

JESUS ON THE MOUNTAIN

A Study in Matthean Theology

Terence L. Donaldson





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Department of Biblical Studies
The University of Sheffield
Sheffield S10 2TN
England

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PREFACE

This monograph is a slightly revised version of a doctoral dissertation presented to the Toronto School of Theology in December 1981. It represents the fruition of an idea that began to germinate in earlier stages of my theological training. While doing research for a Master's thesis on *Heilsgeschichte* in the Gospel of Matthew, I realized the salvation-historical significance of the mountain-top pericope with which the Gospel concludes (28.16-20) at about the same time as I became aware of the prominence within Jewish eschatological expectation of sacred mountain phenomena—particularly with respect to Zion, the 'holy mountain of Yahweh'. Preliminary investigation convinced me that the apparent similarities between these two patterns of thought were substantial enough to warrant further study. The results of such a study, set out in the pages to follow, will, I hope, demonstrate that the idea of an eschatological mountain motif in the Gospel of Matthew is not a case of a 'mountain hanging by a hair'—as the Rabbis described arguments with slender scriptural support—but that sacred mountain conceptions in Second-Temple Judaism provide a vantage point from which Matthew's oft-observed fondness for mountain settings can be seen in new and clearer perspective.

One does not bring a program of doctoral studies to a successful conclusion without assistance of various kinds and from people too numerous to mention here. I would be ungrateful, however, if I did not acknowledge with thanks my indebtedness to several people in particular. First of all, to my family, for encouragement and practical support, and particularly to my parents, who taught me early to read the Bible and to respond to its message. To Professors Larry W. Hurtado, George T. Montague, John C. Hurd and Heinz O. Guenther, in whose classes my interest in Synoptic studies was aroused and my critical perceptiveness sharpened. To the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, for a Doctoral Fellowship that allowed me to pursue my studies relatively undistracted by financial anxieties. To Dr R.T. France, until recently Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, who helped to facilitate a three-month period of research at Cambridge University. To Professors Schuyler

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Brown, Ben F. Meyer and E.G. Clark, for valuable aid at several points during my research. To Lorna Hassell, librarian at Wycliffe College, and her assistants Katie Woelfle and (more recently) Gayle Ford, not only for efficient and cheerful library service but also for many small kindnesses that made the library a congenial place in which to work. To Dr Richard N. Longenecker, my thesis supervisor, for his enthusiastic support of this project from its earliest stages, for perceptive and thorough editorial advice that made possible a clearer and more concise presentation that would otherwise have been the case, and, above all, for the model that he supplies for all his students of rigorous scholarship combined with warm personal concern. And especially to my wife, Lois, whose enthusiasm, creativity and support have made this period of study not a time of sacrifice but a shared venture.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(i) *Primary Sources*

Acts Pil.	Acts of Pilate
Adam and Eve	Life of Adam and Eve
Apoc Abr	Apocalypse of Abraham
<i>Apoc. Pet.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>
Ass Mos	Assumption of Moses
1–2 Bar	1–2 Baruch
Clement	
<i>Prot.</i>	<i>Address to the Greeks</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	<i>The Tutor</i>
<i>Str.</i>	<i>Miscellanies</i>
Cyprian	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i>
<i>Test.</i>	<i>Testimonies</i>
Demosthenes	
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
<i>Desc. Chr.</i>	<i>Descent of Christ into Hell</i>
Ep. Arist.	Epistle of Aristeas
Epiphanius	
<i>Pan</i>	<i>Panarion</i>
Eusebius	
<i>H.E.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
Irenaeus	
<i>Ag. Her.</i>	<i>Against Heresies</i>
JB	Jerusalem Bible
Josephus	
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>The Jewish War</i>
Jub	Jubilees
Justin Martyr	
<i>1 Apol.</i>	<i>First Apology</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
Lactantius	
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Divine Institutes</i>
Life Dan.	Life of the Prophets: Daniel
Life Jer.	Life of the Prophets: Jeremiah

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LXX	Septuagint
1–2–4 Macc	1–2–4 Maccabees
MT	Masoretic Text
Nag Hammadi	
<i>Apocryfn</i>	II,1 <i>Apocryphon of John</i>
<i>GEgypt</i>	III,2 <i>Gospel of the Egyptians</i>
<i>SJC</i>	III,4 <i>Sophia of Jesus Christ</i>
<i>ApocPaul</i>	V,2 <i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
<i>1ApocJas</i>	V,3 <i>First Apocalypse of James</i>
<i>PetPhil</i>	VIII,2 <i>Letter of Peter to Philip</i>
<i>PS</i>	<i>Pistis Sophia</i>
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
Origen	
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Against Celsus</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>On First Principles</i>
<i>Comm. Jn</i>	<i>Commentary on John</i>
Oxy. Pap.	Oxyrhynchus Papyri
Philo	
<i>Dec.</i>	<i>On the Decalogue</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>On Drunkenness</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Allegorical Interpretation</i>
<i>Mig.</i>	<i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>On the Life of Moses</i>
<i>Q. Ex.</i>	<i>Questions on Exodus</i>
<i>Q. Gen.</i>	<i>Questions on Genesis</i>
Ps Sol	Psalms of Solomon
Quest. Barth.	Questions of Bartholomew
Qumran	
CDC	Damascus Rule
1QapGen	Genesis Apocryphon
1QM	War Scroll
1QpHab	Pesher on Habakkuk
1QS	Community Rule
1QSa	Rule of the Congregation
1QSB	Blessings
4Q163pIsa ^c	Pesher on Isaiah
4Q164pIsa ^b	Pesher on Isaiah
4QDibHam	Words of the Heavenly Lights
4QFlor	Florilegium
4QShirShab	Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice
11QJNar	Aramaic text on the New Jerusalem
11QPsZion	Apostrophe to Zion
11QTemple	Temple Scroll

