

## 6 ~ GOSPEL ECHOES

### Jesus~Kingdom of God~Children

In chapter 4 I argued that a biological father did not play a role in the life of the historical Jesus. I ended chapter 3 by stating that Jesus' baptism, according to Mark 1:9, fits into the social context of someone who went to John the Baptist to, in light of Isaiah 1:16-17, "wash himself" of (systemic) "evil" to "plead for the widow" and "defend the fatherless." According to this particular context in Mark (cf. Mk 1:10-11), it is also clear that (the fatherless) Jesus, child of Mary (cf. Mk 3:31-35; 6:3), was believed to be child of God. By this remark, I anticipated my understanding of Jesus, child of God who, according to Mark 10:1-12 and 13-16, pleaded for the (patriarchless) widow and defended the (fatherless) street children. The latter passage, the one about Jesus blessing the children and seeing them as central to God's kingdom, is often referred to as the *Gospel for Children* (in Latin: *Evangelium Infantium*).

Without repeating the painstaking detail of historic-critical analysis, I accept John Dominic Crossan's finding on the "complex" *Jesus-Kingdom of God-Children*.<sup>1</sup> Crossan is clear that, in terms of the sequence of strata, the first stratum contains data chronologically closest to Jesus. Literary "units" of Jesus tradition composed within the first stratum are not necessarily historically the most accurate. Theoretically, a "unit" from the fourth stratum can be more original than one from the first stratum. Therefore, a

hierarchy of attestation of “units” and, especially, “complexes” of “units” is necessary, beginning with the first stratum and working from there to the second, third, and fourth. The complex *Jesus–Kingdom of God–Children* comprises six “units,” namely the Gospel of Thomas 22:1-2; Mark 10:13-16//Matthew 19:13-15//Luke 18:15-17; Matthew 18:3; and John 3:1-10. Thus, it is a “complex” that is attested by a textual “unit” belonging to the first stratum (Gospel of Thomas) and that is supported by multiple independent attestations of the second stratum (Gospel of Mark) and third stratum (Gospel of Matthew and Gospel of John).

These multiple and independent attestations show how seriously Jesus’ attitude towards children should be taken historically. I will argue that it is possible to consider these children, from a perspective of the social stratification of first-century Herodian Palestine, as part of the lowest “class,” namely the “expendables.” Neither Mark nor its parallel texts in the other gospels refer to parents bringing these children to Jesus. It seems that the children were “street urchins.” I am interpreting, on the one hand, this episode of defending the cause of the fatherless from the perspective of Jesus’ own fatherlessness and, on the other hand, in light of the notion “child of God” in the context of Paul. In chapter 7 I will focus on Paul’s implicit reference to Jesus’ call upon God as *Abba* (“Father”) and on Paul’s explicit notion (and its Greco-Roman background) of believers’ adoption by God as children of God.

Scholars have argued from a historical-critical perspective (especially from the exegetical point of view that is referred to in German as *formgeschichtlich*) that the original social setting (*Sitz im Leben*) of the *Evangelium Infantium* (“The Gospel for

Children”) in Mark 10:13-16 should be seen as a miracle story.<sup>2</sup> This passage in the Jesus Seminar’s *Scholars Version* reads as follows:

13 And they would bring children to him so he could lay hands on them, but the disciples scolded them. 14 Then Jesus grew indignant when he saw this and said to them: “Let the children come up to me, don’t try to stop them. After all, God’s domain is peopled with such as these. 15 I swear to you, whoever doesn’t accept God’s imperial rule the way a child would, certainly won’t ever set foot in (God’s domain)!” 16 And he would put his arms around them and bless them, and lay his hands on them.

The Jesus Seminar colored the saying in verse 14 pink and the one in verse 15 gray.<sup>3</sup> This means that most Fellows of the Jesus Seminar believe that these sayings about Jesus’ acceptance of “street children” and seeing God’s kingdom as belonging to people who are like these children circulated independently during the oral period of transmission of the Jesus tradition.

This passage represents one of those examples where *telling* and *showing* have been dialectically interlinked. The result is that it is almost impossible to discern between authentic individual components that go back to the historical Jesus and individual components that were colored by early Christians during the process of oral transmission. However, in terms of “individual features” and not of sayings as “units,” as I argued in chapter 1, there is no reason to see the thrust of the *Evangelium Infantium*, even if it (the thrust of the episode) originally goes back to a “healing” episode (or episodes) in the life of Jesus, as authentic. Mark 10:13-16 as literary unit is Mark’s composition.

Since the time of the Reformation, Mark 10:13-16 has been associated with the practice of baptizing children.<sup>4</sup> This is still so in modern times.<sup>5</sup> Today this direct association between the baptizing of children and the *Evangelium Infantium* is not generally accepted.<sup>6</sup> As far as form is concerned, Mark 10:13-16 demonstrates the characteristics of what Martin Dibelius calls a “paradigm” and Rudolf Bultmann an “apothegm.” Without going into detail, what this amounts to is that the *Evangelium Infantium* is a short (almost aphoristic) narrative that should be formally distinguished from, for example, the parable and the miracle story. Bultmann<sup>7</sup> points out that the children in this story should be seen as the “idea,” that is, a symbol or parable of some concern. The German exegete J. Sauer<sup>8</sup> has, however, very convincingly shown that Mark 10:13-16 is a combined form of an *apothegm* and a healing story, although it shows more of the characteristics of the latter, i.e., a miracle story. Influential studies have independently or consciously supported Sauer in this view.<sup>9</sup>

What is immediately noticeable is that the introduction to Mark 10:13-16 demonstrates strong similarities with other healing narratives where the disabled are brought to Jesus as a performer of miracles, with a call on him to heal them.<sup>10</sup> For our purposes the following terminological aspects of this research can be pointed out:

- “Brought to Jesus”:<sup>11</sup> in the synoptic gospels, this expression is often used to refer to the bringing of the disabled and the sick closer, so that they could be healed.<sup>12</sup>
- “That Jesus should touch them”:<sup>13</sup> in the synoptic gospels, this expression is used only in relation to miracle stories and the raising of the dead.<sup>14</sup>

- “The disciples rebuked the people”:<sup>15</sup> this expression is frequently used in the New Testament with regard to miracle stories.<sup>16</sup>
- “Do not prevent [the children]”:<sup>17</sup> the Greek verb for “do not prevent”, on its own, does not concern the baptism tradition.<sup>18</sup> What is certainly noticeable is that this verb appears in Matthew only in relation to the parallel context, namely Matthew 19:14, and in Mark 9:38-41 two times more in one and the same pericope that has a miraculous exorcism as its theme.<sup>19</sup>
- “Jesus put his arms around the children”:<sup>20</sup> this expression only appears here in Mark 10:13-16 in the New Testament. On the strength of Proverbs 6:10 and 24:33 (Septuagint, the Greek translation of the First Testament), among other references, the Greek word for “put one’s arm around” has an affective connotation of compassion. Diodorus Siculus (one B.C.E.) used it in the context of the healing of children.<sup>21</sup>
- “Jesus put his hands on the children and blessed them”:<sup>22</sup> According to the German exegete J. Sauer,<sup>23</sup> the phrase “to place his hands on them” expresses a typical ritual found in healing practices (“ein typischer Ritus der Heilungspraxis”).

