In modeling the structure of a book upon the structure of a physical object, the book of Leviticus goes several steps further. This book is a projection of the tabernacle. God dictated the proportions of the desert tabernacle to Moses in the book of Exodus (ch. 25). The building consists of

37. Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). See also her *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

38. Berman, *Temple*, 12.

39. Duane L. Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible: Exploring the Beauty and Structure of the Bible* (New York: Paulist, 2003), 31–41.

three compartments separated by two screens: the first, very large, the entrance and the court where the worshippers make sacrifice; the next, smaller, the sanctuary where only the priests may enter. It contains the table for the showbread, the altar of incense, and the *menorah,* the seven-branched candelabra. Lastly, the smallest, the Holy of Holies, contains the Mercy seat and the Ark of the Covenant, a figure of a cherubim on each side. Nobody can enter it except the high priest.

The book is likewise organized in three sections of diminishing size. It consists of laws, separated by two narratives, which I take to correspond to the two screens. The sections of the book preserve the relative proportions of the sections of the tabernacle. The first large section of the book corresponds to the large court of sacrifice, and the book's contents in this section actually state the laws for sacrifice. The second section of the book is smaller; it ordains the liturgical work of the priests through the year and prescribes rules for their marriages and households. In this respect it corresponds faithfully to the holy place reserved for priests, and it describes what has to be done with the incense, oil, and bread whose furnishings are in that compartment. The third part of the book is very small indeed, like the Holy of Holies, only three chapters long: it is about the covenant that is supposed to be kept there. So the book has been carefully projected upon the architecture of the tabernacle and on the proper activities of the place.

When the book comes to the pages that correspond to the end of the building it is modeled upon, it has automatically come to an end. To go on would spoil the design. The analogy between the abstract structure of the written contents and the solid object on whose shape it has been projected gives the book a strange transparency. The reader looks through the words, or past them, and, visualizing the object, can intuit the depths of the analogy. At first Leviticus looked like a dry list of laws, but now, seeing it in three dimensions, it exemplifies the House of God. That does change the way it is read. And moreover, the tabernacle where God dwells among his people exemplifies Mount Sinai, where God originally met his people and gave his laws to Moses. Tabernacle, holy book, and holy mountain, presented so compactly, yet so vast in reference, mirroring each other in two and three dimensions, they stand for everything that is covered by God's law. . . .

> Frank Kermode, on the idea of the classic, [has said that a classic is not classic] 'if we could not in some way believe it to be capable of saying more than its author meant; even, if necessary, that to say more than he meant was what he meant to do.' . . .
>
> In the case of Leviticus the hidden analogy has expanded the meaning to encompass the Lord's ordering of his infinite universe.
>
> Seeing the Leviticus text as a projection of the tabernacle is a revelation of the same order as produced by reading a ring [or chiasm] according to its structures. The impact of a composition would obviously be much enriched by having a meta-structure. If the verbal structure is being projected on to something else outside itself, it is making another analogy at a meta-poetic level. And this projection provides a further kind of ending or completion.[40]

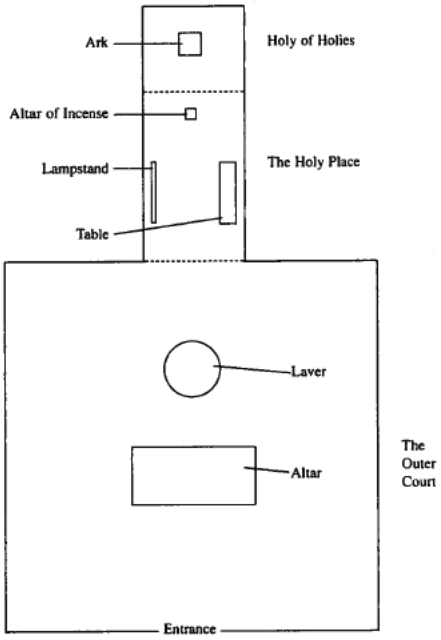
There may be other texts in the Old Testament that are closely tied spatially to rooms or the overall floor plan of the Temple. Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 40–48 come, of course, readily to mind, and the floor plan of other temple texts may be present, though less apparent, elsewhere. As Joseph M. Spencer has discussed, John E. Levenson's book about the Jewish drama of creation and ongoing cosmology "points to the architecture of the temple as a physical embodiement of [a] dialectical theology," separating heaven (the Holy of Holies), from the earth (the Hekal), and further from conquered chaos (the Brass Laver in the court outside the temple).[41] Furthermore, Marshall Goodrich has discerned a way to see the book of Malachi as a temple text.[42] Mack

40. Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 131–134. See also her *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

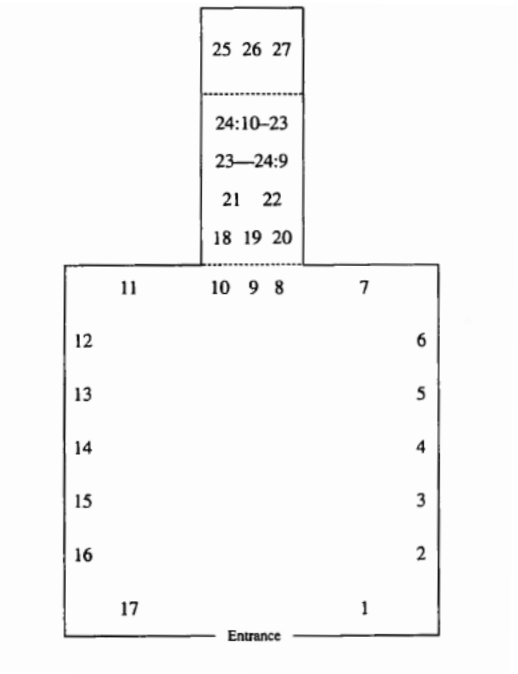
41. Joseph M. Spencer, *Another Testament: On Typology* (Salem, Oregon: Salt Press, 2012), 47–49, discussing John E. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988),

42. Temple themes dominate the book of Malachi: for example, the law of obedience (1:6); not polluting the bread on the table of the Lord (1:7); making an acceptable sacrifice and vows to God (1:8, 10, 14); not dealing treacherously with a brother or profaning the holy (2:10–11); keeping the law of chastity and fidelity to spouse and God (2:14–16); making pure consecration of tithes and offerings (3:3–10); bringing parents and children, ancestors and posterity, together (4:5–6).

6A. Floor Plan and Furnishings of the Tabernacle



6B. Leviticus 1–27 Set in the Tabernacle



Source: Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature,* 221, 222; quoted in Duane L. Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible: Exploring the Beauty and Structure of the Bible* (New York: Paulist, 2003), 31, 32.

Sterling has recently seen the book of Job as reflecting an endowment ritual,[43] something that Hugh Nibley might have called a ritual drama.[44] The idea that the book of 3 Nephi can be seen as "the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon" adds yet another element of architectural connection to the analysis of the Sermon at the Temple.[45] All of which is simply to say that the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament may not be alone as a type of temple escort text.

Was the Sermon on the Mount a Pre-Matthean Text?

All of the foregoing would seem to say that the Sermon on the Mount was not composed by Matthew but existed as a text before Matthew wrote his Gospel. The emphasis on the Temple in the words and organization of the Sermon on the Mount would only be relevant to a composer as well as to listeners who were intimately familiar with the Temple, which can hardly be said of Christians in Antioch in the 70s, if that is the time and place when the Gospel of Matthew was written, as many have suggested.

D. Marshall Goodrich, email to author, February 23, 2009; John W. Welch, "Seeing 3 Nephi as the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon," in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2012), 27–28.

43. Mack Stirling, "Job: An LDS Reading," presented at The Temple on Mount Zion conference, Provo, Utah, September 22, 2012.

44. See, for example, Hugh W. Nibley, "Abraham's Temple Drama," in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 1–42.

45. John W. Welch, "Seeing Third Nephi as the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 19, no. 1 (2010): 36–55; reprinted in Skinner and Strathearn, *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, 1–34.

For one thing, as I pointed out in *Illuminating*, the vocabulary of the Sermon on the Mount contrasts sharply with the words used by Matthew in the rest of his gospel. Of the 383 basic vocabulary words in the Sermon, I count 73 (or 19% of the total) that appear only in the Sermon (sometimes more than once) and then never again appear elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew.[46]

Seeing its temple character reinforces further the view that the Sermon on the Mount should be thought of as a pre-Matthean source,[47] written at an early time when Jesus and his followers were still hoping for a restoration, reform, and rejuvenation of the Temple, not its destruction or obsolescence. In looking for the Temple to be a house of prayer, Jesus affirmed the "legitimacy of its function" and desired "to see that function restored."[48] A previous, solemn ritual use of the Sermon on the Mount among the early disciples would help to explain its respectful presentation by Matthew as a single block of text, which would strengthen several conclusions advanced by Betz and others that the Sermon on the Mount is in some ways *un*-Matthean and in most ways *pre*-Matthean,[49] and is in no case inconsistent with the characteristics of the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus.[50] Alfred Perry similarly finds evidence that Matthew worked from a written source that he regarded "so highly that he used it for the foundation of his longer Sermon, even in preference to the Q discourse."[51] This pre-Matthean temple understanding of the Sermon on the Mount would also explain why "the parting of the ways" between Christians and other varieties of Jews in the first century turned out to be a longer and more complicated process than one might otherwise have expected,[52] for a simple rejection of the Temple would have resulted in a much less problematical separation.

In particular, Betz's position, which has much to commend it, sees the Sermon on the Mount as a composite of pre-Matthean sources, embodying a set of cultic instructions that served the earliest Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem as an epitome of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Matthew incorporated into his gospel. Thus, for example, Betz calls Matthew 6:1–18 "the Cultic Instruction,"[53] i.e. a text with temple and ritual connections, authored by someone who "must have been a Jewish theological mind with some rather radical ideas," and thus likely either "Jesus himself" or "a member of the Jesus-movement who was inspired by the teaching of the master."[54] Betz uses the idea of early authorship of the Sermon on the Mount to explain otherwise obscure passages, such as "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you" (Matthew 7:6). For most commentators, "the original meaning [of this saying] is puzzling."[55] This logion has been called "a riddle."[56] In Betz's view, the likelihood is that this saying was "part of the pre-Matthean SM; . . . it may have been as mysterious to [Matthew]

46. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple*, 215.

47. Certain passages in the Sermon on the Mount may well postdate Jesus' lifetime, such as those that reflect anti-Pauline sentiments. However, these may be later additions.

48. Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology of the Temple," 138.

49. Hans Dieter Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, trans. L. L. Welborn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 1–15, 55–76; and Hans Dieter Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 70–80. On the conjectured existence of other pre-Matthean sources, see Georg Strecker, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Exegetical Commentary*, trans. O. C. Dean Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 55–6, 63, 67–8, 72.

50. Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1971), 29–37; see John Strugnell, "'Amen, I Say unto You' in the Sayings of Jesus and in Early Christian Literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 67, no. 2 (1974): 177–82. The Sermon speaks in parables, proclaims the kingdom, and uses cryptic sayings, amen, and Abba.

51. Alfred M. Perry, "The Framework of the Sermon on the Mount," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 54 (1935): 103–15, quote on 115.

52. Showing that the separation of Christianity from Judaism was a slow and complex process, with the Temple being the key issue that distinguished the various Jewish sects and movements, see Bauckham, "Parting of the Ways," 135–51.

53. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 329.

54. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 348.

55. Strecker, *Sermon on the Mount*, 146; Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 494–95.

56. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 418.

as it is to us."[57] This view of the SM also opens the way for Betz to conclude "with confidence" that the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13 "comes from the historical Jesus himself."[58] Although Betz is not prepared to attribute every part of the SM in Matthew to the historical Jesus (and neither am I[59]), I would agree that points such as these make it possible to see much of the SM as having originated with Jesus himself. Seeing the SM through the lens of Temple Studies invites us to agree with Betz all the more.

Quotations or Echoes from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 10–25 (Table 7)

In *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, I advance several additional reasons why the Sermon should be seen as a pre-Matthean text used by Jesus in instructing initiates and guiding them through the stages of induction into the full ranks of discipleship, explaining why bits and pieces of the Sermon appear elsewhere in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as in letters of James and Paul.[60] Because I have found even more evidence to support this line of reasoning,[61] I wish to expand on those reasons at this time. On the handout, I give you a newly expanded version of Table 2 in that book. As far as I am aware no comprehensive collection of Sermon on the Mount elements reappearing elsewhere in Matthew and in the New Testament has ever been assembled, but the present Tables 7 and 8 are a start. You can see at a glance that certain words, phrases, thoughts, and sentences found in the Sermon on the Mount appear, not only (as is well known) in Luke 6 (the Sermon on the Plain, delivered to a general audience that included Gentiles and unbelievers), but surprisingly—at least to most readers—another wide array of Sermon echoes appears in Matthew chapters 10–25. Generally, allusions to the earlier parts of the Sermon come in chapters 10–15, verbiage from the middle parts of the SM comes in chapters 18–19, and echoes of the concluding parts of the Sermon come in chapters 21–25. Although those echoes are not rigorously clustered, they follow the sequence in the Sermon closely enough to indicate that the heart of the Gospel of Matthew in chapters 10–25, for the most part, follows the order in which these ideas were presented originally in the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, Matthew chapters 10–25 take for granted, draw upon, utilize, reinforce, and build upon the foundation laid in Matthew 5–7. From the following, it is apparent that Matthew presents the disciples as knowing the Sermon; these texts presuppose that the followers of Jesus had already accepted and were bound by the Sermon, for as Jesus quotes sections from all parts of the Sermon, the disciples understand, without argument or hesitation, the correctness and authoritativeness of its rubrics.

For example, in sending out the Twelve Apostles, he told them not to fear, for not a sparrow falls upon the ground without their Father noticing and "the very hairs (*triches*) of [their] head are all numbered," and surely they as apostles "are of more value than many sparrows" (10:29–31). That brief statement does not give much assurance (after all, the sparrow has "fallen," presumably dead). But having already placed their lives in God's hands, being unable to make one hair (*tricha*) white or black (5:36), and knowing that the Father has promised to clothe them (see 3 Nephi 13:25) as he "clothes the grass of the field" (6:26, 30), these assurances of the Lord would have been completely reassuring, especially when read in connection with priestly functions of verifying the absence of impurities and being clothed more gloriously than Solomon in all his royal and temple splendor.[62]

57. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 494.

58. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 349.

59. For example, I see the anti-pharisaical, possible anti-Gentile, and alleged anti-Pauline elements in the SM among the possible later additions to the SM, which do not appear in the Sermon at the Temple in 3 Nephi. I would also suggest that the more explicit covenant-making setting, the emphasis on the desires of the heart, the absence of unseemly penalties, and the greater optimism of universality in the ST may also reflect the original concerns and teachings of the historical Jesus. See Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple*, 132–44.

60. Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 211–18.

61. This and the following section of this paper draw on sections in the chapter John W. Welch, "Echoes from the Sermon on the Mount," in *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture*, ed. Gaye Strathearn, Thomas A. Wayment, and Daniel L. Belnap (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2010), 312–40.

62. Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 157–64.

The promise of receiving a great reward (*misthon*) in heaven is a dominant theme in the Sermon on the Mount (5:12, 46; 6:1, 2, 5, 16). It remains a persistent precept, more so than in other gospels, in Matthew 10:41–42, which promises "a prophet's reward" and a secure "reward," and also in Matthew 20:8, in the parable about the laborers being paid their "reward" at the end of the day.

The idea of being "the least in the kingdom of heaven" appears first in Matthew 5:19, and then is echoed in Matthew 11:11. On the one hand, the least (*elachistos*) is he who teaches others to break the smallest of the commandments; while on the other hand, the lesser (*mikroteros*) in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist. In Matthew 18:4, completing this sequence, one learns who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, namely he who "humbles himself as this little child."

In Matthew 12:31–37, after being accused by the Pharisees of casting out devils by the power of the Satan, Jesus explained the inner unitary nature of righteousness. "A house divided against itself is brought to desolation" (12:25); and "he that is not with me is against me" (12:30); and "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven" (12:31). Why are these things so? Because, as had already been established in Matthew 7, a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, "a tree is known by its fruit" (*ek gar tou karpou to dendron ginōsketai*, 12:33), "a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things (*agatha*): and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things (*ponēra*)" (12:35), and therefore "by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (12:37). Several key words here clearly echo 7:17–20, about trees being known by their fruit (*apo tōn karpōn autōn epignōsesthe autous*), and then 7:1–2, about being judged by the judgment one has judged. Since the essence of one's nature is in doing "the will of my Father which is in heaven" (*poiōn/poiēsēi to thelēma tou patros ou tou en ouranois*, virtually identical in 7:21 and 12:50), this explains why it is ultimately impossible for Jesus and his apostles, who are in harmony with the will of the Father, to speak against the Holy Ghost or to act in concert with the devil. Otherwise, they cannot "enter into the kingdom of heaven" (the same expression being found in both 7:21 and 18:3).

The declaration in Matthew 5:28 about committing adultery in one's heart is expanded and elaborated seven times over in Matthew 15:18–19, "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

The two sayings in Matthew 18:8–9, about cutting off a hand (or foot) and casting it away, or plucking out an eye and casting it away, are quoted extensively—and in the reverse order—from how they appear in 5:29–30, which speaks of plucking out thy right eye and casting it away, or cutting off thy right hand and casting it away. In both passages, it is better for a disciple to lose one member of his body than for the entire body "to be cast into hell." In 5:29–30 this extreme measure is compared to the even more serious offense of committing adultery; in 18:8–9 this saying is invoked in connection with the solemn injunction not to offend (*skandalizēi*) or despise (*kataphronēsēte*) even the smallest child. The power of 5:29–30 provides the basis upon which 18:8–10 builds.[63] First the man's sexual loyalty to his wife must be established; then, his commitment not to neglect or abuse his or other children follows *a fortiori*. The connection between these two texts says that Jesus has required his men to be completely and equally faithful both to their wives and children.

The initial theme of settling quickly with a brother in private (Matthew 5:23–25) is amplified in Matthew 18:15–19, which instructs church leaders how to resolve cases of a brother's transgression, first in private and then before witnesses, and then through appropriate church councils. In both cases, the hope is for reconciliation and "gaining thy brother." From the very middle of the Sermon, which explains unequivocally that "if ye forgive (*aphēte*) men their trespasses, your heavenly father

63. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 236–39, questions what the right eye and the right hand have to do with adultery, but he agrees that "the connection was made prior to Matthew. That tradition appears to be more specifically the SM itself and not Q."

will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses" (6:14–15). For half of Matthew 18, Jesus answers the question, "how oft shall . . . I forgive?" (*aphēsō*, 18:21), by telling the painful story of the unforgiving servant, who was forgiven (*aphēken*, 18:27) by his lord, but would not forgive his fellow servant. The application of the story, as a model of the behavior of the Father in heaven set forth in 5:14, is made explicit in 18:35.

In the following chapter (Matthew 19:2–9), Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees about the topic of divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1–4, which he had taken up in Matthew 5:31–32.[64] Although the subject of divorce is complicated,[65] it seems clear that Jesus understands the Pharisees as viewing marriage in temporal terms, whereas he views true marriage as something that "God hath joined together," and therefore as something that men who are not authorized to act in the name of God cannot legitimately "put asunder" (19:6). In such a celestially sanctioned marriage, Jesus' restrictive teachings about divorce, quoted from 5:32 in 19:9, make clear sense, as also does the reactions of the disciples who then in turn question Jesus in private about what this might mean for themselves. Having already taken upon themselves the sacred commitment in 5:32 not to divorce or remarry lightly, the disciples rightly understand that no one should lightly enter into or to secularly dissolve a covenantal marriage (19:10). To their astute observation, Jesus responds, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (19:11). In other words, the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount about divorce and other subjects and their implied extensions were "given" by way of covenant between Jesus, who gives, and the disciple who solemnly accepts. Having previously accepted this commitment, the disciples were ready to be taught the next step.

Matthew next alludes back to Matthew 6:20, where Jesus admonished his followers to lay up "treasures in heaven" (*thēsaurous en ouranōi*). Now, in 19:21, Jesus invites the rich young ruler to "sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," in order to have "treasure in heaven" (*thēsauron en ouranois*), that he might thereby become "perfect" (*teleios*). Because helping people to become "perfect" (*teleioi*) was the objective of the Sermon as stated in Matthew 5:48,[66] the disciples and early Christian readers would have understood that this young man went away not only because he "had great possessions," but because he was unwilling to make the covenantal commitment that the Sermon required, even beyond the single element of consecrated generosity. The disciples, who listened in on those words to the young man (19:23), must have been struck even more clearly by the meaning of the words they had learned in 6:19–24 about loving God, by serving only one master, and by laying up treasures in heaven.

