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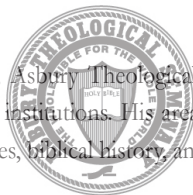
*“So That We May Come and Worship Him”:* Foreshadowing the Nature of Jesus’ Messiahship and the Use of προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῶ in the Gospel of Matthew

**Abstract**

Beginning with the position that the Gospel of Matthew is biographical, this essay begins with an exegetical commentary on Matt 2:1-12. Structural, syntactical, and semantic observations are presented, but focus also falls upon the contrast developed between the magi and Herod. Furthermore, emphasis is given to προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῶ as they establish a continuity theme that permeates the rest of the gospel and foreshadows the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship.

**Key Words:** Biography; infancy narrative; προσφέρῶ; προσκυνέῶ; messiahship

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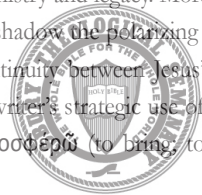


## Genre and the Function of Infancy Narratives

John Barton asserts that genre recognition is at the heart of biblical criticism (Barton 2007:5). By recognizing the kind of text, critics are able to better understand the text's coherence and communicative intention (Barton 2007:24). As for the gospels, much of their genre debate centers on whether they should be classified as ancient biographies. Ulrich Luz admits that the gospel of Matthew is quite similar to an ancient biography, but, in his opinion, specific characteristics prevent an unequivocal classification within that genre (Luz 1989:44-46).<sup>1</sup> Donald Hagner refuses to make any definitive statement, articulating a "multifaced" genre that underscores its function as a "community book" (Hagner 1993:lvii-lix).<sup>2</sup> John Nolland's opinion is similar to Luz's; Matthew "slightly" reassembles an ancient biography, but its kerygmatic material so influences the content of the gospel that he classifies Matthew as an ecumenical text with a didactic purpose (Nolland 2005:19-22).

A point of commonality for these scholars, and many like them, is a focus upon uniquely Christian and/or Jewish nuances as overriding factors to classifying the gospels as ancient biographies, which often includes the form of themes, vocabulary, scripture citations, and other phenomena. In response, Philip Shuler argues that genre possesses a dynamic character, which allows many forms and variables to be present within a certain classification (Schuler 1982:107). Ben Witherington III and Lane McGaughey agree with this proposition (McGaughey 1999:26; Witherington 2001:24). Both scholars suggest that initial focus be given to *general* literary signals and structure, and only subsequently should the unique characteristics be considered.<sup>3</sup> According to McGaughey, "The question of literary genre is particularly a question of form, not of the particularities of content" (1999:25). Thus, both Witherington and McGaughey unequivocally classify the genre of Matthew as an ancient Hellenistic biography.

This essay will assume that the Gospel of Matthew is a biographical work. Yet focus will fall upon the birth narrative of chapter 2. Birth narratives are crucial to an ancient biography, functioning to foreshadow elements of the subject's life (McGaughey 1999:27), and this functional principle is apparent in the Gospel according to Matthew. Within Matthew 2, certain elements surrounding Jesus' birth foreshadow aspects of his ministry and legacy. More specifically, the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth foreshadow the polarizing and revolutionary character of his Messiahship, and the continuity between Jesus' birth and life and ministry is demonstrated in part by the writer's strategic use of two verbs that initially appear in Matthew in chapter 2: προσφέρω (to bring, to present) and προσκυνῶ (to



pay homage; to worship). This thesis will be substantiated in two phases. In the first phase, some interpretive comments with respect to Matthew 2 will be offered. In the second phase, the verbs *προσφέρῶ* and *προσκυνέῶ* will be briefly traced throughout the Gospel of Matthew. According the gospel writer, the nature of Jesus' Messiahship was evident from his birth. It did not necessarily conform to popular assumptions and was destined to be polarizing.