Walter Schmithals<sup>24</sup> understands Mark 10:13-16 against the background of the healing of ostracized children. In line of this interpretation, my research demonstrates that the Greek word *tithemi* (τι/ϑημι), that is translated above as “to place...,” functions semantically as the antonym for the Greek word *ektithemai* (ε)κτι/ϑημαί). In some contexts the latter is used to denote “being put out of the home”/“left out of doors”/“abandon,” while *tithemi* (τι/ϑημι) denotes “accommodating someone.” This

accommodation especially concerns ostracized children. To bless your child, or to give your child a name, implies accepting the child into your house. When the father proclaims the name of the child, he recognizes it as his own. In the fifties, the late Professor At van Selms, my teacher of Semitic Languages at the University of Pretoria, wrote about family life in Ugarit literature and noted: “Through the proclamation of the name the child becomes legally existent.”<sup>25</sup>

To bless your children is to accept them into your home; to not bless your children is to abandon them. Putting a child out of the home was often the lot of unwanted children, like the handicapped. The same fate fell on children “born of unlawful unions” (cf. Wisdom of Solomon 4:6). Physically and mentally disabled children, the blind, those with only one eye or one arm, the leprous, the deaf, and the dumb were often ostracized in this way.<sup>26</sup> The Roman philosopher and statesman, Seneca (*Controversiae* 10:4.16), who was a contemporary of Jesus and well known for his call for a charitable attitude,<sup>27</sup> referred to incidents in this connection.<sup>28</sup>

In the second or third century C.E., the anonymous writer of the well known Letter to Diognetus referred to the widespread Hansel and Gretel phenomenon of children being put out of homes:<sup>29</sup>

For the distinction between Christians and other [human beings], is neither in country nor language nor customs. For they do not dwell in cities in some place of their own, nor do they use any strange variety of dialect, nor practise an extraordinary kind of life....Yet while living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food, and in the rest of life, they show forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of the constitution of their own citizenship. They dwell in their own fatherlands, but as if sojourners in them; they share

all things as citizens, and suffer all things as strangers. Every country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is a foreign country. They marry as all [human beings], they bear children, but they do not expose [e)kri/ptw]their offspring.<sup>30</sup> They offer free hospitality, but guard their purity....

The Greek word translated above as “expose” is used in several places to refer to the ostracizing action of “putting someone out of the house or country.”<sup>31</sup> This casting away of children should probably be seen as a primitive means to control population growth and ensure survival.<sup>32</sup> “The society tends to mandate infanticide in areas affecting the entire society in either ecological (overpopulation) or social (illegitimate) domains.”<sup>33</sup> In many societies, records witness that “adulterous conception was offered as grounds for infanticide.”<sup>34</sup> In some tribes males were said to assist upon the death of any child whose features suggested a nontribal sire. Cases are recorded that “deformed children were described as ghosts or demons, with the rationale for infanticide expressed in terms of a struggle with hostile supernatural forces.”<sup>35</sup> Susan Scrimshaw refers to stories told by the Yaudepu Enga of New Guinea about “supernatural beings who take abandoned children and rear them to live privileged lives.” The Greco-Roman legend of the rescue of the unborn Asclepius by the one who conceived him, the god Apollo, also is a remarkable example. Asclepius’ mortal mother, Coronis, was accused of infidelity when she was found to be pregnant with Asclepius. She was exposed to die on a funeral pyre, but Apollo tore out his unborn child. After Asclepius learned the art of medicine, he son of Apollo, became the healer-god in die Greco-Roman world (that included first-century Palestine) and founder of a very famous healing cult (of which traces are found at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem).<sup>36</sup> In Somali (in the days before Islam) “infanticide of

healthy children was alleged to occur for purely magical reasons...Somali (Africa) parents used to dispose babies born under inauspicious astrological signs.”<sup>37</sup>

Closer to the life and times of Jesus, several other references to the casting out of children are encountered in the writings of, among others, Lactantius<sup>38</sup> (circa 250-circa 325 C.E.), Justin Martyr<sup>39</sup> (died circa 165 C.E.), Clement of Alexandria<sup>40</sup> (circa 160-215 C.E.), Seneca<sup>41</sup> (circa 4 B.C.E.-65 C.E.), and Tertullian<sup>42</sup> (circa 160-circa 212 C.E.). It is in particular the Greek verb and noun *ektithemai* (e)kti/qemai) / *ekthesis* (e)kqe/sij)<sup>43</sup> and the Latin *exposito* that are used to refer to this ostracizing action. It often took place under the pretext that it was a sacrificial religious action. The practice in the Middle Ages of “donating” children to cloisters with ecclesiastic approval and regulation<sup>44</sup>, should be seen in the same light.

Just as the words “hot” and “cold” cannot be used in a semantically independent manner—the one finds its meaning in terms of the other—the meaning of the Greek word *ektithemai* (e)kti/qemai) is complemented by the word *tithemi* (ti/qhmi). The latter can indicate, among other meanings, an act of “assigning/appointing someone to a particular task, function, or role.”<sup>45</sup> It is in other words an act of “choosing.”

“Choosing” need not always imply “selection,” but could also mean the “acceptance” or even the vocation to the fulfillment of a specific role. The name given to a child by the parents was sometimes related to the identification and vocation to fulfill a particular role or perform a task.<sup>46</sup> In this connection, it is important to note that the parental custom of blessing a child and placing one’s hands on that child (cf. the analogy in Mark 10:16) relates to the action of “accepting into the home” as opposed to “putting out of the home.” To bless your child is to promise help and care.<sup>47</sup>



As a result of the (covenantal) relationship between a son and his father, one of the most important signs of honor that a son can show his father is to care reciprocally for him when he is old, and to bury him. The Greek word *tithemi* (τι/ϑημι) is also used for this (see Acts 7:16), as well as *prostithemi* (προστι/ϑημι) (see Acts 13:36, where the word literally means “to entrust your father to his fathers”).<sup>48</sup>

It seems that Old Israel took better care of its children than its neighbors took care of their children. For example, in Psalm 106:37 Israel is called out to abandon the heathen practice of child sacrifice.<sup>49</sup> This does not however mean that this custom was no longer practiced by the Israelites. In Ezekiel 16, God’s covenant with Israel is compared to finding a little girl who had been rejected at birth, but who had been cared for by God as her parent in terms of a covenantal agreement. In Stephen’s speech, the putting out of Moses<sup>50</sup> in a death-basket is also described using the Greek verb *ektithemai* (ε)κτι/ϑημαι (Acts 7:21; cf. [LXX] Ex 2:3).