Matthew 21:22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask (*aitēsēte*) in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" builds upon and adds escalating clarification to the simple formulation in Matthew 7:7, "ask (*aiteite*), and it shall be given you."

The characteristic summation, "for this is the law and the prophets" (7:12; see also 5:17), marks not only the culmination of the Sermon on the Mount but also the final instruction given by Jesus to his apostles in Matthew 17–22, which ends with the same words used with distinctive all-inclusiveness, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (22:40).

Verbose prayers are condemned in Matthew 23:14, as they were in 6:7, but note that many manuscripts do not include this point in 23:14.

In Matthew 25:11–12, the five unprepared bridesmaids, who needed to run off to try to get more oil, return after the door has been closed. They give an example of those who will say, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but he answers, "I know you not." The words "*kurie kurie*" are the same as in Matthew 7:22–23, and

64. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 258, discusses the relation between Matthew 19:3–12; Mark 10:2–12; and the earlier Matthew 5:31–32. The ideas of covenant marriage are as early as Genesis 1:28; 2:23–24; and Malachi 2:14, "the wife of thy covenant."

65. Discussed at some length in Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 89–98, and sources cited there.

66. Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 116–20.

Table 7.	Matthew Words	English	SM Source Words	SM
10:26	*mē phobeisthe*	fear not/worry not	*mē merimnate*	6:25
10:29	*strouthia*	sparrows/fowls	*peteina*	6:26
	patros hymōn	your father	*patēr hymōn*	
10:30	*triches*	each hair numbered	*tricha*	5:36
10:41–42 [3x]	*misthon*	reward	*misthos*	5:12, 46
11:11	*mikroteros*	least	*elachistos*	5:19
	en tēi basileiai tōn ouranōn	in the kingdom of heaven	*en tēi basileiai tōn ouranōn*	
12:33	*poiēsate dendron kalon*	make tree good X	*dendron agathon poiei*	7:17
	karpon kalon	fruit good	*karpous kalous*	
	dendon sapron	tree bad X	*sapron dendron*	
	ex tou karpou to dendron ginōsketai	by the fruit the tree is known	*apo tōn karpōn autōn epignōsesthe*	7:16 X
12:35	*agathos, agatha*	good, good X	*ou agathon ponērous*	7:18
	ponēros ponēra	evil, evil	*ou sapron kalous*	
12:50	*poiesei to thelēma tou patros mou tou en ouranois*	do the will of my Father who is in heaven	*poiōn to thelēma tou patros mou tou en tois ouranois*	7:21
15:19	*ek tēs kardias*	from/in the heart	*en tēi kardiai*	5:28
15:29	*anabas eis to oros*	into the mountain	*anabē eis to oros*	5:1
18:3	*eiselthēte eis tēn basileian*	enter into kingdom	*eiseleusetai eis tēn basileian*	7:21
18:4	meizōn en tēi basileiai	great/est in kingdom	megas en tēi basileiai	5:19
18:8	*cheir skandalizei*	hand/right offends	*dexia cheir skandalizei*	5:30
	ekkopson, bale apo sou	cut, throw from you	*ekkopson, bale apo sou*	
	kalon soi	better for you	*sympheri soi*	
18:9	*ophthalmos skandalizei*	eye/right eye offends	*ophthalmos skandalizei*	5:29 X
	exele, bale apo sou	cut, throw from you	*ekkopson, bale apo sou*	
	kalon soi	better for you	*sympheri soi*	
18:21,27	*aphēsō, aphēken*	forgive	*aphēs, aphēkamen*	6:12–15
18:24,28	*opheiletēs, opheileis*	debts, owe	*opheiletais*	6:12
19:7	*dounai, apostasiou*	give, divorcement	*dotō, apostasion*	5:31–32
	gamēsēi moichatai	marries adultery	*gamēsēi moichatai*	
19:21	*thēsauron en ouranōi*	treasure/s in heaven	*thēsaurous en ouranōi*	6:20
	teleios	perfect	*teleioi*	5:48
20:8	*misthon*	reward	*misthon*	6:1–2, 16
21:22	*aitēsēte,lēmpsesthe*	ask, receive/given	*aiteite, dothēsetai*	7:7
22:40	*nomos kai prophētai*	law and prophets	*nomos kai prophētai*	7:12
25:11–12	*kurie kurie*	Lord Lord	*kurie kurie*	7:22
25:??	*ouk oida hymas*	I know ye not	*oudepote egnōn hymas*	7:23
25:41	*poreuesthe ap'emou*	depart from me	*apochōreite ap'emou*	7:23
	hoi katēranenoi	ye cursed/workers	*hoi ergazomenoi*	

his answer "I do not know you" (*ouk oida hymas*) is functionally equivalent to the even stronger rejection in 7:23, "I never knew you" (*oudepote egnōn hymas*).

Matthew presents in chapter 25 the last teachings of Jesus before the night of his arrest and trial. He ends his report where Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount. Here in 25:13–15, the Lord speaks of the rewards that will be given to those who magnify the unique talents that each has been given, rewards that will be given before all the nations (i.e. openly, as in 6:4, 6, 18) in the day of his coming in glory (25:31–32). And finally, the Lord speaks in Matthew 25:41 of those who will unfortunately have to be asked to leave: "Depart from me (*poreuesthe ap' emou*), ye cursed" (25:41), which carries the same condemnation that concludes the Sermon on the Mount: "Depart from me (*apochōreite ap' emou*), ye workers of iniquity" (7:23). The fact that Jesus concluded his final instructions to his disciples in Matthew 24–25 by reiterating these final words of the Sermon would not seem to be coincidental.

Thus, it is clear to me that Matthew uses the Sermon for his teaching in chapters 10–25 and not the other way around. In chapter 10–25 we see that all passages he quotes are accepted without explanation or argumentation. They are magisterial mandates. Matthew uses these references knowing that the disciples already understand them; we see Jesus using these, as the historical Jesus, because he knows that his disciples accept them.

Use of the Sermon on the Mount in Mark, Luke, Peter, James, and Paul (Table 8)

Moreover, even more significant for present purposes, Sermon on the Mount elements are also found heavily in 1 Peter (by this count 7 times), in James (12 times), and Romans (11 times). On at least six of these 30 occasions, the word orders are chiastically inverted, which according to Seidel's law, may indicate that these passages were consciously quoted. It seems easier to believe that the Sermon on the Mount was known to Peter, James, John, and even Paul, than to believe that all of these early New Testament writings were somehow known to the writer of the Sermon on the Mount. As mentioned above, Hans Dieter Betz has argued that parts of the Sermon on the Mount should be seen as pre-Matthean. But going beyond Betz's analysis, the verbiage and echoes of the Sermon on the Mount found elsewhere in the New Testament would not only mean that parts of the Sermon on the Mount were also pre-Petrine, pre-Jamesian, and even pre-Pauline, but also (because these quotations and echoes come from every part of the Sermon on the Mount) that the Sermon had become coin of the realm at a very early stage in the first few decades of Christianity. Otherwise, how can one explain the fact that all of these Sermon on the Mount phrases had become so widely known and commonly taken as magisterial? Seeing the Sermon on the Mount as a temple-related text that was used to instruct converts and perhaps specifically to prepare initiates for baptism (as I suggest) would explain this wide distribution of Sermon on the Mount elements across the full breadth shown on Table 8, a suggestion that certainly has enormous implications.

Quotations in Mark. In Mark, elements from the Sermon on the Mount appear much less frequently than in Matthew or Luke, but they are present nonetheless. On four occasions, Mark quotes lines found in the Sermon on the Mount.

In Mark 4, after explaining to the disciples in private the meaning of the parable of the sower—namely that all hearers of the word will be judged by the amount of good fruit they bear—Jesus told (or reminded) the Twelve that they too will be judged by what they bring forth: "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?" (Mark 4:21). This truncated statement in Mark makes full sense only if one assumes that the Twelve (and the readers) were aware of what had been said in Matthew 5:14, extending some kind of actual commission or call for action.[67] Otherwise the thought is left dangling about the point of this little parable. Mark 4:22 then states that all that is "hid (*krypton*)" will come abroad openly (*eis phaneron*), reflecting the clear sense, even if not the form of the earliest Greek manuscripts, of Matthew 6:4, 6, which teach that

67. The commissioning element is clearer in 3 Nephi 12:13–16, but it is amply present in Matthew 5:13–16 as well (Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 67–76).

acts of righteousness that are done in secret (*en tōi kryptōi*) will be rewarded openly (*en tōi panerōi*). Finally, after warning the disciples to have "ears to hear" and to be careful about which voices they obey, Jesus applies the rule that "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (Mark 4:24, quoting Matthew 7:2) and that "he that hath not, from him shall be taken" (Mark 4:25, quoting Matthew 25:29). Jesus' words in this short passage draw again from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Sermon on the Mount, thereby invoking it in its entirety.

In Mark 9, Jesus spoke again to the Twelve in private. In response to their dispute over who was greatest, Jesus told them to receive anyone who casts out devils in his name (Mark 9:38–40) and that, on pain of being cast into hell, they should not offend anyone who so much as gives a disciple of Christ a cup of water (Mark 9:38–48). Again, this brief instruction makes good sense if one assumes that the Twelve have already been told that some who perform miracles in Jesus' name will be told to depart (Matthew 7:22). Those people, like children, need to grow and should not be offended. For now, they are not against God, and if they come to know the Lord, someday they will enter into his presence. But before that day, "everyone," including the Twelve, "will be salted with fire" (Mark 9:49, their own sacrifice offered with salt[68]), and thus they should have salt, or peace, among themselves. The key premise that stands in Mark 9 behind Jesus' reprimand—namely that in some way they are the salt that should not lose its savor—remains unstated, presumably because the disciples already know it.

In Mark 10, after answering in public the question raised by the Pharisees about divorcing one's wife, Jesus again spoke to his disciples in private about this matter, explaining that the rule, which applies among them, applies to husbands as well as to wives who divorce their spouse and marry another (Mark 10:11–12). One can see how a need for clarification could logically have arisen out of the teaching on divorce in Matthew 5, which did not mention this point in specific.

In Mark 11, after cursing the fig tree, Jesus spoke in confidence to Peter: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (11:24, echoing Matthew 7:7–8), and "when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (11:25–26, quoting Matthew 5:23; 6:14–15). Here the obligation to reconcile with "thy brother" (Matthew 5:23) is extended to forgiving anyone, even those in Jerusalem who seek to destroy Jesus (11:18) and will wither like the barren fig tree (illustrating Matthew 7:20, "By their fruits, ye shall know them").