### Interpretive Comments on Matthew 2

The structure of chapter 2 breaks down nicely; each major section opens with a temporal qualification in the form of a genitive absolute: vv. 1-12 and vv. 13-23.<sup>4</sup> Each section also possesses noticeable geographical emphases: Bethlehem versus Jerusalem (vv. 1-12) and Egypt (vv. 13-23) respectively. The first major section can be sub-divided into two subsections: vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-12.<sup>5</sup> So too can the second major section into three subsections: vv. 13-15, vv. 16-18, and vv. 19-23.<sup>6</sup> A binding theme for the entirety of chapter 2 is the response to Jesus' birth. As such, there is a stark contrast between major characters. Both the magi and Herod seek out the newborn Messiah, and both voice a desire to visit him.<sup>7</sup> However, where the magi respond with reverence (2:10-11), Herod responds violently (2:16). The magi bring gifts, but Herod brings death. The magi experience excitement when they meet Jesus, but Herod experiences utter hatred. Thus, Donald Hagner's comment is quite accurate when he states, "Chapter two is therefore a unity consisting of a story of acceptance and rejection" (Hagner 1993:24).

The atmosphere of this story of acceptance and rejection can be described as suspense and mystery informing a climatic contrast.<sup>8</sup> It is mysterious in light of the unnamed, Gentile magi from the east who have interpreted an astrological phenomenon as a sign of a newborn king. It is suspenseful because of certain expectations, which are created through the chapter's narrational progression and background information that the writer assumes the reader possesses. In v. 1, the text declares that Jesus was born *ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως*, "in the days of King Herod." Given that 2:19 speaks of the death of Herod, one can deduce that Jesus' birth occurred toward the end of Herod's life, the phase of his life that was plagued most severely by his paranoia (*Ant* 16.361-94; *JW* 1.538-51).<sup>9</sup> Thus, when the magi approach Jerusalem in search for the newborn "King of the Judeans," the reader fully expects Herod to react with his trademark carnage. Indeed, the text immediately reveals in v. 3 that Herod "heard and was troubled" (*ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης ἐταράχθη*), but the fruition of his rage is not disclosed until 2:16. Therefore, Herod's paranoia lurks behind the scenes of chapter 2, adding to the suspense. Furthermore, the writer's intentional deferral of the

fruition of Herod's rage is intertwined with the contrasting responses to Jesus' birth between Herod and the magi that he seeks to emphasize (see below).

Matthew 2 opens with Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως. On the one hand, such an introduction echoes Matt 1:18, Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν, creating an explicit connection between Matt 1:18-23 and the content of chapter 2. Thus, the writer discloses from the beginning that Jesus' Messiahship is one of divine messiahship, particularly as he was conceived by a πνεύματος ἁγίου, "holy spirit." As N. T. Wright has stated, Jewish messianic ideology did not necessarily contain divine or quasi-divine connotations (Wright 1996:477). Equally important to the writer's endeavors is the notation that he was not born nor to be found in Jerusalem. Rather, Jesus was to be found in Bethlehem. This geographic contrast appears straightaway in 2:1, "When Jesus was born *in Bethlehem of Judea*," and is continued throughout the first portion of the chapter. Logically, the magi proceed to the capital in their search for the newborn king. However, finding no resolution in Jerusalem, they are dispatched to Bethlehem (2:8). Whether this contrast alludes to a geographic apologetic (France 2007:45), the gospel writer is at least alluding to the reality that even from his birth Jesus' Messiahship was not to conform to one's logical expectations.

As already mentioned, Matthew 2 is largely driven by a contrast between the responses of the magi and Herod. Both parties voice a desire to pay homage to the newborn king, but upon the conclusion of chapter 2, it is clear that Herod had ulterior motives. Truthful in their desires to pay homage to Jesus, vv. 10-11 divulge that the magi approached Jesus with intense joy and worshiped Jesus through the presentation of gifts. Conversely, Herod's stated desire was deceitful. After consulting the chief priests and scribes as the birthplace of the Messiah (vv. 4-6), he attempts to enlist the help of the magi (vv. 7-8). Whether the magi were initially receptive to Herod's offer is unclear. What is clear is that upon the realization that he had been duped, Herod reacts in accord with his violent reputation, killing all the boys 2 years old and younger in and around Bethlehem (v.16).