Children were abandoned for various reasons. Apart from survival motives or religious considerations, children were often “thrown away” because of an unwanted marriage and pregnancy.<sup>51</sup> In the Wisdom of Solomon (4:3-6), for example, these children were considered as “born of unlawful unions.” Jane Schaberg<sup>52</sup> understands the first-century Mediterranean society’s attitude towards the status of the child carried by the pregnant, betrothed woman, like Mary, as Matthew’s story describes it, in light of the depiction that appears in the Wisdom of Solomon as well as in the Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach. These texts contain references to the divorce of a “seductress” who became pregnant:

So it is also with a woman who leaves her husband

And produced an heir by a stranger.  
For first, she disobeyed the law of the Most High;  
Second, she committed an offense against her husband;  
And third, she committed adultery through fornication;  
And produced children by a strange man.  
She will be led away unto the assembly,  
And punishment will fall on her children.  
Her children will not spread out roots,  
And her branches will not bear fruit.  
She will leave her memory for a curse,  
And her disgrace will not be blotted out.<sup>53</sup>

A similar attitude toward the “children of adultery” appears in the Wisdom of Solomon:<sup>54</sup>

But the children of adulteress will not come to maturity,  
and the offspring of an unlawful union will perish.  
Even if they live long they will be held of no account,  
and finally their old age will be without honor.  
If they die young, they will have no hope and no consolation in the day of  
decision....

For children born of unlawful unions  
are witnesses of evil against their parents when God examines them.

In the First Testament the analogical reference in Ezekiel 16:3 to the abandonment of a child was precisely the result of an undesirable mixed marriage. Incisive studies have been done on the prohibition on mixed marriages during the reign of the last Judean kings in particular.<sup>55</sup> This was mainly the effect of Ezra’s post-exilic marriage reforms.<sup>56</sup> At the time of first-century Judean purification, these “reforms” led to divorce being

justifiable on the basis of Mosaic law (see Mk 10:1-10 and parallel texts). This state of affairs was conducive for the ostracism of the “impure” wife and her oldest child.<sup>57</sup> The debate between Jesus and the Pharisees, (reported in at least three independent sources:<sup>58</sup> Mark 10:1-12; Q 16:18 [cf. Mt 5:32], and Paul [1 Cor 7:10-11]) on whether or not divorce was justified should probably be understood against this background. The story of Jesus’ empathy for and touching of an impure woman who was called a “sinner” and had been put out of her house (cf. Lk 7:36-50)<sup>59</sup> seems to reflect similar circumstances.

This is still a modern-day phenomenon. A South African newspaper,<sup>60</sup> on 25 June 1991, carried a report about young women being put out of their homes in Nazareth:

In an unusual demonstration in Nazareth, Israel, yesterday [24 June 1991], about fifteen young Arabian woman protested against the killing of women by their male relations as a result of shame they had brought on their families. These women say that about forty young women are killed every year after extra-marital pregnancies, unsanctioned love affairs and wanting to marry men not considered suitable by their families.

On 20 September 1994, Sapa-Reuter reports about a “girl killed in ‘crime of honour’” in Amman, Jordan:<sup>61</sup>

A Jordanian teenager killed his 18-year-old physically handicapped sister after she gave birth to an illegitimate child. The 17-year-old stabbed his sister several times before shooting her while their parents ululated. The Jordan Times newspaper, quoting relatives and officials, said the girl, identified only as Jizia, was attacked a day after her family freed her from jail and signed a paper saying they would not harm her. The pregnant girl had been kept in custody until the baby was born to protect her from what is known in the Middle East as a “crime of honour.” The brother surrendered to police.

A woman, remains, in some sense, a “member of the father’s house” in which (she) was born...and would return to (her family) if she was divorced or left widowed and childless.”<sup>62</sup> When a woman with an unwanted pregnancy (whether married, betrothed or not) escapes death, yet is abandoned, the child could be cast away at birth. It seems that in New Testament times, people of other fringe groups who tried to exist outside the circle of normal family care were often the only refuge of the outcast woman and/or child. It is possible that among these people was the socioeconomic group that Josephus frequently referred to as the “bandits.”<sup>63</sup> Also among them seems to be people such as we encounter when we read texts like Matthew 15:29- 32:64:<sup>64</sup>

29 Then Jesus left there and went to the sea of Galilee. And he climbed up the mountain and sat there. 30 And huge crowds came to him and brought with them the lame, the blind, the maimed, the mute, and many others, and they crowded around his feet and he healed them. 31 As a result, the crowd was astonished when they saw the mute now speaking, the maimed made strong, and the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they gave all credit to the God of Israel. 32 Then Jesus called his disciples aside and said: “I feel sorry for the crowd because they have already spent three days with me and haven’t had anything to eat. And I do not want to send these people away hungry, otherwise they’ll collapse on the road.”

“Unclean” and “imperfect” people were seen as estranged from God. From the perspective of the “politics of holiness,” they were the “sinners” who were under the influence of demons. It is with reference to this that Matthew refers to some of the Galileans as those living in the “land of the shadow of death” (Mt 4:16).

According to Matthew (who developed his understanding of Jesus' healing activities from themes in the Hebrew Scriptures—cf. Is 8:23-9:2; 58:10), Jesus' message that God's kingdom was near-at-hand was for the peripheral people (the outcasts, the “people who lived in darkness”) and was like the dawning of a light. According to purification customs,<sup>65</sup> these people were the socially despised who were put out of homes and were refused admittance to the temple and synagogues.<sup>66</sup> Jesus' miracles were aimed at the outcasts in Galilee.<sup>67</sup> Matthew 4:23-5:4ff. is also an example of such a report:<sup>68</sup>

23 And he toured all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of (Heaven's) imperial rule, and healing every disease and every ailment the people had. 24 And his reputation spread through the whole of Syria. They brought him everyone who was ill, who suffered from any kind of disease or was in intense pain, who was possessed, who was epileptic, or paralytic, and he cured them. 25 And huge crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from across the Jordan. 5 Taking note of the crowds, he climbed up the mountain, and when he had sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 He then began to speak, and this is what he would teach them:

3 Congratulations to the poor in spirit!

Heaven's domain belongs to them.

4 Congratulations to those who grieve!

They will be consoled

....