In all these instances in Mark, the words were spoken to disciples in private, consistent with the esoteric, covenantal nature of these teachings. It would seem that each of these reminders and clarifications assumes a previous commitment to the underlying principles involved.

Quotations in Luke. Numerous parallels exist between passages in the Gospel of Luke and the Sermon on the Mount, especially concentrated in the Sermon on the Plain (in Luke 6) and Jesus' teaching to the disciples on prayer (in Luke 11). These parallels have been meticulously examined and extensively discussed for centuries,[69] and my intent here is not to consider each of these many points of contact between Luke and Matthew. Instead, I wish to make two arguments.

First, the Sermon on the Plain is a public text, and this accounts for which teachings it includes. In Luke 6, Jesus spoke to a large, diverse audience "from Jewish and Greek cities" (Luke 6:17). At the end of these teachings, Luke continues, "Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum" (Luke 7:1). Many in that audience were not faithful followers, let alone disciples, of Jesus; he cursed them for being rich, haughty, and socially accepted (Luke 6:24–27), and he chided them for not doing the things he said (Luke 6:46). It appears that Jesus

68. Several manuscripts, including Alexandrinus and Bezae Cantabrigiensis, add "and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," obviously recalling a Sermon on the Mount connection.

69. See Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 37–44, 69–88, 571–640.

Table 8. Selected SM Verbiage and Echoes Found Elsewhere in the New Testament

SM Matt 5–7	Mark	Luke	1 Peter	James	Romans
Blessed (*makarioi*)		14:15		1:12	14:22
be the poor		6:20			
the hungry		6:21			
merciful/mercy (*eleos*)				2:13	
sons of God					8:14
reviled (*oneidizō*)		6:22–23	4:14		
persecuted (*dikaiosynēn*)			3:14 **[x]**		
Reward (*misthos*)		10:7		5:4	
Salt is good, savor	9:50	14:34–35			
Lamp under bushel	4:21	8:16			
See your *kala* works			2:12 **[x]**		
Glorify God (*doxasōsin*)			2:12		
Fulfill the law					8:4
Not one tittle		16:17			
Shun anger (*orgē*)				1:19-20	
No insulting a brother					14:10
Reconcile with brother/all	11:18				
Settle lawsuits quickly		12:58–59			
Lust (*epithymia*) and sin				1:14-15	
Cut off eye/hand	9:43–48 **[x]**				
Divorce	10:11–12	16:18			
Oath, heaven, earth, yea, nay				5:12	
Return not evil for evil					12:17 **[x]**
Turn the other cheek		6:29–30			
Love your enemies		6:27–28, 32–35			12:20
Overwhelm evil in good					12:21
Pray for, bless persecutors					12:14
Be perfect [be merciful] (*teleioi*)		[6:36]		1:4; 3:2	
Not as hypocrites			2:1		
In secret	4:22				
The Lord's Prayer		11:2–4			
Father					8:15
Forgive (*aphēo*)	11:25–26				
God temptation (*peirazō*)				1:13	
Treasure in heaven, thief		12:33–34			
Eye single		11:34–36			
Mammon		16:13			
Worry (*merimnate*)		12:22–34	5:7		
Judge not (*krinō*)				4:11	2:1; 14:10
What judgment you judge	4:24	6:37–38, 41–42			
Ask and be given	11:24			1:5–6	
Knock, open		11:9–13			
Good (*agatha*) gifts (*domata*)				1:17	
Golden rule		6:31			
Narrow door		13:23–24			
Tree known by its fruit		6:43–44			
figs (*syka*) and grapes/vine				3:12 **[x]**	
Lord, Lord		6:46			
Depart from me		13:25–27			
Hear and do (*akouō poieō*)				1:22 **[x]**	
Built (*themelioō*)			5:10		
Upon the rock		6:47–49			

Note: **[x]** = chiastic, Seidel's Law

limited what he said to them, following his own rule of not giving the holy thing to those who are unprepared to receive it (Matthew 7:6). While the Sermon on the Plain follows the same order as the Sermon on the Mount, it suitably contains only its more public elements.[70] Present in Luke 6 are the more ordinary beatitudes of blessing the poor, those who hunger, and those who are reviled (6:20–23); the more social wisdom of turning the other cheek and loving one's enemies (6:27–35), not being judgmental (6:37–42), and following the Golden Rule (6:31); the logical truism of knowing a tree by its fruit (6:43–44); the indisputable need to do more than simply say "Lord, Lord" (6:46); and the sensibility of building one's house on a firm foundation (6:47–49). Likewise, a practical instruction to settle quickly with any adversary (not just a brother as in Matthew 5:22, 24) is given to the people in Luke 12:54, 57–59.

Missing here—outside of the confines of the "mountain" and a covenant community of "his disciples" (as in Matthew 5:1)—are elements that one would expect to be reserved for the closer circle of righteous disciples: for example, certain beatitudes of inner discipleship, with their future blessings of seeing God, becoming children of God, and inheriting the heavenly kingdom; commissions to be salt of the earth and city on a hill; and a demand to keep every provision of the law as stipulations of the covenant (including the avoidance of anger against a brother, the instruction to reconcile with brothers in the community of faith, the higher rules of covenant marriage, the swearing of simple oaths, and giving alms in secret). The saying about becoming perfect is also absent in Luke 6:36, where the public is told instead to be merciful. Gone also are the lines about praying in secret; fasting, washing, and anointing; not casting the holy thing before the dogs; concerns about false prophets; entering through the narrow gate into life eternal; and doing the will of the Father in order to be allowed to enter into his presence.

Second, I wish to point out that elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke (as we also saw in Matthew and Mark), Jesus privately spoke to his disciples about these more elevated topics: for example, losing one's savor and being cast out (Luke 14:34–35, a reference to excommunication), not placing one's lamp under a bushel (8:16, which presupposes a prior commitment to being a light unto the world), needing to pray in a prescribed way (11:1–4), knocking and being assured that the door will be opened and the Holy Spirit given (11:9–13), laying up treasures in heaven (12:33–34), having an eye single to God's glory (11:34–36), receiving food and clothing in support of their ministry (12:22–32), keeping every jot and tittle of the law (16:16–17), avoiding remarriage after divorce (16:18), serving God and not Mammon (16:13), and entering through the narrow door (13:24) or being asked to depart from God's presence (13:25–27). In all these cases, Jesus spoke these words to his disciples in private, consistent with a higher state of seriousness, preexisting commitment, or sanctity. On the only other such occasion in Luke, Jesus spoke to an unidentified person about entering in through the narrow gate (13:23–27), but that speaker already began by addressing Jesus as "Lord," and they spoke together in confidence.

In sum, the Gospel of Luke adds evidence to support the idea that some portions of the Sermon on the Mount were better suited to private settings or were easily adapted for broader use in public declarations. If the Sermon on the Mount was the covenantal fountainhead of these scattered sayings in Luke, this explains why these derivatives carried such numinous power and decisive authority whenever they were used. Luke also gives the distinct impression that selected sentences from the sermon were readily on the lips of Jesus as he walked and talked in public or in private, making it highly unlikely that Jesus would have said these things only once, on some unique occasion or in one particular form.[71]

Elements in 1 Peter. Beyond the ministry of Christ, elements from the Sermon on the Mount continue to appear in the letters of Peter, James, Paul, and elsewhere, which bears out the conclusion that the Sermon on the Mount was coin of the realm for Christians in the third decade of Christianity. Since

70. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 372.

71. Andrej Kodjak, *A Structural Analysis of the Sermon on the Mount* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 168.

baptism was understood in 1 Peter 3:21 as necessarily involving a covenantal pledge (*eperōtēma*) to do God's will, the pervasive use of phrases from the Sermon on the Mount in the early apostolic writings strongly suggests that the sermon provided basic instructions and stipulations used in the formal process of becoming a member of the early Christian Church.[72] Peter himself admonished the Saints to use the very sayings (*logia*) of God: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles [*logia*] of God" (1 Peter 4:11), and indeed he follows his own advice by using the words of Jesus on several instances, ranging from the sermon's very first word and its pointed directions to the disciples, to one of its very last words. For example:

Peter's First Epistle contains several strong echoes of the Beatitudes, using the sermon's opening word "blessed (*makarioi*)" in two beatitudinal constructions. 1 Peter 3:14, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake (*dia dikaiosunēn makarioi*)" is quite similar to Matthew 5:10, although with an inversion of the Matthean word order, "*makarioi . . . heneken dikaiosunēs*." 1 Peter 4:14 recalls the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake" (Matthew 5:11). Peter says, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [blessed] are ye." The KJV obscures the parallelism between these passages by inconsistently translating Greek words which appear in each passage. In 1 Peter 4:14, the word *oneidizō* is rendered as "reproached," but the same word in Matthew 5:11 is translated as "reviled." The word "happy" in the KJV of 1 Peter 4:14 is *makarioi* (blessed).

The phrase "see your good works" in 1 Peter 2:12 (*ek tōn kalōn ergōn epopteuontes*) has conceptual similarities to the commission in Matthew 5:16, that people may see your good works (*idōsin hymōn ta kala erga*). Peter encourages his readers to do good works which "the Gentiles" may behold and thereby "glorify God in the day of visitation (*doxasōsin ton theon en hēmerai episkopēs*)," restating the instruction of Jesus to let your light shine so that when "men" behold it, they may "glorify your Father which is in heaven (*doxasōsin ton patera ton hymōn en tois ouranois*." Each of these two passages uses the same verb *doxasōsin* ("that they may glorify"). The object of this verb, whether "your Father which is in heaven" or "God in the day of visitation," is the same being. The words for "good works" (*kala erga*) in both passages are also the same and somewhat distinctive, because the word *agatha* (the more common word for "good") could have been used alternatively in either case.

In 1 Peter 2:1, when Peter instructs his followers to lay aside "hypocrisies," he picks up a theme repeated four times in the Sermon on the Mount about not being "as the hypocrites" (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5). Peter also instructs them to cast all anxiety on the Lord: "casting all your care (*merimnan*) upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7), the verbal form of this word appearing four times in the Sermon on the Mount: "take no thought (*merimnate*) for your life" (Matthew 6:25; see also vv. 27, 28, 31), for the Lord will take care of what his disciples shall eat and drink and wherewith they will be clothed.

Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount with the extended simile of the wise man who built his house upon the rock, the word for "built" being the pluperfect form of *themelioō* (Matthew 7:25). Peter likewise ends his first epistle with the assurance that the God of all glory will "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you," the word translated as "settle" being the same as the SM word for being built, or established (*themelioō*) on the rock, a word clearly coming, here as in the Sermon, from "the semantic field of building activity."[73]

Strong Allusions in James. Although the details are not always unambiguous, it seems quite evident that the Epistle of James also consciously draws on a known body of basic Christian teachings that was used in his community as an accepted, persuasive, binding text that governed daily life. The writer links his letter "intertextually with the authoritative

72. For a discussion of the Sermon on the Mount as part of a possible conversion ritual, comparable in some ways to the Jewish Giyyur proselyte ritual, see Welch, *Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple*, 193–97.

73. John H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 867.

scriptural writings of his day."[74] In particular, the following elements support the idea that James draws on passages from the Sermon on the Mount, mainly those that have practical, ethical applications. His selection ranges again throughout the entire sermon and includes items that in his context understandably presuppose brotherly relations and obligations of righteousness that would apply more within a faithful community than to the public at large. Without belaboring the pattern seen above, one may compare many passages in James with correspondences in the Sermon on the Mount.[75] For example, following the order in which these words appear in Matthew 5–7, compare:

- James 1:12 with the form of the Beatitudes (blessed . . . , for . . .; *makarioi . . . hoti*). James uses the same expression, *makarios . . . hoti*, in another beatitude, this time about enduring temptation: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life."[76]
- James 2:13 with Matthew 5:7 (on the merciful being given mercy). Expressing the opposite regarding the unmerciful, in reverse order, James writes, "Judgment without mercy" shall be given to him "that hath shewed no mercy." James uses the noun for "mercy" *eleos*, while the sermon uses verbal forms of *eleaō* to speak of the merciful receiving mercy.
- James 1:19–20 (telling brothers to be slow to anger) with Matthew 5:22 (telling brothers who are angry that they are in danger of judgment). The message is the same and rather distinctive. James uses the noun form, *orgē*, while Matthew's account uses a participial form of *orgizō*.
- James 1:14–15 (on lust bringing forth sin and death) with Matthew 5:28 (on lust leading to adultery). Here again, James uses a noun form, *epithymia*, while Matthew uses a verbal form of *epithymeō*.
- James 5:12 with Matthew 5:33–37 (both speaking of not swearing oaths by heaven or earth, but only by yes or no). Each passage uses the verb *omnyō* (to swear), the word pair *ouranos* (heaven) and *gē* (earth), and the injunction to say *nai nai* (yea yea) or *ou ou* (nay nay). These are the only two places in the New Testament where this instruction is given.
- James 1:4 ("that ye may be perfect") and 3:2 (being "a perfect man") with Matthew 5:48 (on becoming perfect, "be ye therefore perfect"). Both James and Matthew use the adjective *teleioi* to describe the perfect state to which the disciples ought to strive (see also Matthew 19:21).
- James 1:13 with Matthew 6:13 (on God not tempting, or being tempted by evil). Each passage uses forms of the word, *peirasmos* (temptation): Matthew uses the noun form, *peirasmos*, while James uses a verb form of *peirazō*. The assurance that God does not tempt any man (in James 1:13) seems to be an obvious correction of some misunderstanding of the prayer in Matthew 6:13 asking God to "lead us not into temptation."
- James 4:11 ("speak not evil one of another, brethren" for he that speaks evil of a brother "judgeth his brother") with Matthew 7:1–2 (on not judging a brother or worrying first about the mote in a brother's eye). Each discourages disciples from judging brothers unrighteously, and each uses the verb *krinō* (judge).
- James 1:5–6 (ask of God, that giveth to all") with Matthew 7:7 (also on asking of God). Each passage uses the verb *aiteō* in the imperative (ask), followed by the future passive form of the word *didōmi* (it shall be given).
- James 1:17 with Matthew 7:11 (both dealing with good and perfect gifts coming down from

74. David R. Nienhuis, "James as a Canon-Conscious Pseudepigraph," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009), 195.

75. Mentioned in John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the New Testament," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim, 1981; reprinted Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 212; see also Patrick J. Hartin, "James and the Q Sermon on the Mount/Plain," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1989 Seminar Papers*, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 440–57; and Patrick J. Hartin, *James and the "Q" Sayings of Jesus* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 140–72. However, the precise nature of the relationship between James and the sermon remains a puzzle (Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 6 n. 13).

76. Although the word "blessed" is used in many places, such as at the beginning of Psalms 1:1, the formula "blessed . . . , for . . ." is less common.

heaven). While Matthew uses *domata agatha* ("good gifts"), and James uses *pasa dosis agathē* ("every good gift"), the phrases are synonymous. In Matthew the gifts come from the Father in Heaven, while in James from the Father of lights.

- James 3:11–12 with Matthew 7:16–22 (in both cases speaking about people not uttering both blessings or curses, as trees can produce either good or bad fruit). Though the vocabulary differs slightly here, the concept is clearly parallel. James 3:12 speaks of "figs" (*syka*) and a vine (*ampelos*); the Sermon on the Mount (7:16) uses grapes (*staphylas*) and figs (*syka*). The similar use by James of rhetorical questions and impossible botanical contrasts seems to draw very clearly on the dominical language of the Lord, as nowhere else in the New Testament.
- James 1:22–23 ("be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only") with Matthew 7:24–27 (on the urgency of both hearing and doing the word). Both passages use variations of the word *poieō* (do). Matthew uses the verb *poieō*, while James uses the noun *poiētēs* (doer); and Matthew uses the verb *akouō* (hear), while James uses the noun *akroatēs* (hearer).

Although some of these words appear elsewhere in the New Testament, the density of words, phrases, ideas, and strong teachings used by James and found in the Sermon on the Mount show that these two texts are closely associated with each other. Indeed, Jeremias has correctly noted that James and the Sermon on the Mount share the same overall character as bodies of early Christian teachings,[77] and in most cases it makes good sense to see James using the sermon rather than the other way around.

Echoes from the Sermon on the Mount in Paul. Similarly, some of Paul's letters reflect parts of the Sermon on the Mount, although admittedly less frequently and more loosely than the letters of Peter and James. Nevertheless, these connections are close enough that one may well suspect that Paul knew the provisions of the Sermon on the Mount. Whether Paul's rhetoric in general reflects written or oral channels of transmission is debatable,[78] but in any event the importance of memory must not be discounted,[79] especially where foundational documents or ritual texts may have been involved.

Among notable statements in Paul's letters that rely on language likely from the Sermon on the Mount are the following from the Epistle to the Romans:

- "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (8:4; compare fulfillment of the law in Matthew 5:17–18);
- "sons of God" and "children of God" (8:14, 17; Matthew 5:9);
- cry to God as "Father" (8:15; see Matthew 6:9);
- "bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (12:14; Matthew 5:44);
- "recompense to no man evil for evil" (12:17; Matthew 5:39), but "overcome evil with good" (12:21; Matthew 5:44);
- "if thine enemy hunger, feed him" (12:20; Matthew 5:44);
- "but why dost thou judge thy brother?" (14:10; Matthew 7:2–4); and
- "why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" (14:10; Matthew 5:22). These final two questions strongly imply that Paul's audience in Rome already knew of their obligation to "judge not" or to call no brother a fool, stipulations of discipleship found most prominently in the Sermon on the Mount.

Was Matthew a Levite?

Finally I want to add today an entirely new argument to this temple studies exploration of the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel of Matthew. All of this talk about the Sermon in relation to the Temple raises several inevitable questions. How would Jesus or any of his disciples have known about the

77. Joachim Jeremias, *The Sermon on the Mount*, trans. Norman Perrin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 22. Jeremias uses here the word *didachē* to describe James, the same word used in Matthew 7:28 to describe the Sermon on the Mount.

78. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 6 n. 12.

79. Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998); Eta Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem? Rethinking the Literary Dependence on the First Three Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992), 182–85.

inner workings, wordings, implements and structures of the Temple? And more particularly, how can one account for this temple interest on the part of the apostle Matthew?

These questions invite us to ask the question, Might Matthew have been a Levite? As is well known, Luke 5:27 tells the story of Jesus calling a tax-collector named Levi to come "follow me." Mark 2:14 identifies this tax-collector Levi as the son of Alphaeus, but when Mark and Luke list Matthew as one of the twelve in Mark 3:18 and Luke 6:15, they do not associate Matthew with this Levi, although they both identify James as a son of Alphaeus.[80] Matthew's own list of the Twelve identifies Matthew as a tax-collector (Matthew 10:3), but neither as surnamed Levi. Yet the calling of Matthew in Matthew 9:9 clearly parallels the calling of Levi in Luke 5:27, and one would think that Matthew would know what was going on here. Some, such as Schwartz, therefore have noted "that the combination of Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27, on the one hand, with Matthew 9:9 and 10:3, on the other, leads to the conclusion that Matthew was also known as Levi."[81] Bauckham and others, however, rightly point out that the situation may be more complicated than this. Many think that Mark did not consider Matthew and Levi, the son of Alphaeus, to be the same person,[82] and Bauckham adds that it would be odd for Matthew to have a second Semitic personal name,[83] and some late Patristic sources argued that Matthew and Levi the son of Alphaeus were two different people. But perhaps there are other possibilities here.

For example, would it be possible that both Matthew and Levi the son of Alphaeus were Levites, and in that case, both could have been known as Levi? It would seem implausible that any Jew in the first century could have been called Levi who was not a Levite. It is hard to imagine that any Jewish father or mother would name a son Levi, or that he would come to be known by his associates as Levi, if he were not a member of the tribe of Levi. This point has been further validated by recent research into first century Jewish inscriptions and epitaphs, where it has been found that no one with the name Levi was not a Levite.[84] Stern, Jeremias, Schwartz and Gundry all suppose that Levi was a name typical of Levites, and that a scribe known by this moniker would have been a Levite.[85] Gundry sees the name Levi in New Testament times as always representing tribal origin (cf. Neh 11:15–22), and entertains the possibility that a person such as Matthew Levi could have borne two Levitical, Semitic names, neither of which was a descriptive nickname.[86]

Of course, the name Matthew and its variants would have been a suitable name for a Levite. It derives from the Hebrew *mattan* meaning gift, with Mattaniah, Matthias, Mattenai, Mattithiah, and Matthew all meaning "gift of the Lord." Although Matthew did not choose this name, assuming that it was his given birth name, he would have been reminded daily that he was a gift of the Lord and that he should be grateful for the many gifts given by the Lord to himself, his family, and to the entire House of Israel. Interestingly, the idea of gifts shows up twice in the Sermon on the Mount, once in bringing one's gifts to the altar at the temple, and also seeking a gift from God knowing that the father will not give an evil gift but knows how to answer petitions

80. Some of the manuscripts for Mark say that Jesus did not see Levi but James, the son of Alphaeus, conforming the patronymic in Mark 2:14 with that in Mark 3:18, but the overwhelming consensus of the early Greek manuscripts identify the tax collector in Mark 2:14 as Levi.