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Rabbinic texts

Ber.	Berakoth
Dem.	Demai
Shab.	Shabbath
Pesaḥ.	Pesaḥim
Sukk.	Sukkoth
Roš. Haš.	Rosh ha-Shana
Ta'an.	Ta'anith
Ḥag.	Ḥagiga
Giṭ.	Giṭṭin
Soṭ.	Soṭa
Ḳid.	Ḳiddushin
B. Bat.	Baba Bathra
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Zebaḥ.	Zebaḥim
Men.	Menaḥoth
Ḥul.	Ḥullin
Aboth R. Nat.	Aboth de Rabbi Nathan
Kuth.	Kuthim
Gen R. (etc.)	Genesis Rabbah
Mek.	Mekilta
Midr. Ps	Midrash on the Psalms
Pesiḳ. R.	Pesiḳta Rabbati
Pesiḳ. R. Kah.	Pesiḳta de Rab Kahana
Pirke R. El.	Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer
Sifre Dt	Sifre Deuteronomy
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sib Or	Sibylline Oracles
Sir	Sirach
T. 12 Patr.	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
T. Levi	Testament of Levi
T. Zeb.	Testament of Zebulun
T. Naph.	Testament of Naphtali
T. Ash.	Testament of Asher
T. Ben.	Testament of Benjamin
Tertullian	
Marc.	<i>Against Marcion</i>
Jud.	<i>Against the Jews</i>
Tg.	Targum
Frag. Tg.	Fragment Targum
Tg. Neoph.	Targum Neophyti
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Tob	Tobit

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Wisd	Wisdom of Solomon
Xenophon	
<i>Anab.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>

(ii) *Secondary Literature*

AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANQ	<i>Andover Newton Quarterly</i>
APOT	<i>Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament.</i> 2 vols. Edited by R.H. Charles. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
AssSeign	<i>Assemblées du Seigneur</i>
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
ATRSup	Supplement to the <i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
Bauer–Arndt– Gingrich	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.</i> Translated and adapted from W. Bauer's <i>Griechisch- Deutsches Wörterbuch</i> by W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich. 2nd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibLeb	<i>Bibel und Leben</i>
BibTod	<i>Bible Today</i>
BjRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BLE	<i>Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
Brown–Driver– Briggs	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CahJos	<i>Cahiers de Joséphologie</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	CBQ Monograph Series
CQR	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
DJD, V	<i>Discoveries in the Judean Desert. V: Qumrân Cave 4.</i> Edited by J.M. Allegro. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
Erjb	<i>Eranos Jahrbuch</i>
EstBib	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
EThL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>

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<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>EvTh</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G.A. Buttrick <i>et al.</i> 4 vols. New York / Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
<i>IDBSup</i>	Supplement to <i>IDB</i> . Edited by K. Crim <i>et al.</i> Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>JAAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the Americal Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Liddell-Scott	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Compiled by H.G. Liddell and R. Scott. 9th edn. Revised by H.S. Jones. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
<i>LumVie</i>	<i>Lumière et Vie</i>
<i>LuthQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
MeyerK	H.A.W. Meyer, <i>Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament</i>
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTApoc</i>	E. Hennecke, <i>New Testament Apocrypha</i> . 2 vols. Edited by W. Schneemelcher. Translated by R. McL. Wilson. London: Lutterworth Press, 1963, 1965.
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OJRS</i>	<i>Ohio Journal of Religious Studies</i>
PRS	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>

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<i>QLP</i>	<i>Questions liturgiques et paroissiales</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches bibliques
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>RThPh</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
<i>RThR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>StEv</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StudNeot	Studia neotestamentica
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 10 vols. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J.T. Willis and D.E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–.
<i>Theol</i>	<i>Theology</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TPQ</i>	<i>Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugaritische Forschungen</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplement to <i>VT</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

PART I
SETTING DIRECTIONS

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND THE TASK

1. *Jesus on the Mountain: A Deliberate Matthean Motif*

It has often been noted that mountains frequently appear in the First Gospel as sites for events in the life and ministry of Jesus.¹ A preliminary analysis of the ὄρος data in Matthew and the other Synoptics provides reasons for believing that this is no mere accident, but rather a deliberate and intentional feature of the Matthean redaction.

This is suggested in the first instance by the use of ὄρος in Matthew itself. Though some of the eleven instances in which ὄρος appears in the framework of Matthew's narrative² are passing references which do not appear to have engaged the attention of the evangelist,³ or subsequent references to settings which have already been mentioned,⁴ there are six important passages in Matthew where a mountain serves as the setting for a significant event in the ministry of Jesus: the third temptation (4.8); the Sermon on the Mount (5.1; 8.1); the healing and feeding of the multitude (15.29); the Transfiguration (17.1, 9); the Olivet Discourse (24.3); and the Great Commission (28.16). Not only does this list include some of the most prominent events in the gospel story, but important theological and christological themes swirl around this whole chain of Matthean mountains.