Specific syntactical phenomena of vv. 10-11 and 16 demonstrate most clearly this contrast, establishing the magi as a literary foil for Herod. Both the magi and Herod assess (ὁράω) the significance of their experiences and respond. In both cases, they respond with 1) intense emotion and 2) tangible action. In the case of the magi, they respond "with exceedingly great joy" at the realization that the star had led them to the newborn king. The magi then approach Jesus and Mary and "fall and worship him," which is communicated by a dependant particle followed immediately by a finite verb. In the case of Herod, having perceived that the magi

had spurned him, he responds with incredible rage. He then dispatches his men to kill all the young boys under the age of two. This action is also communicated via a dependant participle followed immediately by a finite verb. Juxtaposed below are vv. 10-11 and 16 with the relevant syntax in bold.

Matt 2:10-11

**ιδόντες** δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα **ἐχάρησαν** **χαρὰν** **μεγάλην** **σφόδρα**.<sup>10</sup> καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ **πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν**<sup>11</sup> αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυμοὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν.

“When they **saw** the star, they **rejoiced with exceedingly great joy**. When they came to the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and **they knelt down and they worshipped him**. Opening their boxes, they presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matt 2:16

Τότε Ἡρώδης **ιδὼν** ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων **έθυμώθη λίαν**, καὶ **ἀποστείλας ἀνεῖλεν**<sup>12</sup> πάντας τοὺς παῖδας ἐν Βηθλέεμ καὶ ἐν τᾷσι τοῖς ὀρίοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω, κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἠκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων.

“At that time when Herod **saw** that he had been deceived by the magi **he was extremely furious**. He sent out and killed all the children in Bethlehem and in its vicinity from two years old and under, according to the time which he determined from the magi.”

This contrast also manifests a deeper connotation. From a sociological viewpoint, Herod can be described as a “dominant character” and the magi as “marginal characters,”<sup>13</sup> suggesting that the responses of Herod and the magi symbolize and foreshadow the societal implications of Jesus’ Messiahship. More specifically, that Herod feels threatened by Jesus’ birth and violently rejects him and that the Gentile magi are receptive to Jesus hints at the reality that Jesus’ Messiahship will confront societal norms and expectations. This is substantiated by reality that the sociological implications of Jesus’ Messiahship crop up periodically throughout the remainder of the gospel in part through the use of the verbs *προσφέρῶ* and *προσκυνέω*, both of which initially appear in chapter 2. The verb *προσφέρῶ*, which occurs 15 times throughout Matthew, first appears in v. 11; the magi opened their repositories and “presented gifts to him [Jesus], gold frankincense, and myrrh.”<sup>14</sup>

The verb προσκυνέω, occurring 11 times, is more pervasive in chapter 2, appearing 3 times.<sup>15</sup> In v. 2, the magi divulge that they have come “to pay homage” to the newborn king. In v. 8 Herod informs the magi that he too desires to pay homage to the child. Verse 11 informs the reader that the magi worshipped the child upon their arrival. These verbs, which will be discussed below, are used strategically throughout the remainder of the gospel, providing continuity between Jesus’ ministry and birth. In fact, one could say that the use of these verbs is the chief vehicle through which the writer of Matthew demonstrates continuity between Jesus’ birth and ministry. Just as people brought things to him and worshiped him at his birth, so too did others throughout his ministry.

In sum, Matthew 2 establishes the foundation for the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship, and it begins with the opening clause. By linking Jesus’ Davidic pedigree with his divinity and instituting a Jerusalem/Bethlehem contrast, the writer is quickly alluding to the fact that Jesus’ Messiahship will not conform to every expectation. This revolutionary quality is furthered not only by the incorporation of Gentile magi as central characters but also by the reality that they were drawn to Jesus and received his birth positively. The gospel writer also demonstrates, through the contrasting responses of the magi and Herod, that Jesus’ Messiahship was 1) destined to be polarizing and 2) would confront societal norms. At the heart of the writer’s rhetoric are the verbs προσφέρω and προσκυνέω, both of which appear initially in chapter 2 and periodically throughout the subsequent narrative. It is to a discussion of these occurrences this essay now turns.