I do not think that this report is, in its entirety, historical but it signals in all probability a clear picture of the fact that Jesus did not act only as a healer of disease but

also as a critic of society.<sup>69</sup> “The healings must be seen against the background of the community that recounted them, as collective symbolic actions by which distress was remedied and in which the members found strength to combat it in their ordinary lives by actions that were not merely ‘symbolic.’”<sup>70</sup> The people who were ill were the people who were *poor*, who *grieved*. These verbs came from the first two beatitudes (Mt 5:3-4) that preface Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:28). The Jesus Seminar regards these two and the one about hunger and thirst (Mt 5:6) as already been interpreted by Matthew as “religious virtues rather than...social and economic conditions.”<sup>71</sup> However, the “Fellows of the Seminar were virtually unanimous in their view that [the historical] Jesus is the author of the[se] three congratulations.”<sup>72</sup> The Lukan versions of those congratulations that are “addressed to the poor, the weeping,, and the hungry,” taken from the Sayings Gospel Q (6:22-23) are probably more original. They are not like the Matthean spiritualizations because they do not have the stipulations “poor *in spirit*” and “hunger and thirst *for justice*.”

Yet what Matthew does should not go unnoticed or be seen as irrelevant. Matthew has a “typifying style of composition.”<sup>73</sup> He often summarized his understanding of Jesus’ miracles. When Matthew added religious virtues to Jesus’ talk on political and economic conditions, he certainly did not distance himself from the concrete social consequences of Jesus’ healing activities. “The programmatic miracle summary in [Mt] 4:23-25 precedes the Sermon on the Mount. In it teaching and healing are linked. What Matthew has joined, let not the exegete put asunder. Distinguishing between the two is a different matter.”<sup>74</sup>

This wisdom comes from the German exegete and theologian Gerd Theissen. In his book *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* ([1974] 1983), he focuses on the meaning of the fact that Jesus turned to the social and political outcasts. Theissen<sup>75</sup> notes that belief in miracles among the humble people was “concentrated...on specific situations of distress, on possession, disease, hunger, lack of success and danger.” And it is true, the Matthean miracle summaries “leave no doubt about the sort of people who flocked to [Jesus]; it was the *ochlos*, the ‘crowd’, the humble people.” They were part of the expendable class, “about 5-10%, for whom society had no place or need. They had been forced off the land because of population pressures or they did not fit into society. They tended to be landless and itinerant with no normal family life and a high death rate.”<sup>76</sup>

Street children were to be found among them. It is striking that, in many places in Matthew, the “crowd” was called the “least” (Mt 25:40, 45), the “children” (Mt 15:26; 18:3), the “little ones” (Mt 18:14), and “sheep” (Mt 18:12; cf. Mt 10:36, and 15:26). The metaphorical use of “sheep” in Matthew 9:36 and 18:12 correlates with the expressions “the lost sheep of Israel” in Matthew 10:6 and “the little children” in Matthew 18:3-5, as well as “the little ones” in Matthew 18:6, 10, 14 (cf. Mt 10:42).

In the first-century C.E., the outcast of children generally meant abandoning them to all types of social evils. The Christian apologist, Lactantius (*Institutiones Divinae* 5.9) pointed out that children abandoned thus often fell prey to wild animals or sexual abuse. Also Justin Martyr (1 *Apologia* 27) argued that Christians should be taught not to put their newly born children out of their homes, since almost all such children, both daughters and sons, would be abused as prostitutes. Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus*

3.3) also called attention to this wretchedness and noted that men would later unwittingly have sexual intercourse with their own children, who had become prostitutes. Tertullian (Ad Nationes 1.3.16) objected to the custom of putting children out of the house since the children would suffer. He acknowledged that it was not usually the parents' intention to harm their children, that strangers would sympathetically adopt the children and care for them better than their biological parents could because of limited resources.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the church received children who had been ejected from their homes and it functioned as a sort of children's home. In a certain sense, the church facilitated the ostracizing practice. Thomas Aquinas<sup>77</sup> studied in detail the teaching of children in the cloisters and questioned whether children who did not yet understand what it was all about could be bound by a lifelong oath, and whether such children had any place in the cloister. It would appear that this did not, in fact, reflect true concern for the children, but that the large number of children put out of their homes and given to the church by their parents disrupted church life.<sup>78</sup> This practice of "sacrificing children" was called *oblatio* and by the first century C.E. it had already been identified as distinct from *expositum*<sup>79</sup> by Seneca (Controversiae 10:4.16).

By the Middle Ages it had become important for the church to regulate the baptism and the reclaiming back of expositi.<sup>80</sup> Ecclesiastical practices of the sixth century that even organized the sale of children are known to us. Within the Benedictine Order, in particular, we find that *oblatio* was sanctioned. Parents were forbidden to have any further say in the instruction and formal education of these children. The instruction of these children was also distinct from the normal instruction given to children in the cloisters.<sup>81</sup> At first, only the children of aristocrats were received, but later children from



parents in the peasant society were also taken in. In the thirteenth century, the papal Decretum Gratiani began to forbid the practice of *oblatio* and attempts were made to avoid receiving children under the age of eighteen in the monasteries.<sup>82</sup>

We have seen that Schmithals<sup>83</sup> describes the original social location (*Sitz im Leben*) of the *Evangelium Infantium* (as far as it can be discerned historically) as that which should be understood against the background of the healing of ostracized children. He also notes that Jesus' acceptance of the children, which is apparent from his actions, should be seen as a condemnation of the practice of "turning the children out of the home." Persons, such as widows and orphans, who had no connection with a patriarch were necessarily marginal to the society.<sup>84</sup> From the socio-historical information given above, one can argue that the social world mirrored in the *Evangelium Infantium* (and in the contexts of both Jesus' birth record in Mt 1:1-17 and the birth narrative itself in Mt 1:18-25) correlates with what is found in the contextual world in which Matthew's story as a whole makes sense.

I already mentioned that the infancy narratives are so filled with legendary content that almost no history can be inferred from them. In a published lecture (given for St Andrew's Trust for the Study of Religion and Society, New Zealand) Dr. James Veitch (Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and Fellow of the Jesus Seminar) puts it as follows in his paper entitled *The Birth of Jesus: History or Myth?*<sup>85</sup>

Matthew's birth stories were created out of stories in the Hebrew Bible. They are not accounts of what actually happened....The third gospel, known to us as "Luke," probably circulated in the wake of the persecution of Domitian

around the mid-90s of the 1st century. Its communities were Greek Christians....In the light of persecution, they wished to present a story of Jesus using language and thought–forms of their contemporaries living in cities throughout the empire. Since the Roman Senate deified its emperors from Julius Caesar onwards, it is not surprising to find Christian writers doing the same for Jesus.<sup>86</sup> ...So what can be gleaned from “Matthew” and “Luke” about the actual historical circumstances of Jesus’ birth? Very little...There is the admission that the circumstances of the birth were not straightforward but quite special, prompting a suggestion of illegitimacy or premarital activity. Perhaps in a small village like Nazareth, set in a mixed-Jewish and non-Jewish area, a conception like this would give rise to speculation and gossip. But religious concerns prompted by creative human imagination have already taken over by the time we reach “Matthew,” and the human Jesus is already lost from sight.<sup>87</sup> ...*So forget the history and enjoy the myth.*<sup>88</sup>

Yet, when one sees myths as emptied realities and one fills the emptied history with nature (as I suggested in chapter 3), one catches a glimpse of how the stories about Jesus’ birth gave meaning to the life of people—among them were women and children living at the fringe of society because they were the nobodies (the divorced and the fatherless, the widows, and the orphans) to whom patriarchy gave no place amidst the honorable.