The importance of the mountain setting for Matthew is evidenced not only by the theological themes with which it is associated, but also by the fact that these mountain scenes occur at important junctures in the Matthean narrative. Of greatest significance in this regard is the appearance of τὸ ὄρος as the setting for Matthew's closing pericope (28.16-20), a passage which is increasingly being recognized as providing the key and climax to the whole Gospel.⁵ To this important incidence of ὄρος one can add the appearance of a mountain setting at the conclusion of Jesus' preparation for ministry

(4.8), at the beginning (5.1) and end (15.29) of his ministry with the Galilean crowds, and at the points where Jerusalem and the cross begin to loom over the narrative (17.1) and where Jesus gives his final teaching before his passion (24.3). When these structurally significant occurrences of ὄρος are taken together, the likelihood emerges that even though Matthew's mountain terminology is not uniform⁶ (a phenomenon for which we shall have to account), the setting nevertheless serves as one of the devices by which Matthew structured his narrative and moved it forward.

The importance of the mountain setting for Matthew as suggested by such 'vertical' considerations is further borne out by a 'horizontal' comparison of Matthew with the other Synoptics. While Jesus appears in mountain settings in Mark and Luke,⁷ there are several indications that, in contrast to these Gospels, the Matthean situation is the result of conscious redactional activity rather than just the random inclusion of traditional elements. The first thing to note is the uniqueness of most of the Matthean scenes. Though Matthew has evidently depended on Mark for the mountain settings of the Transfiguration Narrative and the Olivet Discourse, in the case of the other four passages listed above, the mountain setting is unique to Matthew.⁸ And in three of these passages (4.23–5.1; 15.29–31; 28.16–20), the ὄρος reference is part of an extended Matthean summary statement which displays many of the evangelist's special concerns.

Also to be considered is the pattern of Matthew's selection of ὄρος references from the tradition. The three most characteristically Matthean mountain scenes (4.23–5.1; 15.29–31; 28.16–20) present a generally positive picture of the person of Jesus and of his ministry with the disciples and crowds. Opposition and unbelief are generally foreign to Matthew's presentation of 'Jesus on the mountain'. Of the eight Markan appearances of Jesus on or near a mountain, Matthew has taken over or adapted seven which are consistent with this picture,⁹ but, significantly, has omitted the one which is not, *viz.* the mountain-top encounter with demons and pigs.¹⁰ Furthermore, though there is no reason to believe that Matthew had access to the tradition underlying Lk 4.28–30, this account of the attempt to kill Jesus by throwing him down from a mountain serves to throw into relief the positive nature of the Matthean mountain scenes.

Finally, the kind of evidence from vertical analysis that suggests a redactional pattern for Matthew is completely lacking in Mark and

Luke. Both Gospels contain mountain scenes which display widely differing characteristics and which cannot be easily described under a single heading;¹¹ in neither of them is there evidence of a redactional or structural role for the ὄρος setting such as can be found in Matthew;¹² and both of them seem interested in developing other geographical patterns.¹³ The presence of mountain settings in Mark and Luke, therefore, enhances rather than diminishes the possibility that ὄρος functions in Matthew as a deliberate redactional motif.

Thus, though we need to carry out a full study of Matthew's mountain scenes before we can declare with certainty that there is indeed a *Bergmotiv* in the Gospel, the preliminary indications are that such a study would be fruitful. This being the case, a series of questions about the possible redactional significance of this chain of mountain scenes presents itself. Looking first at the mountain scenes in isolation: Are there common features in the role played by the mountain settings in each of these passages? Can these mountain scenes be characterized under a single heading or seen as examples of a common form? We have already noted the 'positive' nature of these scenes, but it is possible to be more precise? Then, considering the setting of these mountain scenes in the Gospel itself: Does ὄρος play a literary role in Matthew's development of his Gospel? Is there a structural pattern to be discerned in the mountain passages and the themes with which they deal? Further, looking at the mountain scenes in the context of the first century religious and cultural milieu: Does the mountain in Matthew draw on any recognizable pattern of religious mountain symbolism? Is there, for example, any OT typology at work? Did the evangelist intend that the mountain setting function not only as a literary device but also as a theological symbol, evoking already existing forms of sacred mountain theology? Finally, assuming that answers can be found to all these questions: What light does the mountain motif shed on the wider redactional questions of Matthew's theological purposes and the life setting in which these purposes find their place? It is within the framework provided by these questions that the following study will be carried out.

2. *Matthew's Mountain Motif in Current Discussion*

As has been noted, Matthew's interest in mountain locales has not

escaped scholarly attention. Though there has been no full-scale study,¹⁴ questions raised by the ὄρος data have been recognized and some preliminary discussion has been carried on. Much of this discussion is either wide of the mark or superficial; still, several authors have provided insights which may serve as the basis for further study.

