

ECHOES OF DISPLACEMENT IN MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY OF JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy of its protagonist, Jesus. The genealogy functions primarily as a history of origins, tracing the line of God's promise first through the founding of Israel, then in the emergence of the royal line, and finally in the hopes carried beyond the collapse of the Babylonian exile. But lurking within this history of origins are ruptures in the text that disrupt the flow of expected conventions. While attention has predominantly focused on the unusual inclusion of the four female names in Matthew's genealogy, this article detects a sub-theme of displacement within the text's intertexture that has previously gone unnoticed. Displacement here refers to a shift from one location to another through forced migration, and entails not just geographical movement, but also the conceptual and psychological shifts that accompany such events.

This article begins by situating the genealogy within its immediate literary context of the infancy narrative in Matt 1–2. The genealogy is then explored in light of the categories of displacement, wandering and exile in the remembered tradition of ancient Israel. What emerges is a narrative of displacement that gestures towards the approaching forced displacement that Joseph, Mary and Jesus will experience during the flight to Egypt in 2:13–23. Taken together, then, Matt 1–2 is seen to construct a marginal identity for Jesus who will subsequently come into significant conflict with institutions of power later in his life. As a result, the interpretation of Jesus' identity and location within Matt 1–2 should be expanded to include not only his geographical origins and/or theological purpose and mission, but also his social location, which is one of displacement and marginality.

DISPLACEMENT AND MATTHEW'S INFANCY OF JESUS (MATT 1–2)

Before making an analysis of the genealogy itself, it is prudent to situate it within the wider literary context of Matt 1–2. Accordingly, this section establishes the importance of "displacement" as a narrative category for Matthew's infancy of Jesus. A number of commentators observe that the first

two chapters in Matthew deal primarily with the identity of Jesus: who is this person, and where does he come from?¹ These beginning chapters frame the rest of the Matthean text by providing a detailed account of the protagonist's origins and articulating the gospel's purpose. By knowing something about Jesus' origins, the reader is enlightened as to his mission in later life, which, at its most basic level, is to "save his people from their sins" (1:21).

The predominant tendency in Christian piety, to mix Matt 1–2 with the corresponding material in Luke to form the "Christmas story," has meant that certain elements of the narrative, such as echoes of displacement, give way to an accentuated religious meaning for Christian believers. Within scholarship, too, the historical-theological function of the text has taken precedence. Take Raymond E. Brown's monumental *The Birth of the Messiah*, for instance. In this work, Brown contends that since scholars have long doubted the historicity of the infancy narratives, they should instead be regarded primarily as vehicles for each Evangelist's theology.² In his book *The Liberation of Christmas*, Richard A. Horsley, who brings a strong Marxist/liberationist hermeneutic to the infancy narratives, however, contends that the theology and purpose that scholars discover in Matthew's infancy narratives often reflects modern apologetic concerns more than the designs of the Evangelist himself.³ What is important for the purposes of this article is the multivalence of the Matthean text. The attentive reader can detect numerous intertextual echoes to the remembered tradition of Israel embedded within the Jewish cultural milieu of Matthew and intimately known to the gospel's early readers/hearers. Being open to new ways of reading can significantly enhance our appreciation of these residual textures, especially when they have been neglected and/or underutilised by the tradition of dominant interpretations.

Interestingly, the motifs of death and displacement recur frequently during Jesus' infancy. In his book on Matthew's passion narrative, Donald Senior observes that from the very beginning of the gospel, "Jesus' death looms

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- 1 Daniel Harrington, for instance, adopts the breakdown of the infancy into the following: Matt 1 focuses on "who is Jesus?" and in Matt 2 the emphasis shifts to a series of places, thus the question becomes "where?." Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 46; cf. Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 5; Thomas R. Hatina, "From History to Myth and Back Again: The Historicizing Function of Scripture in Matthew 2," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Christian Gospels: The Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 98; John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980), 1–2.
 - 2 Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 26–36.
 - 3 Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 6.

before the reader. The atmosphere surrounding Jesus' birth is filled with threat as Herod stalks the newborn Messiah. Infants are slaughtered and the family of Jesus are forced to flee.⁴ The extravagant gifting by the magi in 2:1–11 forms a dramatic contrast to the response of Herod in 2:12–23 who, upon realizing their deceit, lashes out in violent terror. As an infant, Jesus possesses no agency and is entirely reliant on the actions of others for his survival. The fact that Jesus never returns to his original home place (which in Matthew is Bethlehem) but instead is displaced to the Galilean town of Nazareth out of fear (ἐφοβήθη) of Herod's son, Archelaus, means that he grows up in exile, dislocated from his original home place as a two-time refugee.