Connecting the infancy narratives with Jesus’ defense of patriarchless women and fatherless children is one way to demonstrate how *Matthew’s showing* and *Jesus’ telling* (and acting) interlink. To realize this dialectic is to take into consideration that the *Jesus of history* is retold as the *Jesus of faith*—that the *proclaimer* became the *proclaimed*.

## **A Tale of Two Kings**

I have argued that the accommodation of the abandoned child forms the original *Sitz im Leben* of both Mark 10:1-12 (Jesus' critique of divorce) and Mark 10:13-16 (Jesus' blessing of street children). It seems also to be the fundamental social setting of the Matthean parallel in Matthew 19:13-15. Here the *Evangelium Infantium* in Mark served as the source for Matthew's version of the complex "Jesus-Kingdom of Heaven-Children." In my view the same social setting can be assumed to be part of the background of the narrative about the birth of Jesus, at least as told in Matthew's story.

Matthew's story about the genesis and infancy of Jesus forms an appropriate parallel to what many find to be perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Jesus' ministry:<sup>89</sup> his association with the "least," the "children," the "little ones," the "sheep." The use of these names portrays the care and love of Jesus, symbolized in the Matthean infancy narrative as shepherd of God's people (cf. Mt 2:6). Against this background, it is so much more comprehensible that the *Evangelium Infantium* (in both Mark 10:13-16 and Matthew 19:13-15) should have been placed between the debate on divorce (Mk 10:1-12//Mt 19:1-12) and the rich young man's question about the implications of obeying the law in terms of compassion and the constitution of a "new" fictive family (Mk 10:17-31//Mt 19:16-30).<sup>90</sup>

A genealogical record is a kind of certificate of status in terms of someone's "attributed identity": "it certified the bearer as an official member of his culture in good standing, and conferred upon him the cultural credentials of role and status apposite to his ancestral heritage."<sup>91</sup> According to Matthew's narrative strategy, the birth record of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17) paves the way for the birth narrative as such (Mt 1:18-25). And the birth narrative in its turn paves the way for the story of King Herod versus the newborn king of

the Jews (Mt 2:1-23). Instead of leading God's people, Herod (appointed by Caesar as "king of the Jews"), killed children (see Josephus BJ 1.431-440) and in response was feared (see Assumptio Mosis 6:2-9).<sup>92</sup> Susan Scrimshaw,<sup>93</sup> therefore, postulates "dynastic politics" as the "proximate reason" for Herod's infanticide. Jesus, on the contrary, being an adopted child (Mt 1:19-20), touched (Mt 19:13-15) and healed children (Mt 21:14) and, in response, was honored in the temple by children as Son of David (Mt 21:15). The Matthean infancy narrative can thus be interpreted from the perspective of the social pattern of *challenge* and *response* in terms of the ascribed and acquired honor of two kings.

This "challenge and response" can be studied from the social-scientific perspective of honor and shame as pivotal social values.<sup>94</sup> In the first-century Mediterranean world, every social interaction that took place outside one's family or group of friends was perceived as an affront to one's honor. Bruce Malina helps exegetes of Jesus' birth record to understand that "being born into an honorable family makes one honorable, since the family is the repository of the honor of past illustrious ancestors and their accumulated acquired honor."<sup>95</sup> Malina notes that one of the purposes of genealogies as birth records is to legitimize a person's ascribed honor.

The "game" of challenge and response can only be played among equals. This is a problem where Jesus is concerned. Jesus was not an equal of Herod the Great. We know that Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, was ascribed honor by Caesar when he was declared king of the Judeans in 47 B.C.E.<sup>96</sup> Herod the Great himself was made king by the Roman Senate.<sup>97</sup> However, although he was a Judean by religion, his racial

descent was Idumaeen.<sup>98</sup> Herod acted as patron among the people through agriculture and commercial enterprise<sup>99</sup> but the response to his program was fear and hostility.

Matthew's version of Jesus' genealogy places him among the disreputable. Matthew's reference to Tamar (as the mother of Perez, Mt 1:3) alludes to the tortuous way in which Judah begot Perez and Zerah (Gen 38:6-30); Rahab, the mother of Boaz (Mt 1:5), was the foreign prostitute who helped the Israelite spies at Jericho (see Jos 20); Ruth, the mother of Obed (Mt 1:5), was also a foreigner (see Ruth 4); the very designation of the mother of Solomon as "the wife of Uriah" (Mt 1:6) reminds the readers of David's dubious behavior (see 2 Sm 11).<sup>100</sup>

These "foremothers" of Jesus were dishonorable people. A prostitute had no honor because of her unconventional lifestyle. She was not sexually exclusive to a patriarch. She symbolized chaos.<sup>101</sup> According to the Mediterranean culture, such people had no honor at all. In other words, there was no honor to defend. They were comparable to other defenseless people: orphans, widows, destitute poor, resident aliens—"people incapable of defending their own honor."<sup>102</sup> This meant that a patron with honor was needed in order to defend a person without honor.

According to Matthew, God was the one who intervened on behalf of Jesus. "While [first-century Mediterranean] people are defined by others and because of others, they are in fact unable to change undesirable situations. Hence the need for divine intervention."<sup>103</sup> In the Matthean infancy narrative, the life of the child Jesus was threatened by Herod the Great. Though Jesus was portrayed as born from and among despised outcasts, he was God's "adopted son" (see Mt 3:17).

It is clear that the thrust of the Matthean genealogy is that Jesus was an adopted child. Because of God's intervention, he became Joseph's adopted son (see Mt 1:25). Combining the messianic interpretation of Jesus and the tradition that Jesus was from the tribe of Joseph (see again chapter 4, "The Joseph Trajectory"), Matthew says that Joseph's line goes back to both David and Abraham. Yet children of Abraham were God's children. From the Matthean point of view, a son of David and of Abraham was not someone characterized primarily by biological offspring, but by what he would do, his vocation.<sup>104</sup> In Matthew 3:7-9, the "true children of Abraham" are described as people who do certain things: they bear fruit that befit repentance.