The most frequently encountered comments on Matthew's ὄρος motif have to do with the first set of questions enumerated above, i.e. with the matter of the common characteristics which these mountain scenes display and which the mountain setting serves to bring into focus. For most scholars who make comments of this kind, the mountain in Matthew is to be seen as a place of revelation. In fact, such a view is encountered so often¹⁵ that many commentators simply repeat it without elaboration as if it were a self-evident truth.

This approach, however, must be judged as unsatisfactory, not only because of repeated failures to spell it out in detail and to search for supporting parallels in the OT or current Jewish religious thought,¹⁶ but also because it is an inadequate and even misleading characterization of Matthew's mountain scenes. Mt 15.29-31, which as one of the uniquely Matthean mountain passages should figure largely in any assessment of the motif, cannot be described as revelatory at all. Nor does the idea of revelation appear in any determinative way in the third temptation. Revelatory features are present in the other four main passages, but to describe these as simply scenes of revelation is to relegate more important and characteristic elements—e.g. the emphasis on the authority of Jesus (Mt 7.28f.; 28.18b), the gathering of the crowds for messianic ministry (4.23-5.1), the community mandate aspect of 28.16-20—to the shadows.

Just as unsatisfactory is the description of mountains in Matthew as places of solitude and nearness of God.¹⁷ While this may be true to a certain extent for Luke, the presence of the crowds on the mountain in Mt 5.1 and 15.29—a feature which distinguishes Matthew's mountain scenes sharply from those of the other Synoptics—makes this a totally inadequate description for Matthew. Wellhausen was right when he observed that mountains in Matthew are places of activity not solitude.¹⁸

A real advance, however, has been made by several scholars who point to recurring christological and ecclesiological themes which appear in Matthew's mountain passages. Schmauch, for example,

drawing attention to the absence of opposition and to the emphasis on the relationship between Jesus and those who have gathered around him on the mountain, sees the mountain motif as having to do with the creation of an eschatological community bound to a teacher.¹⁹ While his focus on teaching as the characteristic feature of the mountain events is wide of the mark,²⁰ his idea that the mountain is the place where the eschatological community is gathered and constituted—a theme also suggested by Strecker²¹—surely deserves further consideration. Also to be taken into account is the suggestion, made in varying ways by Livio,²² Ryan,²³ Daniel and Kingsbury,²⁴ that mountains function as places of christological manifestation.

Several scholars have moved beyond merely finding common elements in Matthew's mountain scenes to an attempt to discover the literary role of the motif in the structure of the Gospel as a whole. Frieling's thesis of a seven-fold chiasmic structure is not borne out by the evidence.²⁵ More insightful, however, is the suggestion made by Schmauch and worked out in a more systematic way by Lange that each of Matthew's mountain scenes is linked in one way or another to the final one in the sequence.²⁶ Though questions can be raised about Lange's selection of mountain passages,²⁷ the recognition that Mt 28.16-20 serves as a summary and climax for many of Matthew's key themes means that the possibility of this passage functioning in a similar way for his mountain motif as well is worth investigating in greater detail than has been the case to this point.

The area in which current investigation of Matthew's mountain motif is weakest is that represented by the third set of questions above, i.e. the possibility that ὄρος functions in Matthew as a theological symbol which introduces into the text, by means of typology or of allusion to contemporary sacred mountain traditions, its own independent meaning. Several scholars, including Lange, assume without any real attempt at justification that no mountain typology is present in Matthew at all.²⁸ But though the opposite *a priori* assumption is also to be avoided, Matthew's undeniable interest in OT themes (evidenced both by direct citation and by allusion²⁹), suggests that such a conclusion cannot be reached apart from a thorough investigation of the alternative. Yet even where the possibility of an OT background is taken seriously, the absence of any systematic consideration of religious mountain symbolism in the OT and contemporary Jewish thought means that such assessments

of this possibility as have been made must be judged as speculative and premature. Though a fair amount of work has been done on sacred mountain conceptions in the OT,³⁰ corresponding features within Second-Temple Judaism have been largely ignored,³¹ and no thorough attempt has been made to see the ὄρος data of the Gospels against the background which these two bodies of literature provide.

The most common suggestions for the background against which Matthew's mountain scenes are to be viewed have to do with Mount Sinai. As we have seen, Sinai occasionally figures in the characterization of these Matthean settings as 'mountains of revelation'. More frequently it is argued that Matthew's mountain scenes are part of a developed New Sinai/New Moses typology.³² Though such a view is not implausible, two weighty considerations stand in the way of its full and immediate acceptance. The first has to do with the absence of any study of religiously significant mountains and sacred mountain symbolism in the milieu in which Matthew was written. The assumption seems to be made by many that if a first-century reader familiar with biblical tradition encountered an obviously symbolic mountain in a piece of literature, then Sinai would immediately spring to his mind as the only possible background against which such symbolism could be seen. But was Sinai so prominent in contemporary thinking, particularly in view of the continuing significance within Judaism of Zion? Perhaps it was, but this would need to be demonstrated on the basis of a study of the relevant literature.

The second objection has to do with the Gospel of Matthew itself. Though Moses allusions are indeed present in the Gospel, study has shown that wherever Moses typology is present it is not allowed to stand on its own but is gathered up into larger christological patterns.³³ Even if Sinai typology is present in Matthew's mountain motif, might not the situation here be the same?