An emphasis on displacement is also peculiar to the Matthean text. For example, the frequent use of ἀναχωρέω (to escape/withdraw) is distinctive of Matthew who employs it ten times (2:12, 13, 14, 22; 4:12; 9:24; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21; 27:5; cf. 8:20), compared to just one appearance in Mark (3:7), one in John (6:15) and two in Acts (23:19; 26:31). The verb ἀναχωρέω can denote a simple departure from a location, or express the action of withdrawing and/or taking refuge.⁵ Its repetition within the flight to Egypt, in particular, draws attention to the plight of Joseph, Mary and Jesus in their encounter of imperial-sanctioned violence, and the displacement caused thereafter.

In Matt 2:13–23 the NRSV renders ἀναχωρέω with the relatively impotent “went,” effectively downplaying the term's loaded socio-political overtones (a distinction should be made between ἀναχωρέω and the common verb ἔρχομαι, the latter of which appears in verse 22 to signify Joseph's return to Israel). The strategic deployment of ἀναχωρέω within 2:12–23 suggests that on these occasions a movement is undertaken *in response* to hostile external circumstances—in other words, it signifies forced displacement. This particular meaning effect is also apparent later in the gospel when the verb is used to denote Jesus' withdrawal upon hearing of the arrest of John the Baptist (4:12) and then again, upon hearing of the Baptist's death (14:13).⁶

Explored intertextually, ἀναχωρέω is regularly connected to the exploitation of individuals within their respective social and political environments.

4 Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1985), 17.

5 “ἀναχωρέω,” in Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 75 (hereafter BDAG).

6 Employing source criticism, Deirdre Good argues that the motif is part of a three-fold pattern of hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment, and functions to advance the narrative by prompting Joseph or Jesus to go from one region to another. See Deirdre Good, “The Verb ἀναχωρέω in Matthew's Gospel,” *Novum Testamentum* 32, no. 1 (1990): 1–12.

Of its fourteen appearances across the LXX and deuterocanonical literature, a number of examples stand out for their mention of political rulers displacing marginal refugees. In Exod 2:15, for instance, the term describes the action Moses takes after Pharaoh discovers he has killed an Egyptian: “When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled [ἀνεχώρησεν/ פָּרַח] from Pharaoh. He settled in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well.” The Hebrew verb פָּרַח means “to run away or flee from danger.”⁷ Likewise, in 1 Sam 19:10, ἀναχωρέω denotes David’s flight and escape from King Saul when Saul is actively seeking David’s life: “Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear; but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. David fled [ἀνεχώρησεν/ פָּרַח] and escaped [διδεσώθη/ טָמַל] that night.” Its use in conjunction with the verb διασώζω (“to escape,” lit. “to save through”) in addition to the temporal setting of the night magnifies the need to move or withdraw promptly because of an immediate hazard or danger. This time the LXX translates a different Hebrew verb, פָּרַח, which roughly translates “to rush to bring something into safety” (cf. Exod 9:20) and/or “to find safety for oneself,”⁸ also communicating a sense of urgency. The book of Tobit contains yet another example of a king who seeks to kill the protagonist. In this instance, Tobit explicitly displays the trait of fear before fleeing just as Joseph is said to fear (ἐφοβήθη) Herod’s son Archelaus before withdrawing to Galilee (Matt 2:22): “Then one of the Ninevites went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them; so I hid myself. But when I realized that the king knew about me and that I was being searched for to be put to death, I was afraid [φοβηθεὶς] and ran away [ἀνεχώρησα]” (Tob 1:19). The term ἀναχωρέω is, therefore, richly layered with intertextual significance that intensifies the sub-theme of displacement within the Matthean text, especially so when it recurs around instances of political instability and turmoil in the infancy narrative.