Matthew's story presupposes that Joseph knows something about Mary's pregnancy. It seems that he thought that she had committed adultery.<sup>105</sup> However, the narrative does not describe how Jesus was conceived but rather the reason why Mary's pregnancy should not be perceived as shameful; that which is conceived in her is not impure but is of the Holy Spirit, and thus holy. The Greek syntax of this sentence puts the emphasis on the word "holy." The text opposes diverging evaluations of Mary's pregnancy, either as something that is shameful and a cause of disgrace and rejection (Mt 1:19) or as something that one should not fear because it is of God (Mt 1:20).<sup>106</sup> The divine is defined in terms of holiness. Joseph, when wanting to divorce Mary, is described as her husband; just (or righteous); unwilling to put her to shame (Mt 1:19); Joseph, when taking Mary into his home, is described as son of David, obeying (Mt 1:24), without fear (Mt 1:20), adopting Jesus by giving him his name (Mt 1:25), and transmitting the vocation to be *son of David* and *son of Abraham* (Mt 1:1).

From Matthew's perspective, "true righteousness" (*dikaiosunē*), which "exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (Mt 5:20), is expressed in love, given without discrimination to deserving and undeserving alike (Mt 5:44-48). "The 'just' man is merciful, as God is merciful."<sup>107</sup> Four of the five instances of the verb "to have compassion" and five of the eight instances of the verb "to have mercy"<sup>108</sup> occur in Matthew in connection with healing and in almost every case the names "Lord" [Κυ/ριος] and/or "Son of David" appear in the same context.<sup>109</sup> Except for the narrator, it is only the crowd (Mt 9:27; 12:23; 20:30, and 21:15) and the Gentiles (Mt 15:22) who address Jesus as "Son of David" and not the disciples or the Judean leaders. All of these passages deal with healing and all, except Matthew 15:21-28, deal with the healing of the blind in one way or another. Matthew 21:9, the entry into Jerusalem, is an exception because it does not deal directly with healing. However, the entry bears a close relation to the following incident of healing that takes place inside the temple and leads to a climax when "children in the temple" honored Jesus as the "son of David" (Mt 21:15). From a "medical-anthropological" perspective, we know that the healing incidents (for example, the healing of "lepers") in the gospels provide evidence that human illnesses "were thought to be a source of pollution, not contagion, and that Jesus' cure invariably involved establishing new self understandings so that these formerly unclean and excluded from the holy community now found themselves clean and within the holy community."<sup>110</sup>

In the Mediterranean world, children were considered nobodies. Herod the Great, the challenger of Jesus, was also the murderer of children. Research, studying infanticide from a cultural-anthropological perspective, mentions resource competition among

individuals and families in preindustrial societies competing for other valuables besides land and geopolitical power. “Human history is full of cases of competition for access to office (read: economic and reproductive dominance) most especially among royalty. We should expect that the greater the value of the office, the greater the benefit of assassination of potential competitors.”<sup>111</sup> These studies found that the practice of infanticide was used in hunter-gatherer, horticulturist, and stratified agrarian societies for purposes ranging from population control to maintenance of the social structure.<sup>112</sup>

In order to maintain his geopolitical power, Herod the Great murdered those sons who would be more readily acceptable to the Judeans as king. The legend about Herod’s infanticide in Matthew should be understood against this background. Matthew narrates that Jesus escaped being murdered by Herod. This was a result of God’s intervention. In Matthew’s story Jesus, in his turn, became the protector of defenseless children. Matthew encompassed the beginning and end of Jesus’ public ministry within the context of Jesus’ relationship to children. Jesus’ baptism by John (so that they both can fulfill “all righteousness”—Mt 3:15) and Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-17) formed the two poles of his ministry. Both episodes can be described as cleansing of the temple—the last episode is explicitly told and the first episode implicitly. Both incidents were (in a midrash fashion) understood by Matthew as fulfillment of Scripture. The baptism scene is a Matthean allusion to Isaiah 1:13-17 and the record of the entry into Jerusalem is an explicit interpretation of Jeremiah 7:1-8:

“Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your evil assemblies...I am weary bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make



yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! *Seek justice, encouraged the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.*”

(Is 1:13-17; my emphasis)

“This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ‘Stand at the gate of the Lord’s house and there proclaim this message: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord!’ If you really change your ways and your actions *and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place*, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever. But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.’”

(Jer 7:1-8; my emphasis)

In the beginning of Matthew’s story the “authorities” in Jerusalem almost murdered the infant Jesus with other “expendable” children. In the middle part of the story Jesus acted as the protector of the honor of the miserable. At the end, quite unconventionally, Jesus was honored by infants. Here, near the end of Jesus’ life, Matthew unexpectedly places the children in the temple. Children were not permitted to enter the temple. Yet, according to Matthew, children were the ones to honor Jesus. Jesus, seemingly a fatherless person, born from among the despised, was also not expected to be found in the Temple. We have seen that honor could only be ascribed by notable persons.<sup>113</sup> The implication of this is that Matthew treated both Jesus and the children as notable people.

It becomes clear that in Matthew's story, God is shown "to be one who sides with the outcast and endangered woman and child."<sup>114</sup> Matthew retold the tradition of the divine intervention that caused Joseph's acceptance of the messianic child and his mother. Therefore, Jane Schaberg is on the right track when she understands Matthew's emphasis of God as Father as an indication that the Jesus movement is the commencement of a new (fictive) family (cf. Mt 19:29), a family of God (cf. Mt 23:9). By making the child and not the father the model for entry into the reign of God, the fatherless Jesus "reversed the hierarchical assumptions that governed all of life."<sup>115</sup> The Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the status of women and children represents the deliberate breaking down of boundaries. The new way was for all to assume the position of children (cf. Mt 23:11-12).<sup>116</sup> Jane Schaberg<sup>117</sup> says about her work on Jesus' illegitimacy: "If my reading of Matthew's infancy narrative is regarded as a possible reading, other ears may recognize its echoes in the rest of this Gospel." This is what my reading scenario does: the fatherless Jesus defended the fatherless street urchins. Jesus erased and replaced the "god-like" status of the biological father with God as "our Father in heaven." He opened the door for the fatherless to call upon God as their Father.

At this point, it is as if we have realized that we crossed a bridge. From hindsight it was a movement from seeing Jesus, being child of God, to seeing his followers who became children of God. Actually, the transition from the *Jesus of history* to the *Jesus of faith* can be explained in terms of a suspension bridge. According to this analogy, the quest for Jesus means an involvement of the scholar as *engagé*. Every time, when one sets foot on the left side of the bridge, the pedestrian is swayed to the right side. It is a motion from *telling* (the Jesus of history) to *showing* (the Jesus of faith). It represents a

movement between what can be historically discerned with regard to the words and deeds of Jesus on the one hand, and the faith assertions of his followers on the other hand. What is at issue is engaged hermeneutics. While bridging the transition between pre-Easter and post-Easter, the scholar is critically testing whether the cause of Jesus has been adequately conveyed in the process of transition.