81. Daniel R. Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 95 n. 34.

82. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapid, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 108; agreeing with E. Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark,* Journal for the Study of the New Testament Suppliment 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1981), 176–77.

83. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 109.

84. Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity: Part I: Palesitne 330 BCE–200CE* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2002).

85. Menahem Stern, "Aspects of Jewish Society," in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. Shemuel Safrai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, and W van Unnik (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 599; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 213, n. 209; Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*, 95 n. 34; Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 183.

86. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982), 166. For other examples of such nomenclature, see the citations in W. L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 100–101 n. 29; and Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.2.2 §35; 18.4.3 §95; 20.8.11 §196.

to give good gifts, with the temple being the place par excellence where gifts from the Lord were earnestly sought and vows and pledges were made hoping to receive those gifts.

And by the same token, any disciples associated with the name of Levi should probably also be understood as coming from the tribe of Levi. Thus, Mark's Levi the son of Alphaeus would have been a Levite, and that would mean that Alphaeus himself was a Levite, which might mean that James (Jacob) the son of Alphaeus was also a Levite. And with all these Levites in the picture, it is no wonder that they needed to be known by patronymics or nicknames. Especially after Matthias takes the place of Judas among the Twelve in Acts 1:26, the need would have become even greater to differentiate him from the other apostle similarly named Matthew, who thus becomes known as the tax-collector, as he even calls himself (Matthew 10:3).[87]

Moreover, if Matthew was in fact a Levite, he was not alone as a convert to Christianity from the Aaronide ranks. Barnabas, who would become Paul's missionary companion, was a Levite from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). Barnabas, of course, had connections with Jerusalem; John Mark was his cousin. So, although he had an estate in Cyprus, Barnabas was apparently present in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost and became a Christian convert at a very early stage. His first given name was actually Joseph (Joses in the KJV), and he had been surnamed or given the new name (*epiklētheis*) of Barnabas, as he had sold his land and brought the money to Peter and the apostles, complying with the apostolic order that followers of Jesus should liquidate their assets and have their property in common. The name Bar-nabas in Hebrew is said by Luke to have meant "the Son of Consolation," connecting it with the Greek word for the Comforter (*huoios paraklēseōs*), the name given used Christ for the Holy Ghost, the *Paraclete*, whom we can call to our side for support and encouragement.[88] Thus, the name Barnabas would have indicated that he had become a son of the Holy Ghost, or had been born of the Spirit through receiving the gift and comfort of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by the apostles. It is interesting to wonder if this new name might have been given to this Joseph as a convert name, just as Saul was renamed Paul upon his conversion, and perhaps in a similar manner Levi had been renamed Matthew. Such renamings must have reflected a significant personal transformation, signaling rebirth and becoming a new person. It may also have "marked the definite admission to an office, the authoritative reception or recognition of Barnabas as a prophet or a teacher in the society."[89]

In addition to Barnabas, a large number of priests were among the earliest converts to Christianity who awaited especially the return of Jesus to the Temple where they had served: "And the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Moreover, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, served as a priest in the temple, which means that Elizabeth was also from the priestly tribe of Levi, which further means that her cousin Mary was probably also of that tribe. If she came from a Levitical background, Mary may have sung at home the psalms, the songs of the temple, as Jesus grew up. If so, Jesus himself was raised in a home where his parents were at least familiar with, if not even fully attentive to, the full range of Levitical concerns and duties.

The Duties of the Levites (Table 9)

And what were those Levitical concerns and duties? Even more than by the onomastic evidence, the proposition that Matthew was a Levite is strengthened a wider, functional analysis, inspired by the Temple Studies approach. By compiling a list of all of the functions known to have been served by Levites in the first half of the first century (Table 9), and then by comparing that list closely with Matthew's unique vocabulary (Table 10), one can readily see that the Gospel of Matthew shows a clear interest in

87. As Bauckham suggests, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 107.

88. The name Barnabas may also be connected with the Hebrew word for "Prophet" or with the Aramaic word for "refreshment," but Luke's interpretation of the word should not be discounted.

89. Richard B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* in the Westminster Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1964, reprint of 1901), 63.

Table 9. Duties of the Levites

Singing and providing music in the Temple in twenty-four concourses, two weeks a year (1 Chron 25; 2 Chron 5:12; 34:12).
Standing to thank and praise God every morning and evening (1 Chron 23:30)
Caring for the courts, rooms, store-houses and treasuries of the temple (1 Chron 23:28)
Cleansing everything that is holy, the sacred vestments and vessels (1 Chron 23:28)
Serving as custodians of the ark (Deut 10:8)
Transporting, maintaining, and handling of cultic items (Num 3-4; 8:5–22)
Setting out the shewbread and providing the wafers of unleavened bread (1 Chron 23:29)
Preparing the flour for the cereal offerings, the baked offering, the offering mixed with oil
Overseeing standards of measurement of number and amount (1 Chron 23:29)
Making all kinds of burnt offerings at time and in the number required (1 Chron 23:31)
Slaughtering the sacrificial victims and serving the people (Ezek 44:6–14)
Keeping charge of the sanctuary, guarding the gates, opening and closing the outer gates, guarding the doors 24 hours a day (1 Chron 26:1–19)
Teaching people in general (Deut 24:8; 33:10; 2 Chron 35:3; Neh 8:7)
Teaching the law (2 Chron 17:7–9)
Instructing the king (Deut 17:18–20)
Judging and acting as officers of the law (2 Chron 19:8, 11); and as sheriffs, police, law enforcers (1 Chron 23:4). In the time of Ezra, they were the sole members of the Sanhedrin (Deut 17:8-9; 21:5; Ezek 44:15, 24)
Collecting the annual temple tax, tithing, and donations to the temple (Neh 10:38-39)
Functioning as temple agents outside cultic sanctity (Ezek 44:11; 46:24)
Rendering medical services (Lev 13:2; 14:2; Luke 17:14)
Acting as architects and builders in repairing the Temple (2 Chron 34:8–13)
Serving as "scribal and administrative mediators between the public and the ruling Aaronides"*
"Presiding over teaching, worship, and inquiries of the deity"†
Overseeing the temple library and interpreting scripture: "At the outset of the Hellenistic period, then, Levites remained firmly bound to the priestly faculty of the Jerusalem temple, . . . overseeing the collections of literature in the temple library, carrying out administrative duties and, most prominently, carrying scribal/exegetical authority"‡
The Book of Jubilees "restricts the role of legitimate scribes and exegetes of Scripture to hereditary Levites"**
Acting as scribes and writing scripture. In the early Hellenistic era, "literacy and scribal skill are entirely restricted to those carrying Levite status. The authority to compose and interpret Scripture is an exclusive hallmark of the temple-bound priestly circles"††

* Mark Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton, *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 2.

† Leuchter and Hutton, *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, 182.

‡ Leuchter and Hutton, *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, 220.

** Leuchter and Hutton, *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, 222.

†† Leuchter and Hutton, *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, 222–23. See also 2 Chron. 34:13.

many Levitical concerns, any or all of which a Levite like Matthew would very likely have been aware of, if not personally involved with.

In general, Levites were to some extent supported by resources of the temple system, tithes, sacrifices, and the annual temple tax.[90] They ate the meat offered to Yahweh (Dt 18:1–5), and they shared in the tithes every third year.[91] They received as charitable offerings portions of the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil and wool (Deut. 18:4), and in all things, the Levites assisted and were subservient to the priests (Num 18:2,4).

More specifically, the assignments of the Levites included any of the items shown in table 9.

Does the Gospel of Matthew Reflect Letivical Concerns? (Table 10)

Seeing that the Sermon on the Mount is saturated with temple connections and Levitical interests, what about Matthew's gospel in general? Do these Levitical concerns and connections found in the Sermon on the Mount continue to surface as linking themes that run throughout the Gospel of Matthew? By extracting from Matthew's vocabulary a list of words that he alone of the gospel writers makes use of, one can detect verbal clues of Matthew's various interests and professional expertise. Building on that verbal evidence, one can further notice that what emerges in Matthew's Gospel is an array of religious themes, temple practices, and priestly experiences that would have been especially noticeable and significantly meaningful to a Levite. Seeing Matthew as a Levite explains why he would have shown particular interest in this large body of priestly activities and concerns, which Mark (especially writing to Gentiles) and Luke (a physician by profession) would not have cared so much about.

When one looks at the list of Greek words that appear in the New Testament only in the Gospel of Matthew, some expected and other unexpected clusterings of these uniquely Matthean words emerge. As one might expect, since Matthew worked as in Capernaum, a fishing town, and would have known the fishermen there, along with their gear and tackle, he alone uses several words related to fishing, six of them, one time each: *haggos*, "container for a catch of fish"; *hagkistron*, "fish hook"; *amphiblēstron*, "casting a net for fishing"; *anabibazō*, "draw or drag nets ashore"; *sagēnē*, "dragnet," and *parathalassios*, "by the sea, or lake" (4:13). Also, as one would expect of a person involved with revenue collection and financial affairs, Matthew alone uses eight other words related to business and money, one or two times each: *nomisma*, "coin, tax money" (22:19); *didrachmon*, "didrachma, two drachma" (17:24); *statēr*, "stater, four drachmas" (17:27, 26:15); *daneion*, "debt" (18:27); *emporia*, "business" (22:5); *trapezitēs*, "banker" (25:27); *misthousthai*, "hire" (20:1); and *basanistēs*, "jailer, torturer, or possibly inspector" (18:34). Thus, it does not seem coincidental that the gospel of the tax collector Matthew takes particular note of temple matters that have to do with money. He alone reports that Jesus encouraged his disciples to pay the temple tax voluntarily and miraculously provided a coin for them to pay this offering (Matthew 17:24–27).[92] Those who operated the temple economy had, quite notably, violated the principle that temple offerings and transactions should be consecrated exclusively to the Lord, for which Jesus held them accountable. The story of the unforgiving steward, who himself had squandered 10,000 talents owed to his master, may well be a veiled critique of the misuse of the temple treasury, which according to Josephus amounted to the phenomenal sum of 10,000 talents.[93] This story appears only in Matthew 18. Furthermore, Matthew is the only one to point out that the thirty pieces of silver were returned by Judas to the temple treasury, where those coins apparently came from (Matthew 27:5). Given the importance, as temple motifs, of the law of consecration, laying up treasures in heaven,

90. Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2006), 64–81; Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), 9, 256, 380–381, 404–405.

91. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 281.

92. Hugh Montefiore, "Jesus and the Temple Tax," *New Testament Studies* 11 (1964–65): 70–71.

93. John W. Welch, "Herod's Wealth," in *Masada and the World of the New Testament,* ed. John F. Hall and John W. Welch (Provo: BYU Studies, 1997), 81–82.

and serving God and not mammon, it is not surprising that Jesus was so deeply troubled by money changing and commercial abuses in the temple.

But even more, and something I was not expecting to find, was the number of words—at least forty—in Matthew's unique vocabulary that have something to do with the interests and duties of the Levites. This, in my mind, confirms that Matthew was indeed a Levite, as strongly as the previously two vocabulary clusters are consonant with him having been a revenue agent in Capernaum. His Levitical words and their temple-related subjects are shown in table 10.

When compared with Mark and Luke, Matthew adds several unique points of emphasis in reporting Jesus' program of temple novation. In Matthew, in refuting those who criticized Jesus for supposedly working on the Sabbath, Jesus responded, "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one [intending God] greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:5–6). Similarly, when Jesus taught that swearing by the temple really means swearing by God (Matthew 23:16–17), he pointed his disciples toward the true spirit of the temple, the house of God. It is God who sanctifies all things, including the temple, not vice versa.

More work needs to be done in this regard, and so we may not yet be prepared to say definitively that Matthew was Levite and that he reflected Levitical temple interests in his composition of his New Testament Gospel, but a substantial number of significant evidences give reasons to think that this was the case.

But Could a Levite Have Been a Tax-collector?

But, if Matthew were a Levite, could a Levite have been a tax-collector? In brief, I see no reason why a Levite could not have been a tax-collector. While he was probably not a publican working as a powerful money mogul or a franchiser or franchisee in the Roman tax system, he could easily have been involved in any number of other kinds of revenue collection. The word Greek *telonēs* was a generic word for those involved in tax-farming or acting as a revenue agent. Every Greek city had its *telonai*. We think of Matthew narrowly today as a Roman "publican," because the Vulgate translated the Greek word *telonēs* into the Latin publicanus. Perhaps Zacchaeus (Zakchaios) was one of those Roman tax lords (he is called an *architelonēs*) and he was also noted as being very rich (Luke 19:2), so there is reason to distinguish him from Matthew and the ordinary publicans and sinners with whom Jesus would have interacted on a daily basis.

The odious periodic poll taxes were direct taxes that were collected by wealthy contractors who were probably not Jews; but the customs or duties that were collected at a revenue office such as Matthew's toll-booth could not be collected in one taxing season, because these taxes were levied on individual transactions on a day to day basis. To be sure, working in that capacity would have been seen as socially undesirable for many reasons. The general populace saw them as thieves, perhaps because they were susceptible to bribes or playing favorites or pocketing some of the money for themselves, but more than that such an agent would necessarily have had to handle Greek and Roman coins, with images of their gods, the emperor, and other secular and religious pagan symbols, all of which would have been prohibited to an orthodox Jew by the second of the Ten Commandments. Thus, it is true that tax-collectors were counted by the Phrarisees and the Talmud among those who worked in "bogus trades" and were untrustworthy, making them ineligible to serve as judges or witnesses,[94] and that such people were also seen as being "in a special way unclean."[95] But such people could always be ritually cleansed from such impurity without much difficulty. Some tax-farmers even conducted their business honestly and were highly regarded by those who knew them, as for example

94. Along with gamblers, lenders, pigeon trainers, herdsmen, and thieves. See John W. Welch and John F. Hall, *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 3–10; based on table in Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 304.

95. Otto Michel, "*telōnēs*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Friedrich, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), 8:101.

Table 10. Matthew's Levitical Vocabulary

Tithing: *anēthon*, "dill" (23:23) (the Talmud requires that people pay tithes on the seeds, leaves, and stem of dill or anise); *kuminon*, "cummin" (23:23)
Temple treasury and the bribe by the chief priests to Judas: *korbanas*, "temple treasury" (27:6); *statēr*, "stater, four drachmas, one shekel" (26:15); *kryphaios*, "secret, hidden," chamber of secrets (6:18)
Temple layout: *exōteros*: "outer, outmost" (8:12, 22:13, 25:30) (used often in Ezekiel regarding temple areas, Ezek. 40:19, 20, 31; 41:15, 17; 42:1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14; 44:1, 19; 46:20, 21)
Purification and cleansing: *aponiptō*, "wash" (27:24); *diakatharizō*, "clean out, thresh out" (3:12); *diulizō*, "strain out, filter out" (23:24); *katamanthanō*, "consider, observe" (6:28) (inspect for purity in reporting contamination of a home, Lev 14:36)
God's presence or action: *hairetizō*: "choose, appoint" by the Spirit (12:18); *typhomai* "smolder, smoke" (12:20) (smoking flax not quenched until God appears, see Isa 42:3); *eklampō*, righteous ones "shine" as the sun (13:43); *prophthanō*, "come before, come unto" (17:25)
Pots and vessels: *paropsis*, "plate, dish" that Pharisees cleaned beyond the required pots (23:25); *aggeion*, "container, vessel" (25:4) (see Lev. 11:34, container for drink; Lev. 14.5, sacrificial vessel in cleansing of leper presided over by a priest; Num. 4:9, oil vessels in the tabernacle; Num. 5:17, vessel for holy water as part of the jealousy offering presided over by a priest; cf. Herodotus 4.2, vessel for holding money in the treasury)
Blood impurity: *haimorroeō*, "suffer a chronic bleeding" (9:20) (see Lev. 15:33)
Mixing seeds: *epispeirō*, "sow on top of" (13:25); *sunauxanomai*, "different plants growing together" (13:30)
Unclean animals: *kōnōps*, "gnat, mosquito" (23:24)
Prayer: *polulogia*, "many words, long prayer" (6:7); *battalogeō*, "babble, use many words" (6:7) (compare the Levites praying each day); *phylaktērion*, "phylactery" (23:5)
Sacrificial animals: *nossion*, "young bird " (23:37) (cf. Ps. 84:3); *sitistos*, "fattened" (22:4) (suitable for sacrifice)
Forgiveness: *diallassomai*, "be reconciled to, make peace with" (5:24); *hebdomēkontakis*, "seventy times" (18:22) (God's vengeance in Gen. 4:24
Oaths or vows: *katathematizō*, "curse, place oneself under a curse" (26:74); *epiorkeō*, "break an oath, swear falsely" (5:33)
Marriage: *epigambreuō*, "to marry according to the law" (22:24)
Teaching: *phrazō*, "explain, interpret" (15:15); *syntassō*, "direct instruct, order" (21:6); *kathēgētēs*, "teacher, leader, master" (23:10)
Writing: *iota*, "the letter iota" (5:18)
Watching over: *koustōdia*, "a guard" (27:65, 66, 28:11)
Evil spirits: *daimōn*, "demon, evil spirit, god" (8:31) (cf. Isa. 65:11)
Death and burial: *teleutē*, "death" (2:14); *taphē*, "burial place (27:7); *egersis*, "resurrection" (27:53); *Barachias*, father of one Zacharias killed in the Temple (23:35)
The temple tax: *didrachmon*, "didrachma, two drachma" (17:24); *statēr*, "stater, four drachmas" (17:27; 26:15)

the tax-collector John who tried to use his connections and reputation to settle the dispute between the Jews and Gessius Florus at the beginning of the Jewish War.[96]

Matthew's tax collecting activities, of course, are openly acknowledged by Mark, Luke, and Matthew himself. In Mark 2:14 Jesus sees Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the "revenue collection place" (*epi to telonion*), and said to him "follow me." Luke 5:27 reports what appears to be the same event, saying that Jesus went forth and beheld a tax collector (*telonēn*) by the name of Levi, sitting at the place of tax collection. Again, in Matthew 9:9, Jesus sees a man seated at the place of tax collection "called Matthew (*Matthaion*)" and then in Matthew 10:3 when the twelve apostles are names, Matthew is specifically identified as the tax collector (*ho telonēs*), followed by James the son of Alphaeus.

Many forms of taxation were collected within Israel, as well as by agents of the Roman overlords. Matthew could have been involved in the collection of any or all of these various taxes. One should not think of all tax collectors working in Galilee as necessarily working for the Romans. In fact, there were probably very few Romans anywhere in Galilee. Just because Capernaum was a fishing town on the North end of the Sea of Galilee where some travelers entering that region may have stopped does not mean that there would have been a toll booth or a customs office there run by the Romans. While it is unknown what kind of tax collection office Matthew may have been working at, and in fact it is not clear that Matthew's office was in Capernaum, where Peter's home was, he could just as well have been a collector of various Jewish or Herodian taxes.

Jewish or local taxes in Galilee and Judea at the time of Jesus included the annual temple tax of a half shekel per adult male (Exodus 30:11–16),[97] tithing of ten percent of one's increase in herds or crops or fish or produce, tithing in the amount of one percent of food obtained by hunting and gathering, money and contributions for temple sacrifices amounting to probably around one to two percent of the goods and animals offered in kind, and on certain occasions property in any amounts connected with the making of vows, and as contributions on holy days,[98] such as the first dough the first fruits, first sheerings, gleanings, and alms.[99] At the time of Jesus, it appears that two types of tithing were collected: one tenth of a person's crops and herds went to the priests and Levites, and a second tenth went to the Temple.[100] As Leon Morris comments, tithes were paid to the Levites (following Numbers 18:21), who in turn paid to the priests a tithe of the tithes they received (Numbers 18:25–28).[101] In addition, the annual heave offering consisted of two percent of the harvest.[102] In total, a Jewish farmer might have to give as much as 23 percent of his produce to the Temple.[103] While certain exemptions were made for the poor who could not pay,[104] it is clear that the total regular tax burden was heavy. Somebody has to be collecting or assisting in receiving any or all of these taxes, assessments, or contributions.