In considering the wider intertextual configuration of Matthew’s infancy narrative, some scholars have identified allusions to the figure of Moses that are continued through the gospel. In his study *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, Dale C. Allison, for instance, identifies a number of intertextual links between the Matthean Jesus and the infancy of Moses, particularly within the flight to Egypt (Matt 2:13–23) where explicit recitations

7 “פָּרַח,” in Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner and Johann J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson (4 vols.) Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999), 1:156 (hereafter *HALOT*).

8 “פָּרַח,” *HALOT*, 2:681.

and reconfigurations of Old Testament material come in abundance. The Evangelist, so it is argued, presents Jesus as the new Moses, a long-awaited liberating figure who will save his people.⁹ Many aspects of Moses' life are alluded to in the flight to Egypt narrative: first, Herod's order to slaughter the infants in and around Bethlehem in 2:16–18 echoes Pharaoh's decree to expunge every male Hebrew child in Exod 1:15–22; secondly, Jesus' displacement as an infant echoes Moses' displacement in Exod 2:15; and thirdly, Joseph's return to Israel with Mary and Jesus in Matt 2:21 echoes Moses' taking his wife and sons and returning to Egypt in Exod 4:20.

While Moses does not feature in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, the echoes of displacement within the genealogy anticipate the allusions to Moses in Matt 2, and further underscore the social and political consequences of forced migration. While Moses was a liberator of the Hebrew people, he also lived as an alien within Egypt. Within the book of Exodus, Moses undergoes a number of cycles of displacement and his infancy is one of bloodshed and abandonment. Shortly after Moses' birth, the Egyptian Pharaoh commands that all male Hebrew children born be killed by drowning (Exod 1:15–22). Rather than sending him to be killed, Moses' parents set their child adrift on the Nile River where he is found and adopted by the family of Pharaoh. He then grows up as an outsider within the royal family of Egypt (Exod 2:1–22). As an adult, Moses agitates Pharaoh until he is finally forced to leave Egypt because of the violence set against him. After leading the exodus "out of Egypt" under God's guidance and command (Exod 12–14), he becomes a wanderer in the desert with his people and never actually makes it to his (new) home place in the "promised land." Moses in fact dies in the desert as a displaced wanderer.

The genealogy of Jesus' origins which introduces the gospel precedes these more explicit events of, and echoes to, displacement contained in Matt 2. Having explored the motif of displacement within the wider infancy narrative, then, it is now appropriate to return our attention to the genealogy itself, and to observe the varying degrees to which displacement presents itself as a significant narrative category in the opening verses of the Matthean text.

ECHOES OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE GENEALOGY (MATT 1:1–17)

The discursive intent of Matthew's genealogy is to link Jesus to a wider context and larger narrative. On its rhetorical function, John Nolland writes: "Genealogies established individual identity; reflected, established, or

9 Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

legitimated social structures, status, and entitlements to office; functioned as modes of praise or delineations of character or even as basis of exhortation.¹⁰ As well as honouring Jesus by placing him in a cultural and familial home, the genealogy's three part structure—culminating in David, the exile, and Jesus—creates expectations that in Jesus we find a messiah figure or agent of liberation. For Warren Carter, the opening verses of Matthew in the context of Roman imperial theology points to the basic issue of sovereignty; the text asserts that God's purposes, and not Rome's, are being worked out in human history. He writes:

The genealogy demonstrates, among other things, that God supervises human history, that God's purposes especially run through Israel (not Rome), that God's purposes are not always faithfully embodied by humans but they are not thereby hindered (kings, exile), and that all sorts of humans (wicked and faithful, famous and obscure, firstborn and insignificant, male and female, Jew and Gentile) are caught up in these purposes.¹¹

The rich intertexture within the genealogy provides a plethora of interpretive data and possibilities. In recent decades, the reference to the four female figures (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and the wife of Uriah) interwoven into the mostly patriarchal genealogy has commanded the attention of scholars. These four women are said to share (with Mary) a certain irregularity with respect to their social roles. Their inclusion ruptures the tradition of only citing male forebears and so offers a reading site of resistance against dominant male ideology.¹² A sub-theme of displacement

10 John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 70.

11 Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 60.