## END NOTES

1. Cf. Crossan, J.D. 1991, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; Crossan, J.D. 1991, "The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant," p. 1200.
2. Sauer, J. 1981, "Der ursprüngliche 'Sitz im Leben' von Mk 10, 13-16"; Robbins, V.K. 1983, "Pronouncement Stories and Jesus' Blessing of the Children: A Rhetorical Approach"; Schmithals, W. 1986, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Kapitel 9,2-16,18*, pp. 447-448.
3. Cf. Funk, R.W. & Hoover, R.W. 1993, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, p. 89.
4. Cf. Ludolph, I. 1973, "Zur Geschichte der Auslegung des Evangelium Infantium."
5. See *inter alia* Cullmann, O. 1948, "Spuren einer alten Taufformel im Neuen Testament," pp. 65-73; Jeremias, J. 1958, *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten*, pp. 61-68; Lindemann, A. 1983, *Die Kinder und die Gottesherrschaft*, pp. 77, 97-99.
6. See *inter alia* Aland, K. 1961, *Die Säuglingstaufe im Neuen Testament und in der alten Kirche: Eine Argument a Joachim Jeremias*, pp. 67-71; Klein, G. 1970, "Jesus und die Kinder: Bibelarbeit über Markus 10, 13-16," pp. 68-69; Schweizer, E. 1975, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, p. 112; Gnifka, J. 1979, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, 2. Teilband: Mk 8,27-16,20*, p. 81; Sauer, J. 1981, "Der ursprüngliche 'Sitz im Leben' von Mk 10, 13-16," pp. 27-29; Derrett, J.D.M. 1983, "Why Jesus blessed the children (Mk 10:13-16 par.)," pp. 1-3; Ringshausen, G. 1986, "Die Kinder der Weisheit: Zur Auslegung von Mk 10, 13-16 par.," pp. 34-42; Schmithals, W. 1986, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Kapitel 9,2-16,18*, pp. 445-446).
7. Bultmann, R. 1964, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, p. 215: "das Bild wird zur Sache selbst."
8. Sauer, J. 1981, "Der ursprüngliche 'Sitz im Leben' von Mk 10, 13-16," pp. 41-45.
9. See Derrett, J.D.M. 1983, "Why Jesus blessed the children (Mk 10:13-16 par.)," pp. 1-2; Ringshausen, G. 1986, "Die Kinder der Weisheit: Zur Auslegung von Mk 10, 13-16 par.," p. 41.
10. Cf. Klein, G. 1970, "Jesus und die Kinder: Bibelarbeit über Markus 10, 13-16," p. 59; Pesch, R. 1977, *Das Markusevangelium, 2. Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27-16:20*, p. 131; Sauer, J. 1981, "Der ursprüngliche 'Sitz im Leben' von Mk 10, 13-16," p. 41; and

11. In Greek: *prosfē/rw*.
12. See Mk 2:4 par.; Mt 4:24 = 14:35; Mt 8:16 par.; Mk 1:32 (*e1feron*); Mt 9:2 par.; Mk 2:3 (*fe/rontej*); Mt 9:32; 12:22; 17:16 par.; Mk 9:17 (*h1negka*); cf. also *fe/rw*: Mk 1:32; 2:3 par.; Lk 15:18; Mk 7:32; Mk 8:22; Mk 9:19-20 par.; Mt 17:17; Ac 5:16; exceptions: Mt 18:24; Lk 23:14.
13. In Greek: *a3ptomai*.
14. Mk 1:41 par.; Mt 8:3/Lk 5:13; Mk 3:10 par.; Lk 6:19; Mk 6:56 par.; Mt 14:36; Mk 5:27-28 par.; Mt 9:20-21/Lk 8:44; Mk 5:30-31 par.; Lk 8:45-46; Mk 7:33; 8:22 (*i3na au0tou= a3yhtai*); Mt 8:15; 9:29; 17:7 (with reference to raising from the dead); Mt 20:34; Lk 7:14; 8:47; 22:51; exception: Lk 7:39).
15. In Greek: *e0pitima/w*.
16. Mk 1:25 par.; Lk 4:35; Mk 4:39 par.; Mt 8:26/Lk 8:24; Mk 9:25 par.; Mt 17:18/Lk 9:42; Mk 10:48 par.; Mt 20:31/Lk 18:39; cf. also Lk 4:39 and the “Markan seal of confession” in Mk 3:12 par., Mt 12:16/Lk 4:41; outside the framework of the miracle story one finds the word *e0pitima/w*, as far as the synoptic gospels are concerned, only in the Petrine confession in Mk 8:30, 32, 33 par., and in the Lukan redaction in inter alia Lk 17:3, but also in the Lukan material in Lk 19:39 and 23:40.
17. In Greek: *kwlu/w*.
18. I am saying this despite what Oscar Cullmann and Joachim Jeremias, among others, inferred from Acts 8:36. A form of baptism could be expected to be formulated interrogatively, while, in the synoptic gospels, *kwlu/ete* occurs only as an imperative or as an assertion in the indicative (cf. Klein, G. 1970, “Jesus und die Kinder: Bibelarbeit über Markus 10, 13-16,” p. 69; Pesch, R. 1977, *Das Markusevangelium, 2. Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27-16:20*, p. 132; Sauer, J. 1981, “Der ursprüngliche ‘Sitz im Leben’ von Mk 10, 13-16,” p. 41).
19. “Es ist ganz evident, daß im Hintergrund dieser Perikope Probleme urchristlicher Wunderpraxis stehen. *Mh\ kwlu/ete* erweist sich somit als ein Terminus, der Raum dieser Praxis zumindest nicht unüblich war” (Sauer, J. 1981, “Der ursprüngliche ‘Sitz im Leben’ von Mk 10, 13-16,” p. 42). 1 Corinthians 14:39 is the only place in the New Testament where the expression *mh\ kwlu/ete* occurs outside the referential framework of the “Wunderpraxis.”
20. In Greek: *e0nagkali/zomai*.