Zion has also been suggested as a relevant background for the mountain motif in Matthew—particularly by Schmauch, who points to its place in prophetic literature as a locus of eschatological fulfilment.³⁴ In view of (1) Zion's prominence in the OT as God's 'holy mountain', (2) the continuing importance of Jerusalem for Second-Temple Judaism, and (3) Matthew's evident concern to define his community's existence over against that of Judaism, further investigation of this possibility seems eminently worthwhile.

Thus a thorough study of Matthew's use of the mountain setting in

his presentation of the ministry of Jesus appears to be justified. A preliminary survey of the data suggests that it is a deliberate Matthean motif which is potentially important for the redactional investigation of the First Gospel, not only for the theological themes which it brings into focus but also for the possible theological freight which it might carry in and of itself. Though the importance of the motif has not gone unrecognized, it has not been thoroughly investigated, and much of the study that has been done has been superficial or misdirected. Some solid contributions have been made, most notably Schmauch's suggestive comments on the background of the motif and its place in Matthean theology and Lange's literary analysis. But Schmauch's work is sketchy and little attuned to the concerns of redaction criticism, and the insights of Lange into the redactional significance of the motif have been short-circuited by his refusal to consider the possibility of an OT background. The most glaring lacuna is the absence of any systematic study of religiously significant mountains and sacred mountain symbolism in Second-Temple Judaism, especially in view of the eschatological significance of the mountain setting which quickly becomes apparent from a study of the relevant literature. In the light of all these considerations, a full-scale study of the mountain scenes in Matthew is not only defensible, but also has the potential of providing further insight into the Matthean redaction.

3. *The Meaning of τὸ ὄρος in the Gospels*

Before proposing such a study, however, one further preliminary matter needs to be addressed. This concerns the meaning of the articular but unspecified τὸ ὄρος, found frequently in the Gospels—especially in the phrase εἰς τὸ ὄρος.³⁵ Foerster has argued on the basis of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic evidence that ὄρος can refer not only to 'a (single) mountain', but also to a more broadly defined geographical area such as a 'mountain range', 'desert', or 'field', with the result that εἰς τὸ ὄρος should be rendered 'into the hill country'.³⁶ On the basis of such a translation he maintains that the Gospel occurrences of εἰς τὸ ὄρος (those of Matthew included) are purely geographical references with no possible literary significance or typological overtone. And though the same conclusions are not always drawn, this translation is also proposed by Dalman, Black, and others.³⁷

Foerster's conclusions have to be judged in the light of his evident desire to exclude any 'mythological' element from biblical mountains. Yet it must be granted that this is a possible meaning for τὸ ὄρος, especially in a milieu where Semitic influence was at work. Evidence for a broader meaning for τὸ ὄρος in classical or purely Hellenistic usage is limited.³⁸ But in Hellenistic Jewish usage, the fact that both הַר and מִטָּר can mean 'hill country' as well as 'mountain'³⁹ has had its effect on the semantic range of ὄρος. In the LXX, הַר is rendered principally by ὄρος, the adjective ὀρεινός ('of the mountains or hill country'), or its substantive ὀρεινή ('mountainous region, hill country').⁴⁰ All of the 22 occurrences of ὀρεινός/ὀρεινή for הַר are in instances where the meaning 'hill country' is demanded by the context. But there is not a clear semantic difference to be made between ὀρεινός and ὄρος, for τὸ ὄρος is often used as well to render this more general meaning of הַר.⁴¹ Thus there is some LXX evidence that the semantic range of ὄρος is as broad as that of הַר. A similar situation is found in 1 Maccabees, where τὸ ὄρος means 'mountainous country' in probably four places,⁴² and in Josephus, where perhaps six such references can be cited.⁴³

But although 'to the hills' is a possible rendering of εἰς τὸ ὄρος in the Gospels, several factors combine to make it unlikely. First of all, even in Hellenistic Jewish usage, 'the mountain' is by far the more common and natural sense of τὸ ὄρος. Since the Greek writer had at his disposal the less ambiguous terms ὀρεινός and ὀρεινή (as well as ὄρη), ὄρος came to be used in the sense of 'hill country' much less frequently than was the case with הַר.⁴⁴ Wherever τὸ ὄρος is used in this way, the meaning is clearly demanded by the context.

Further, in Gospel usage not only is there no single instance of τὸ ὄρος where the translation 'hill country' is contextually required, there are positive indications that this translation is to be excluded. When Synoptic writers want to refer to 'the mountains' or 'hill country', they do so in other ways. Though Luke is the only NT writer to use the term ὀρεινή (Lk 1.39, 65), the plural ὄρη is used frequently—by Matthew no less than the others—to convey this generalized meaning (Mk 5.5; Mk 13.14 // Mt 24.16 // Lk 21.21; Mt 18.12; cf. Heb 11.38; Rev 6.15, 16). Moreover, there are instances in the Synoptics where a prepositional phrase with τὸ ὄρος is unambiguously used with references to a specific single mountain. The Markan *Vorlage* to Lk 9.28 refers to 'a high mountain' (εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλόν; Mk 9.2); Luke has replaced this with εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσ-

εύχασθαι, thus using the phrase under discussion to refer to the single 'high mountain' of Mark. Also in Mk 9.9 // Mt 17.9 // Lk 9.37, ἐκ (ἀπὸ) τοῦ ὄρους refers to the individual mountain of the Transfiguration. The use of εἰς τὸ ὄρος in Mt 28.16 also most probably refers to a single mountain appointed as a rendezvous.⁴⁵

Finally, even if it could be demonstrated that in pre-Matthean Synoptic usage εἰς τὸ ὄρος meant 'into the hills', this would by no means prove that Matthew, with his evident interest in mountain settings, used the phrase in the same way.⁴⁶

Thus, although 'to the hills' is a possible translation of εἰς τὸ ὄρος, it is highly unlikely in the Synoptics,⁴⁷ where this meaning is usually conveyed by the plural εἰς τὰ ὄρη, is nowhere contextually required, and, in fact, is excluded in at least some of its occurrences.