12 See Elaine M. Wainwright, *Shall We Look for Another? A Feminist Rereading of the Matthean Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 53–66. Wainwright builds on the previous work of Janice Capel Anderson who views these four women as models that interpret and present Mary's female difference by celebrating female initiative, faith and reproductive power, but are also domesticated by patriarchal constraints. Janice Capel Anderson, "Mary's Difference: Gender and Patriarchy in the Birth Narratives," *Journal of Religion* 67 (1987): 183–202. Amy-Jill Levine suggests these women represent "people oppressed by the dominant political, religious, and social system." Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 62. See also Jane Schaberg's critical response to these various feminist positions and their detractors in Jane Schaberg, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives*, anniversary ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 236–44.

also apparent within the intertexture of the text has, however, been almost entirely ignored.¹³ One exception is an article by Mervyn Eloff who, building on N. T. Wright's idea that Israel saw itself as still in exile at the time of Jesus, argues that Matthew's stress on exile is an attempt to present Jesus as a resolution to the story of Israel. He writes that Jesus is "the one who will in fact bring Israel's exile to an end and in this way gives the reader a fresh theological perspective on the gospel as a whole."¹⁴ It is a contention of this article, however, that exile and displacement are more than theological motifs, in that they also construct a marginal social and political space for the Matthean Jesus.

As is demonstrated below, of the forty names that are mentioned in the genealogy at least fifteen can be explicitly connected to episodes of forced displacement, itinerancy and/or homelessness. This combined with the emphasis on the Babylonian exile gestures towards the displacement that Jesus will experience during the flight to Egypt in 2:13–23 and his marginal identity that will later come into significant conflict with institutions of power such as the temple complex.

The gospel begins with the words: "Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ [The book of the genealogy/origin of Jesus the Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham]" (1:1), indicating an emphasis on two characters central to the Old Testament tradition. On the one hand, "Son of David" signals the royal dimension of Jesus' ancestry and associates him with the legitimate rulers over Israel.¹⁵ In the context of displacement, however, the reference to David evokes the story of his escape from King Saul (1 Sam 19:1–24) foreshadowing Jesus' own flight from political hostility in Matt 2:13–23. On the other hand, "Son of Abraham" invokes the founding

13 A number of interpreters have recognised that Matthew's genealogy reveals much about the narrative that follows; however, the underlying narrative of displacement has not featured in their assessments. See Dennis E. Nineham, "The Genealogy in St. Matthew's Gospel and Its Significance for the Study of the Gospels," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 58, no. 2 (1976): 451–68; Herman C. Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95, no. 2 (1976): 205–30.

14 Mervyn Eloff, "Exile, Restoration and Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus 'Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ,'" *Neotestamentica* 38, no. 1 (2004): 75. See also, N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 385–86.

15 A social-scientific treatment of this royal legitimization of Jesus can be found in Dennis C. Duling, *A Marginal Scribe: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew in a Social-Scientific Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 91–119. See also Joel Willitts' recent thesis on the political ramifications of the Matthean text's Davidic framework and the Shepherd-King motif: Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of "The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel"* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007).

of the Israelite people in the calling of Abraham and the promises made to him (Gen 12; 15; 17; cf. Exod 3:15–16). Those descended from him are included in the people of God.

While David is primarily associated with his role as king of Israel, and not as a displaced refugee, echoes of displacement within the story of Abraham are perhaps more prominent. The emphasis on Abraham indicates that Jesus belongs to this group of people, and specifically to the Jewish line of descent. The first narratives concerning Abraham in Gen 12–13 focus on his constant geographical shifting due to the combination of divine injunctions and inhospitable socio-political conditions. Abram appears as a nomad who, upon receiving a call from Yhwh, journeys from his hometown Ur through to the land of Canaan. On the way he dwells in Haran (11:31) where Yhwh promises to make his descendants into a great nation (12:1–5). After entering Canaan, he stops in Shechem (12:6) and then moves to Bethel (12:8). Soon after, the land to which Yhwh has called Abram becomes barren due to famine and so Abram wanders further south (12:10). Finally, due to severe famine, he is displaced to Egypt. Soon after, however, he is pursued by Pharaoh's men and so journeys through the Negeb to Bethel (13:3) before settling again in the land of Canaan (13:13). Abraham's constant shifting foreshadows the itinerancy that will feature as a major component of Jesus' life and ministry.