### The Use of προσφέρω and προσκυνέω in the Gospel of Matthew

In what follows is a brief survey of the relevant occurrences of the verbs προσφέρω and προσκυνέω in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>16</sup>

#### προσκυνέω

- Descending from the mountain upon which he delivered his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is surrounded by a great multitude. In the midst of this swarm, a leper bowed before Jesus that he might be healed (8:2). Jesus obliged his request, going so far as to *touch* him, and then exhorts the newly healed leper to offer a gift in the temple as a witness to the temple establishment (8:4). Thus, Jesus demonstrates that his Messiahship confronts social and religious norms in order to restore people within the community (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992:70-72).

- In 9:18, a public official (ἄρχων) interrupts a conversation between Jesus and his disciples (9:14-17), bowing before him with the bold hope that he would resurrect his recently deceased daughter.<sup>17</sup> After being delayed by a woman with a chronic illness (19:20-22), Jesus ultimately resurrects the girl from the dead in spite of the crowd's mocking (19:24-25).
- Matthew 14:22-36 is the writer's account of Jesus walking on water. After startling his disciples, Jesus encourages his followers not to be afraid (14:26-27). Peter attempts to mimic the feat, but he ultimately fails because of his lack of faith (14:28-31). Jesus saves Peter and enters the boat with the other disciples, who respond to this experience by worshiping him and confessing that he is the Son of God.
- While in the region of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman boisterously approaches Jesus so that he might heal her demon-possessed daughter (15:23-27). In the process of her pleading, the writer of Matthew informs the reader that the woman bowed before Jesus (15:25). Initially shrugged off, the woman's persistence ultimately pays off, and Jesus pronounces the healing of her daughter.
- As Jesus approached Jerusalem in order to celebrate the Passover, the mother of the sons of Zebedee kneels before Jesus (20:20) as she petitioned for a place of high honor for her sons. To this, Jesus responds with a couple of questions that encourage serious reflection about the nature of God's Kingdom. It is not a kingdom that operates with popular and familiar principles. Rather, it is a kingdom that values service and humility (20:25-28).
- The final two occurrences of προσκυνέω appear in chapter 28. In v. 9, Mary and Mary Magdalene meet the resurrected Jesus on their way to inform the disciples of the empty tomb. Their response is one of pure emotion, grabbing his feet and worshipping him. In v. 17, the 11 disciples meet Jesus upon the Mount of Ascension. There, the writer informs the reader that his disciples worshiped him, but he adds the subtle comment that some doubted. Ostensibly even within the ranks of the disciples, skepticism festered.



Consequently, the use of προσκυνέω throughout Matthew provides continuity between Jesus' birth and his ministry. Just as the magi bowed to worship him, so too did many others throughout his life. Furthermore, those people came from all points on the sociological spectrum. They were of high social stature, of low social stature, of Jewish descent, and of non-Jewish descent. In addition, the writer discloses the nature of Jesus Messiahship and his kingdom by this verb. It is a kingdom that values humility and servitude, and its lord governs supernatural forces. However, the writer also discloses that Jesus did not garner universal and total acceptance, even from those within his inner-circle.

### προσφέρω

There are 14 occurrences of the verb προσφέρω outside of Matthew 2, 9 that are relevant.