Nevertheless, since there is apparently no parallel to the articular τὸ ὄρος used without any contextual indication as to the particular mountain which is in view, the phrase remains striking and demands some explanation. Though other suggestions have been made,⁴⁸ it is probably to be seen as a highly stylized term which grew out of a common belief that the mountain setting was typically associated with Jesus and was characteristic of his ministry. Just as it might be said of a student that he spent the day 'in the library' (though in fact he might have been at any one of several libraries), or of a fisherman that he went 'to the lake' (when there was no one specific lake in which he did all his fishing), so it was said of Jesus that he went εἰς τὸ ὄρος. 'The mountain' is an indication of the setting which, it was believed, Jesus characteristically chose for his ministry. Though we do not intend to raise the *Sitz im Leben Jesu* question in this redactional study, it is likely that this usage represents a preference for mountain locales in the ministry of Jesus himself.⁴⁹

4. *The Proposed Study*

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to carry out a thorough redaction-critical investigation of the mountain motif in the First Gospel, taking into consideration the significance of mountains as religious sites and theological symbols in the religious-cultural milieu in which the Gospel took shape. Our attention will be focussed on those passages in which a mountain functions as the setting for an event in the life and ministry of Jesus. This is not to ignore the fact that ὄρος also appears five times in sayings material (5.14; 17.20;

18.12; 21.21; 24.16); but these non-framework uses of the term are for the most part just taken over by the evangelist from his sources⁵⁰ and—with one important exception⁵¹—do not have any real bearing on Matthew's redaction or theology. Of the framework occurrences of ὄρος, there can be no question that our study will have to include the ὄρος ὑψηλὸν (λίαν) of the Temptation and Transfiguration Narratives (Mt 4.8; 17.1), as well as the εἰς τὸ ὄρος setting of the Sermon (5.1), the gathering of the ὄχλοι (15.19), and the Great Commission (28.16). Jesus is also found εἰς τὸ ὄρος in Mt 14.23. But this mountain is not the setting for an extended event in the ministry of Jesus, and the reference is just taken over from Mark with no apparent redactional interest. Thus we will not devote a separate chapter to this passage, though it will come into the discussion of Mt 15.29⁵² and we will return to consider its place in the pattern which emerges from our study of the more extended Matthean mountain scenes.⁵³ The Mount of Olives also appears in framework material, especially as a setting for the Eschatological Discourse (24.3). This mountain is different from the others in that it is a specified geographical locale; for this reason Lange omits it.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, it falls into our general category of 'mountain settings in Jesus' ministry', and we will discover that there are reasons for its inclusion in the overall Matthean pattern.⁵⁵ Our study, then, will focus on the Matthean mountain settings in 4.8; 5.1 // 8.1; (14.23); 15.29; 17.1 // 9; 24.3; and 28.16.

In our study of the mountain setting in these passages, we will be inquiring into its function as a purely *literary motif*, i.e. as a term which does not necessarily carry any theological significance in and of itself, but which is used as a literary device by which the author organizes his Gospel and develops some of its themes. We will then ask further whether the literary motif functions as well as a *theological symbol*, i.e. as a term which points in some way to external conceptions or categories which are *ipso facto* imported into the text. In order to speak with any confidence in this area, it will be necessary to carry out a study of sacred mountains and religious mountain symbolism in the OT and the Second-Temple period. On the basis of such a literary and theological analysis we hope to be in a position to assess the extent to which the mountain scenes exemplify a common underlying pattern or schema. At the far end of our study we will be concerned to see what light may be shed by our investigations on the wider questions of Matthean theology and of the life setting in which this theology was forged.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our study of Matthew's mountain motif will be comprised of two major components: (i) an investigation of the function and meaning of the mountain as a religiously significant site or symbol in the milieu in which the Gospel was written; and (ii) a redaction-critical study of the mountain scenes in Matthew with a view to discovering the literary and theological role played by ὄρος in the Gospel. Before proceeding with the study, however, there is methodological groundwork to be laid in each of these areas.

1. Investigation of Background

We have assumed to this point that if ὄρος in Matthew carries any extra-Matthean religious significance—i.e. if it functions as a theological symbol, as we have defined this term—then in order to understand this significance it will be necessary to set Matthew's mountain theme against the background of Second-Temple Judaism. This assumption will require some elaboration, justification, and, at certain points, qualification.