21. “Kybele schließt die kleine Kinder in die Arme [e0nagk.] u. heilt sie [sw/ | zw], wenn sie krank sind” (see Arndt, W. F & Ginrich, F.W. 1957, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 261. According to Sauer, J. 1981, “Der ursprüngliche ‘Sitz im Leben’ von Mk 10, 13-16,” p. 42, it is therefore also possible “daß e0nagkali/samenoj, auch in Mk 10:16 eine Heilgestus beschreibt.”
22. In Greek: ti/qhmi ta\j xei=raj e0p 0.... or e0piti/qhmi ta\j xei=raj....
23. Sauer, J. 1981, “Der ursprüngliche ‘Sitz im Leben’ von Mk 10, 13-16,” p. 42. Cf. Mk 8:23; Mk 5:23 par.; Mt 9:18; Mk 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25; 16:18; Lk 4:40; 13:13; Ac 28:8; cf. also Ac 3:7.
24. Schmithals, W. 1986, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Kapitel 9,2-16,18*, pp. 447-448.
25. Van Selms, A. 1954, *Marriage & Family Life in Ugarit Literature*, p. 90.
26. Stockton, I. 1983, “Children, Church and Kingdom,” p. 90.
27. See Dibelius, M. 1961, s.v. “Seneca, Lucius Annaeus,” *RGV*, V, pp. 1694-1695.
28. See Boswell, J.E. 1984, “*Exposito* and *Oblatio*: The Abandonment of Children and the Ancient and Medieval family,” p. 21 note 26; cf. Rawson, B, 1986, “Children in the Roman ‘Familia’,” pp. 170-200.
29. *Loeb Classical Library* 1965, s.v. “The Epistle to Diognetus,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, II, pp. 358-361; cf. Wilson, S. 1988, “Infanticide, Child Abandonment, and Female Honour in Nineteenth-century Corsica,” p. 763 note 4.
30. In Greek: a0ll 0 ou0 r9i/ptousi ta\ gennome/na.
31. See Liddel, H.G. & Scott, R. 1961, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1572.
32. See Boswell, J.E. 1984, “*Exposito* and *Oblatio*,” pp. 10-33; Countryman, L.W. 1989, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, p. 22.
33. Scrimshaw, S.C.M. 1984, “Infanticide in Human Populations: Societal and Individual Concerns,” p. 448.
34. Daly. M & Wilson, M. 1984, “A Sociobiological Analysis of Human Infanticide,” p. 489.
35. Daly. M & Wilson, M. 1984, “A Sociobiological Analysis of Human Infanticide,” p. 492.
36. Scrimshaw, S.C.M. 1984, “Infanticide in Human Populations,” p. 443; Cimok, F [1993] 1998, *Pergamum*, p. 84; White Fathers – Saint Anne s.a., “Bethesda: St. Anne” .
37. Cf. M H I Galaal, M.H.I., in Daly. M & Wilson, M. 1984, “A Sociobiological Analysis of Human Infanticide,” p. 494.
38. Lactantius, *Institutiones Divinae* 5.9.
39. Justinus Martyr, 1 *Apologia* 27.

40. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus* 3.3.
41. Seneca, *Controversiae* 10.4.16.
42. Tertullianus, *Ad Nationes* 1.3.16.
43. In Greek: ε) κτi / qemai / ε) κqε / sij.
44. Cf. Deroux, M.P. 1927, “Les origines de l’oblation benedictine,” pp. 1-16, 81-113, 193-216.
45. Cf. Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A. (eds.) 1988, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, p. 483.
46. Cf. Patte, D. 1987, *The Gospel according to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew’s Faith*, pp. 23-28, with regard to Joseph’s name of “Son of David” in the Gospel of Matthew, as well as the designation of “God-with-us” given to Jesus.
47. Horst, F. 1961, s.v. “Segen und Fluch,” in *RGG*, V, p. 1650, refers in this connection to Ruth 4:13-16.
48. Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A. (eds.) 1988, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 531. The Greek expression used in Acts 13:36 is: prosete/qh pro\j tou\j pate/raj au0tou=.
49. See especially the comprehensive study by Stager, L.E. & Wolff, S.R. 1984, “Child Sacrifice at Carthage: Religious Rite or Population Control? Archaeological Evidence Provides Basis for a New Analysis,” pp. 31-51, in this regard. Cf. also Thompson, Y. 1986, “A Missing Hexateuchal Narrative Concerning Child Sacrifice,” pp. 38-42; Countryman, L.W. 1989, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, p. 27 note 11.
50. See Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A. (eds.) 1988, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 728.
51. Boswell, J.E. 1984, “*Exposito* and *Oblatio*,” p. 19.
52. Schaberg, J. 1987, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*, pp. 55-56.
53. Sirach 23:22-26; translation by Trenchard, Ben Sira’s View, p. 95; cf. Schaberg, J. 1987, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*, p. 217 note 154.
54. Wisdom of Solomon 4:3-6 [RSV]; cf. Schaberg, J. 1987, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*, p. 56.
55. See *inter alia* Epstein, L.M. 1942, *Marriage Laws in the Bible and Talmud*.
56. See *inter alia* Bossman, D. 1979, “Ezra’s Marriage Reform: Israel Redefined,” 32-38.
57. Cf. Bakon, S. 1981, “Jacob, Man of Destiny: His Youth,” p. 119; Meijer, A. & Meijer, A. 1984, “Matriarchal Influence in the Bible: A Medical-Psychological Study,” p. 817; Goodnick, B. 1988, “The Saga of the Firstborn,” pp. 170-178; Weaver, P.R.C. 1986,

58. See Funk, R.W. & Hoover, R.W. 1993, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, p. 88.
59. “There are three quite different versions of this story, which appear to derive from three independent sources: Mark [14:3-9], Luke [7:36-50], John [12:1-8]. Matthew has simply copied Mark, so his version provides no additional information. The affinity of these stories with one another is unmistakable. Yet the differences suggest that the story (or stories) had a long and complicated history...The Fellows of the Jesus Seminar were of the opinion that the original form of the story is beyond recovery. As a consequence, they also doubted that any of the words preserved by the evangelists could be attributed to Jesus” (Funk, R.W. & Hoover, R.W. 1993, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, pp. 115-116).
60. *Transvaler* 25 June 1991, “Vroue maak beswaar,” p. 7 (my translation from the original Afrikaans).
61. *The Pretoria News* 20 September 1994, “Girl killed in ‘crime of honour’,” p. 4.
62. Countryman, L.W. 1989, *Dirt, Greed and Sex*, p. 160.
63. Horsley, R.A. 1979. “Josephus and the Bandits,” pp. 37-63.
64. *Scholars Version*, in Miller, R.J. 1992, *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version*, p. 86.
65. Cf. Theissen, G. [1974] 1983, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, p. 249.
66. See *inter alia* Neusner, J. 1973, *From Politics to Piety*, pp. 15-26.
67. Cf. Elliott, J.H. 1991, “Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions,” p. 100.
68. *Scholars Version*, in Miller, R.J. 1992, *The Complete Gospels*, p. 65.
69. See Crossan, J.D. 1996, *Who is Jesus?*, p. 84.
70. Theissen, G. 1983, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, p. 251.
71. Funk, R.W. & Hoover, R.W. 1993, *The Five Gospels*, p. 139.
72. Funk, R.W. & Hoover, R.W. 1993, *The Five Gospels*, pp. 289-291.
73. See Theissen, G. 1983, *The Miracle Stories*, p. 207.
74. Theissen, G. 1983, p. 207.
75. Theissen, G. 1983, p. 249.



76. Saldarini, A.J. 1988, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach*, p. 44.
77. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a.2ae.88.9, 2a.2ae.189.5, 2a.2ae.189.5.2; *Quodlibetales* 3.5.11.12, 4.12.23, 4.12.23.7.
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