- Six of these occurrences are similar in the sense that the sick and/or demon possessed were brought to Jesus for healing. According to Matthew 4:23-25, because of Jesus' fame the sick from all over were brought to Jesus. After healing Peter's mother-in-law, many sick and demon possessed were brought to Jesus (8:16). People brought a paralytic to Jesus (9:2), as well as a mute demoniac (9:32; 12:22). In the land of Gennersaret, the region's sick were brought to Jesus (14:35).
- In Matt 19:13-15 children are brought to Jesus in order that he would offer a blessing upon them. Rebuking the disciples for their attempts at curbing such efforts, Jesus pronounces that the Kingdom of God belong to similar people. Given that children were some of the most vulnerable in antiquity, Jesus is proclaiming that the kingdom functions on behalf of society's vulnerable (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992, 117).
- Attempting to trap Jesus in his words, the Pharisees and the Herodians press Jesus on the issue of taxes (22:15-22). Before Jesus responds, he requests a denarius as a visual aide. His inquisitors oblige his request, bringing him a coin (22:19). "Give to Caesar the things of Caesar, and to God the things of God," Jesus responds. According to N. T. Wright, Jesus is subtly coding a cry of Messiahship, formulated from the last words of Mattathias Maccabee (1997:502-07). Yet, the beauty of Jesus' words exists in their ambiguity. Wright proceeds to advocate an implicit call to worship, deriving from Pss. 29:2 and 96:7-10. Therefore, this exchange leads to what Wright refers to as a "protest against Jewish compromise with



paganism," wherein the pre-conceived notions of messianic revolution are classified (1997:506). "Jesus saw himself as the true Messiah, leading to the true kingdom-movement; Israel's true response to Yhwh would be to acknowledge him and follow his kingdom-agenda" (Wright 1997:506-07).

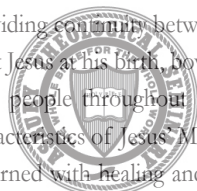
- Matthew 17:16 is also worth noting, albeit as an indirect reference. A man with a son suffering from debilitating seizures initially brought him to Jesus' disciples, but to no avail. Jesus casts out the demon and uses the opportunity to teach his disciples about the role of faith.

The verb προσφέρῶ therefore is used throughout the gospel as a strategic vehicle through which the writer discusses the nature of the Kingdom of God and Jesus' Messiahship. That the sick and vulnerable of society repeatedly are brought to Jesus communicates that Jesus' Messiahship was partially concerned with and defined by such encounters. The verb is also used in one particular context that discusses the expectations of the Kingdom's agenda.

## Conclusion

Assuming that the Gospel of Matthew should be classified as a biographical work, this essay has examined particular elements of the Matthean birth narratives. In particular, this essay has argued that the foundation for communicating the revolutionary and polarizing character of his Messiahship is established in chapter 2. Recognizing Jesus' Davidic and divine pedigree in vs. 1, the writer contrasts the responses of the magi with that of Herod. Whereas the magi joyfully seek out the newborn king to pay him homage, Herod maliciously seeks him out to murder him so that his political security would be ensured. Yet, this contrast also exhibits a sociological connotation. Jesus threatens Herod, who represents the dominant of society, but the Gentile magi, who represent the marginalized, are drawn to Jesus.

In the midst of this, the verbs προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῶ are used. In fact, the contrasting responses of Herod and magi pivot on the use of προσκυνέῶ. Important is the reality that these verbs are used strategically throughout the remainder of the gospel, providing continuity between Jesus' birth and his life and ministry. Just as people sought Jesus at his birth, bowing before him and presenting him with objects, so too did people throughout his life. In these episodes, the writer divulges particular characteristics of Jesus' Messiahship and the Kingdom of God, being particularly concerned with healing and restoring the sick and demon



possessed into the community and caring for the vulnerable of society. In certain instances, Jesus confronts the religious customs and establishment, demonstrating that his Messiahship aims to reform its dysfunctional elements. Thus, the sociological dimension of the Herod/magi contrast is carried forward as well.

It must be noted that Matthew's use of the verbs προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῳ is distinct from the other gospel accounts. With respect to προσκυνέῳ, there is no continuity between gospel accounts. As for προσφέρῶ, the situation is virtually similar.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Matthew's use seems intentional. However, perhaps the most fascinating characteristic of the writer's employment of these verbs is how he concludes his usage, which is to emphasize that the effects of Jesus' ministry produced skeptics and doubters (Matt 28:17). Thus, the thread that permeates the Gospel of Matthew comes full circle. What began with revolutionary implications and with polarizing responses ended in the same way.