In the first place, though the use of mountains as religiously significant sites and symbols is an almost universal and timeless phenomenon,¹ there is little to be gained from any comprehensive survey, even if it were possible within the limits of this study. Such an enterprise would, for the most part, yield only analogical (as opposed to genealogical) parallels which could not possibly have influenced the Matthean usage. Though an awareness of comparative religions investigation into sacred mountain phenomena alerts us to features in the material under consideration which might otherwise go unnoticed, our primary attention must be given to those streams of religious tradition which may reasonably have influenced early Christianity in general and Matthew in particular.

Second, it is assumed here that the church for which Matthew was written was Jewish-Christian in orientation and so dependent for its world of ideas largely on the traditions of Second-Temple Judaism. In view of the fact, however, that the *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's Gospel is a matter of some dispute, such an assumption requires further examination and justification.

The problem of the life-setting of Matthew arises from the presence in the Gospel of two tendencies that exist somewhat in tension. On the one hand, the Gospel exhibits a number of characteristics which appear to reflect a Jewish-Christian milieu: the emphasis on OT fulfilment, particularly in the formula quotations;² the concern for the abiding validity of the law (5.17-20; 23.1-3; cf. 7.21-23); the particularism of the mission of Jesus and his disciples (10.5f.; 15.24); and numerous cases where Jewish practices are unexplained (Mt 15.2; cf. Mk 7.2-4), rabbinic discussion are reflected (Mt 19.3), and the like.³ On the other hand, a certain distance—even alienation—from Judaism and things Jewish is seen in the universalistic interest in the Gentile mission (4.15; 10.18; 12.21; 13.38; 24.14; 28.19f.), the harsh polemic against the Jewish leaders (e.g. ch. 23), statements such as '*their* synagogues' (4.23), '*their* scribes' (7.29), and a number of 'replacement pericopes' (8.5-13; 20.1-16; 21.28-32, 33-45; 22.1-14).

Matthew has traditionally been seen as a Jewish-Christian Gospel.⁴ As this traditional position has been worked out within the framework supplied by redaction-critical concerns, it is argued that the Gospel was written for a Greek-speaking but largely Jewish-Christian church which was in the process of consolidating its own life and self-understanding in a context in which, as a result of increasing Pharisaic opposition, it was being pushed in a greater or lesser degree to the margins of Jewish life.⁵ This church was open to the Gentile mission, but valued its Jewish heritage and wanted to give a greater place in Christian practice to a re-interpreted Torah, in order to counter the antinomianism which it feared was endemic in that mission.⁶ If Matthew wrote in and for such a church, then it can be safely assumed that both he and his readers were thoroughly conversant not only with the OT but also with developed exegetical traditions of Second-Temple Judaism.

In the past three decades, however, there has been a growing group of scholars who take the second tendency outlined above as evidence of a 'Gentile bias',⁷ and as determinative for the life-setting of the Gospel. For these scholars, Matthew's church is a church in transition;

it originated as a Jewish-Christian community, but by the time of the writing of the Gospel it had become largely Gentile. Though the evangelist included Jewish-Christian material that had been handed down in his church—either out of a respect for tradition,⁸ or in a conscious attempt to describe a Jewish stage of *Heilsgeschichte* which had been superseded⁹—when the Gospel is seen from the perspective of its last redactional layer it takes the shape of a Gentile-Christian manifesto celebrating the fact that the kingdom of God, once the domain of Jews only, has now passed to Gentiles.¹⁰ If the First Gospel arose in such a setting, then, although it cannot be denied that the evangelist had an interest in the OT, it would no longer be likely that the literature of Second-Temple Judaism could be of much help in ascertaining the way in which the OT was read and understood by the evangelist and his readers.

We cannot enter here into a thorough study of Matthew's *Sitz im Leben*. It is our considered opinion, however, that the 'Gentile bias' reading of Matthew is ill-founded.¹¹ The attempt to assign all Jewish-sounding material to the tradition appears to be a case of special pleading, especially in view of the presence of such tendencies in unmistakably redactional material (e.g. Mt 24.20)¹² and of the open-endedness of the Jewish mission in Matthean perspective (ch. 10, esp. v. 23).¹³ The pervasiveness of this material throughout the Gospel gives it a face-value Jewish-Christian orientation that is difficult to ignore. To think that Matthew expected to make a Gentile-Christian statement by composing a Gospel which exhibits opposite characteristics to such an extent is virtually to abandon the redaction-critical assumption of the theological and literary competence of the evangelists. And to think that he expected his readers to recognize the purely *heilsgeschichtliche* value of such material is to assume a level of subtlety and sophistication in his readers that is difficult to envisage.

But not only is a Gentile-Christian *Sitz im Leben* difficult in view of the Jewish-Christian material, it is by no means required by the anti-Judaistic element in the Gospel. The assumption seems to be that opposition to Pharisaic Judaism implies *ipso facto* a Gentile-Christian standpoint.¹⁴ Such an assumption, however, does not take into account the diversity and party-spirit that characterized first-century Judaism and which disappeared only with the triumph of Pharisaism over competing Jewish groups. Both Matthean tendencies can be more satisfyingly explained by seeing Matthew's church as part of one of these groups.

We must return to the *Sitz im Leben* question at the end of our study, asking what refinements should be made in light of our investigations. Here we need only state that our initial position most closely resembles that of Hummel:¹⁵ Matthew's Gospel was written in the period after the war but before the *Birkath ha-Minim* declaration was fully in force, for a Hellenistic Jewish-Christian community which, while open to a properly-conceived Gentile mission even as it held on to its Jewish heritage, was being forced to re-examine its own identity as the Pharisees of Jamnia carried out their reconstruction of a more narrowly defined Judaism.