In addition, the local Herodian Jewish leaders, who were client kings under the Romans, had the authority to collect sales taxes in the amount of approximately one percent of all transactions in the market place, a four percent tax on any transfer of

96. Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.287. See Michel, "*telōnēs*," 8:103.

97. Cf. Nehemiah 10:33–40, which alternatively describes this tax as one third. Josephus describes the half-shekel head tax as being required of every Jew twenty years and older. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.9.1. See generally, Sara Mandell, "Who Paid the Temple Tax When the Jews Were under Roman Rule?" *Harvard Theological Review* 77 (April 1984): 223–32.

98. Robert Oden, "Taxation in Biblical Israel," Journal of Religious Ethics (Fall 1984), 169.

99. Ronald Z. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible During the Period of the First and Second Temples," *Journal of International Law and Practice* (Summer 1998): 246–50.

100. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible," 228; Stevens, *Temple, Tithes, and Taxes*, 93–96.

101.Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 582, discussing the precision with which the rabbis computed and collected tithing even on herbs and anything defined as cultivated food.

102. John Tvedtnes, "The Priestly Tithe in the First Century A.D.," in Hall and Welch, *Masada and the World of the New Testament*, 262.

103. Michael Farris, "A Tale of Two Taxations," in Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today, ed. V. George Shillington (Edinburgh: T&T Clar, 1997), 25; citing Marcus J. Borg, "Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus," *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* (New York: Edwin Mellon, 1998), 5:32.

104. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible," 245–46.

slaves, produce taxes, amounts of up to fifty percent of crops, transit tolls of two to three percent of all imported goods, variable resource use fees, and other conscriptions of property or services. These taxes were not usually collected in person by the Romans but were collected by the Herodians or their revenue agents.[105] The administrations of the Herodian kings were independent from Temple officials.[106] The taxes collected by these client kings supported the infrastructure of the Judean economy as well as the often extravagant undertakings of the kings. Produce taxes and resource use fees went to build roads and harbors.[107] Matthew could have been employed collecting any of these taxes.

While the Temple and Jewish taxes typically imposed tax burdens on current produce, the Romans imposed an annual poll tax, based on the most recent periodic census, of one denarius for all adult males fourteen to sixty-five years of age; property taxes of one percent of the value of land, houses, slaves, and ships; and inheritance taxes of five percent of large bequests from unrelated decedents. Roman taxes were especially resented, because they had to be paid on property and by all adult males, whether they were starving or prospering. Taxes based on produce or transactions were undoubtedly heavy, but they were only paid out of available resources. The Roman publicans came into an area for a season, collected their taxes with the assistance of hired agents, and then may well have left the area entirely. In order to obtain a franchise to collect taxes in a certain Roman district, a tax farmers had to be granted the privilege in Rome by posting guarantees that the amount of required tax would be actually collected, which usually meant that the publicans had to have substantial capital resources and be socially networked and politically connected with high-ranking Roman officials.

In any event, the need for local daily tax collectors was obviously much greater in collecting the ordinary Jewish taxes than in collecting the periodic Roman taxes. Taxes on sales, produce, and imports were generated on a daily basis as transactions occurred in the market. Thus it is more likely than not that Matthew, stationed at his tax-collecting place, was gathering Jewish taxes, not Roman, although he could have been involved in collecting any of these taxes.

But if Matthew was a Jewish collector, there is no reason why he could not have been a Levite, and in fact the functions of being a Levite would have trained and situated him ideally to be such a tax collector. Every Levite had to serve two weeks in Jerusalem, and on such trips to Jerusalem all Levites would have purified themselves, and could have carried tax revenues or other receipts to the Temple. Levites were keepers of books and scribal records, essential tools for any accountant. They were charged with the responsibility of collecting tithing and helping people to interpret the law of tithing so that they could know how much they should pay. For example, fish were probably taxed at the one percent tithing rate along with other animals that were hunted, and not the ten percent tithing rate that was imposed on crops that were grown on your own property. But how any of these rules were applied in particular is difficult to say. Even though many of these taxes were voluntary in nature (such as the payment of tithing) payment was a prerequisite to remaining full members of the religious community. Those who did not pay tithing were ostracized from society. While several of these taxes were nominally voluntary in nature (such as tithes), the Levites reminded violators that none payment was worthy of death or retribution from God.[108] Steps were evidently taken in the first century to send collectors out to gather temple taxes, for on one occasion leaders had to quell a mob angered at

105. In this section, I acknowledge and draw upon the excellent paper of one of my law students, David K. Stott, "Legal Implications of Roman and Jewish Taxation Practices on Matthew's Role as Apostle and Author," Provo, Utah, J. Reuben Clark Law School, winter 2007, used with permission.

106. E.g., Herod the Great identified himself as Jewish and was considered such by his contemporaries, although according to Jewish law he would not be. See Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.13 ("The Jews pretended that the city was theirs, and said that he would built it was a Jew, meaning King Herod. The Syrians confessed also that its builder was a Jew."). See also Solomon Zeitlin, "Herod: A Malevolent Maniac," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 54 (July 1963): 5.

107. See generally, Welch and Hall, *Charting the New Testament*, chart 2-6.

108. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible," 249.

such collectors;[109] and on other occasions, the middle class viewed the collection of temple taxes by force as blasphemy and disdained such collection efforts.[110]

A Temple Harvest: Seeing the Temple in the New Testament and the New Testament in the Temple

In conclusion, ideas tend to survive if they are prolific. It seems to me that seeing temple themes in the New Testament, and the New Testament in the Temple is a prodigiously generative approach. In temple theology and in the New Testament, God is incarnate (meaning that he is tabernacled in a temple as much as in a body) and he is also eternal (meaning that he is in time as much as in eternity). God is physical, in contact with physical things, while at the same time he is "spiritual" (preferred by some as the reading of *pneuma ho theos* in John 4:23).[111] Thus, Temple theology, with its emphasis on architecture, enactments, and material symbols, offers understandings that philosophical theology does not.

The field of Temple Studies is not involved with marginal topics. Temples and temple institutions dominated every civilization in the ancient world. By taking up the task of analyzing the Sermon on the Mount and the gospel of Matthew in the light of temple themes, I argue that modern or secular literary readers are looking under the wrong bushel to find the light behind the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, Matthew 5–7 is not in any proper sense a "sermon" at all. This label fundamentally misrepresents this text. Seeing this crucial text in the light of Temple Studies sheds light on questions such as why the Sermon on the Mount was written, what purposes it served, what gives it its coherence, how its listeners would have heard its coded allusions and systematic program, and how the Sermon on the Mount figures into the program of Jesus to cleanse the Temple of Herod and restore the Temple of Solomon, and reestablish God's covenant with his sons and daughters.

Precisely because Sermon on the Mount is a crucial text, any new insights or interpretations will likely meet with the resistance of inertia, if not with opposition. But this is an opportunity for Temple Studies to engage other disciplines in analyzing pivotal texts. Through temple theology and the verbal, functional, and organizational data accumulated here, the Sermon on the Mount can be seen as regenerating the covenant of cosmic peace, as putting away sin and enmity, and as reintroducing mankind into the presence of God, being anointed, called the sons of the God, wearing garments more glorious than Solomon's, taught the heavenly *didache*, and seeing now with a new eye—an eye purely single to God and his glory, his Shekinah. This argument also invites readings of the entire Gospel of Matthew, and indeed of the entire New Testament, in the light of Temple Studies and temple theology.

Temple Studies as a field is still young. It needs advocates. Scholars of other schools need to be persuaded to see the value of Temple Studies in understanding the background, context, genre, or *Gattung* of religious texts from all ancient civilizations. Publications of temple studies books offer us an opportunity to promote awareness of Temple Studies generally. My Ashgate book has been reviewed five times that I am aware of; these reviews all contain some favorable reactions,[112] for which I am grateful; but since most people are not very familiar with Temple Studies, some of these reviewers seem a bit mystified by this book. While the reviewers have said that the book alerts readers by a "well-presented argument to new possibilities of interpretation that seem, in some instances, to have much

109. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible," 250–51.

110. Domsky, "Taxation in the Bible," 250, quoting Branfeld, *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, 1:304.

111. See the discussion of the "properly indefinite translation" of *pneuma ho theos* as referring to the character and quality of God in Jason David BeDuhn, Truth in Translation: Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2003), 123–26.

112. Warren Carter at the Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, finds the emphasis "helpful and insightful" but still identifies "several problematic issues with this study."

plausibility,"[113] raises "a convincing argument,"[114] makes "a welcome contribution,"[115] and advances "a profoundly erudite and deeply meditative argument for the Temple as the chief referent behind" much in the Sermon on the Mount,[116] some of these reviewers still raise questions, have reservations, and invite us to push further the implications of the arguments made in this book. I see this, among other things, as an open request for more information about Temple Studies and temple theology.

In sum, what more can I say about the Sermon on the Mount? It deserves every superlative accolade it has ever been given. It deserves our fullest attention and devotion. I loved memorizing the entire Sermon on the Mount in German as a missionary, and I love reading it again and again in Greek. I loved teaching it to my children as their father when they were growing up, and I love talking about it with my wife as her husband. I love plumbing its depths, which offer a treasury of sublime teachings upon which the wise will build and the foolish will stumble. I love embracing its expansive vision of the eternal promises of the full human potential, as peacemakers, as children of God, and as those who have been invited and assured that they may become perfect like their Father who is in heaven is perfect. I love seeing all this come to life in the light of the temple, in the light of temple texts, temple theology, temple studies, and temple experiences. I love combining what we learn about the Sermon on the Mount in the Bible and also the Book of Mormon, with the biblical Greek texts revealing an array of temple themes embedded in its memorable words and phrases, and with the Book of Mormon providing a temple and covenant-making contexts for that text. I love how, in all of this, the Bible and Book of Mormon work together, so that that which is veiled in Matthew (perhaps following the Sermon on the Mount's own protective order not to cast this holy thing too blatantly before those who are not ready to hear and to do all that it says) becomes plainer and more precious in the light of its unveiling in the Nephite record, which we have long been told will reveal, indeed, the fullness of the Gospel.

113. A. E. Harvey, review in *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS (2010), on jts.oxfordjounrals.org.

114. Review in *Letter and Spirit* 5 (2009), 271–73.

115. Diana Woodcock, review in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 33 no. 5 (2011): 52–53.

116. Patrick Madigan, review in *Heythorp Journal* 53, no. 2 (2012): 336–37.