Assuming these conclusions, there are a few implications that arise. If the writer of Matthew is communicating that on one level Jesus' Messiahship is revolutionary and polarizing, missional or ecclesial models should be constructed with a proper mentality. Indeed, Paul instructs Christians that "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28), and Jesus commanded his disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:18). Yet, the writer of Matthew is making it known that the Kingdom and Jesus' Messiahship will be undesirable to some. The nature of the gospel is so drastic and revolutionary that some will shun it. The implication is clear enough: the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be compromised, even under the guise of a particular mode of evangelism. Missional or ecclesial models therefore must strike a balance between a global and universal focus while accepting the reality that the very nature of Jesus and his Messiahship will hinder universal acceptance. Thus, the Church should not be surprised when its efforts are met by rejection, even hostile rejection at that. Rather, the Church should concern itself with the faithful embodiment of the principles of the Kingdom of God on this earth while it awaits the final redemption of the cosmos. As for the manifestation of the principle offered here, that is another discussion for another time.

## End Notes

This is dedicated to Rev. Robert Schreiner, a fellow alumnus of Asbury Theological Seminary (1982) and my father. He was the first to teach and show me how to be a lover of Scripture and follower of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of such preceding characteristics include scriptural citation, Jewish themes, such as salvation history, and unique Matthean discourse material.

<sup>2</sup> Hagner discusses seven options that factor into his genre debate: gospel, midrash, lectionary, catechetical manual, church corrective, missionary propaganda, and polemic against rabbis (1993:lvii-lix).

<sup>3</sup> Witherington lists seven general characteristics of an ancient biography. While some characteristics mention content, it is important to realize that these are not focused upon uniquely Christian and/or Jewish content (2001:22-24).

<sup>4</sup> 2:1 reads Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod," and 2:13 reads Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν, "When they left."

<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, the division of this section hinges upon the particle τότε. The content of this chapter supports this division. Verses 1-6 focus upon the Bethlehem/ Jerusalem juxtaposition, as well as Herod and his efforts to interpret the meaning of this event. Verses 7-12 shift focus to the magi, particularly the rest of their journey and their response manifested upon their arrival.

<sup>6</sup> The division of these subsections is again syntactical. Verses 13 and 19 open with a genitive absolute, and v. 16 opens with τότε.

<sup>7</sup> The magi state, ἤλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ, "We have come to pay him homage" (2:2) and so does Herod, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ, "so that I too will come to pay him homage" (2:8).

<sup>8</sup> On atmosphere, see David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, (2011:212).

<sup>9</sup> *Ant* 16.361-94; *JW* 1.538-51.

<sup>10</sup> The feelings are intense, hence the cognate accusative doubly modified.

<sup>11</sup> More specifically, πεσόντες is an attendant circumstance participle (Wallace 1996:640).

<sup>12</sup> ἀποστείλας can also be understood as a temporal participle (Wallace 1996:623-24). Regardless, the syntactical connection is preserved, as πεσόντες and ἀποστείλας are unequivocally dependent participles.

<sup>13</sup> I am invoking the terms "dominant" and "marginal," in the vein of James L. Resseguie (2005:137-38; 154).

<sup>14</sup> Generally speaking, προσφέρῶ suggests bringing or presenting someone or something to someone else (*BDAG*:886). Yet, it can possess a cultic connotation (K. Weiss, *TDNT*, 9:65-68; *BDAG*, 886:2.a).

<sup>15</sup> προσκυνῶ possesses a significant semantic range, including ideas of physical prostration in light of social realities, respectful welcome, reverence, and worship (*BDAG*:882-83).

<sup>16</sup> This essay syntactically limits its investigation to those occurrences where Jesus is object of the action. Thus, the occurrences of the verb προσφέρῶ in 5:23-24; 8:4; 17:16; 18:24; 25:20 will not factor into this discussion.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the man comes to Jesus immediately after his child's death (ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν; "My daughter just now died") and that the man voices his desires through an imperative-future verbal sequence (ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν ἐπίθες τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπ' αὐτήν καὶ ζήσεται; "but come lay your hand upon her and she will live"). Jesus' reputation as a master healer precedes him.

<sup>18</sup> Only in the account of the children being brought to Jesus is there continuity across gospel accounts.

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