So we will carry out our investigation on the assumption that Matthew wrote for a church which was not only familiar with the OT, but also was conversant with the way in which the OT was read and interpreted in contemporary Judaism. This does not necessarily imply that Matthew has taken over any mountain symbolism from this milieu; whatever symbolic or typological elements are present in Matthew's mountain motif will have to be established by exegesis. But exegesis is itself dependent in turn on an understanding of the milieu in which a text was written; and if the mountain in Matthew functions as a theological symbol, then it is within the life and literature of Second-Temple Judaism that the 'semantic range' of this symbol is to be established.

Now this does not mean that our investigation can ignore other mountain conceptions that were abroad in the Mediterranean world. Not even in Palestine did Judaism exist in a vacuum; as Hengel has demonstrated, it was influenced early and deeply by the categories and thought forms of Hellenism.¹⁶ But given the milieu in which Matthew was written, such Hellenistic elements as are present in the Gospel (even at the subconscious level) were mediated via Judaism. Thus, while we must note the influence of Hellenism on the development of sacred mountain conceptions in Judaism—and though the mountain settings in Gnostic literature will demand special attention—we will look only briefly at Hellenism in and of itself.

Our investigation of the traditions and thought forms which may have influenced Matthew in his emphasis on mountain settings, then, will focus on the OT and the literature of Second-Temple Judaism. With respect to the OT, our primary interest will lie not in the developmental history which stands behind the text, but in the final shape of the text in its first-century setting. The most relevant historical-critical question that can be asked is not: How did the

various theological strands and literary units which make up the OT come to be? but: How was the OT read and understood by Jewish and Christian communities in the first century AD? In that these communities stood at the end of a continuous religious history and a process of development that had their roots in ancient Israel, we cannot remain unaware of history-of-religions and history-of-traditions perspectives, with their interest in the historical development of a given religious tradition or theological idea in the period for which the OT supplies evidence. Insights derived from such studies will be incorporated into our OT discussion at pertinent points. But for brevity's sake, our primary interest will be in (i) the literary-theological function of sacred mountains and mountain symbolism in the OT in its final form, and (ii) the function of this aspect of the OT in the religious and exegetical life of first-century Judaism.¹⁷

With respect to the literature of Second-Temple Judaism, we will be interested not only in what this material can tell us about the way in which OT mountain theology was understood and applied in this period, but also in its innovations and developing traditions which may have influenced the milieu in which the Gospel of Matthew was written. The term 'Second-Temple Judaism' is one of convenience and not meant to imply that our interest is limited to material produced before AD 70. Later Rabbinic, Targumic, and Samaritan writings are also relevant to our study, both because they often contain earlier material and because even though written later they often display the flowering of tendencies whose roots are deep within an earlier period. In addition to this material, of course, we will be investigating apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works, the literature from Qumran, the LXX, and the writings of Philo and Josephus. Critical assumptions concerning this material will be indicated at relevant points in the study.

Our goal in this background study is not to come to any specific conclusions about the Matthean mountain motif, even assuming that the *ōpos* functions symbolically in the Gospel. Rather it is to map out the range of religious meaning associated with the mountain site/symbol in those traditions with which Matthew and his community probably were familiar. Conclusions about Matthew will have to await the study of the Matthean mountain passages themselves.

2. Redaction Criticism

The primary analytical tool to be used in our investigation of Matthew's mountain scenes is that which has come to be known as Redaction Criticism. This discipline assumes that the evangelists were authors and theologians in their own right, who, living in the midst of concrete and (at least potentially) identifiable church situations, shaped the Gospel traditions as they received them in order to address particular issues and needs which were present in those church situations. In this approach the Gospels are seen not as shapeless collections of units of tradition, but as carefully-crafted theological statements; the evangelists, by the same token, are not merely tradents but competent exegetes; the community not only transmits the Gospel tradition, but provides the setting in which and for which the tradition is shaped and interpreted.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the redaction-critical task is two-fold: first, to uncover and examine the various theological and practical motives which governed the evangelist in his work; and second, to use the results of this study to illuminate the setting in which this work was done. The first aspect of the task proceeds both in a 'horizontal' way (comparing the Gospel with its sources in order to discover significant patterns in the way in which the evangelist has altered, deleted, rearranged, or recast the material as he received it) and in a 'vertical' way (looking at the overall composition of the Gospel to discover its themes and the structures on which it is built).¹⁸

The second aspect of the task is characterized by a built-in circularity. Bultmann's description of the circular procedure that the form critic must follow holds for the redaction critic as well (for 'forms' read 'theological concerns of the evangelist'):

It is essential to realize that form-criticism is fundamentally indistinguishable from all historical work in this, that it has to move in a circle. The forms of the literary tradition must be used to establish the influences operating in the life of the community, and the life of the community must be used to render the forms themselves intelligible.¹⁹

It is impossible (as this study has already demonstrated) to begin a redactional-critical investigation of one of the Gospels without making some initial assumptions about the setting in which it was produced. But the redaction-critical process is not complete until