While the emphasis of the genealogy is placed on David and Abraham, many other names evoke the memory of homelessness and forced displacement, often with a connection to Egypt, famine, the exodus, or the Babylonian exile. Abraham's son Isaac (Matt 1:2) was, like his father, subjected to a famine and forced to move to Gerar (Gen 26:1–33). Yhwh commanded Isaac not to go to Egypt, rather he should “settle in this land as an alien [παροίκει]” (26:3). As a result of severe famine in Canaan, Jacob (Matt 1:2) migrated to Egypt at the time when his son was viceroy (Gen 46:2–4). Aminadab (Matt 1:4) was born of Aram during the Israelite exile in Egypt and was the father of Nashon who was a prominent figure during the Exodus. Both Nashon and his son Salmon were at least twenty years of age and so did not survive the forty year sojourn in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land (Num 26:64–5). Obed and Ruth (Matt 1:5) were part of an Israelite family from Bethlehem who were displaced to the nearby country of Moab because of famine (Ruth 1:1–5). During Saul's persecution of David, David asks the king of Moab for the protection of his parents and leaves Jesse (Matt 1:6) and his mother with the king of Moab (1 Sam 22:3–4). The Israelite king Uzziah (Matt 1:9) became leprous and so “lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord” (2 Chr 26:21).

The Matthean text makes special reference to Jechoniah and his son (Shealtiel) in relation to the deportation to Babylon (Matt 1:11–12).¹⁶ Second Kings 24–25 describes Jechoniah as a king of Judah who was dethroned by the king of Babylon in the 6th century BCE and taken into captivity along with his entire household and three-thousand prestigious Jews. The next name after Jechoniah's son Shealtiel, Zerubbabel (Matt 1:12–13), literally means “the offspring of Babylon.”¹⁷ The phrase “deportation to Babylon” is repeated four times in Matt 1:1–17 and is used to divide between two of the three groups of generations: fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the exile and fourteen generations from the exile to the Christ. The text employs the Greek verb μετακείσθαι to denote the “deportation,” echoing its LXX usage of the Babylonian captivity (2 Kgs 24:16; 1 Chr 5:22; Ezek 12:11) and literally meaning to “transfer to another place of habitation.”¹⁸ Nolland remarks that the verb intends to call to mind all the suffering and sense of tragedy known from the Old Testament accounts.¹⁹ This includes a well-developed discourse of destruction interwoven through the Old Testament that recounts the shame, humiliation, uprooting and trauma associated with the exilic experience.²⁰ The emphasis on Babylon gestures towards the geographical and social displacement of Jesus and what will amount to an inferior political, legal and social status as an outsider within his local environment.

The genealogy concludes with the introduction of the protagonist, Jesus, through his parents, Mary and Joseph: “and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah” (Matt 1:16). As mentioned above, this verse is seen as the fifth and final rupture in the genealogy of Jesus. Nolland observes that:

[w]ith Joseph comes a notable break in the pattern, ‘A produced B’. The language created a detour around this pattern in a manner which would normally be considered a distinction without a difference. But this

16 Jason B. Hood argues that the addition of “and his brothers” to Judah and Jechoniah (1:2, 11) evokes Jesus’ royal role. This is because Judah and Jechoniah are understood to have sacrificed themselves for their brothers in order to further the restoration of Israel, thus gesturing towards Jesus’ future role as an agent of God’s salvation. See: Jason B. Hood, *The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations: Matthew 1.1–17* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

17 “זְרֻבָבֶל,” HALOT, 1:279.

18 “μετοκείσθαι,” BDAG, 643.

19 Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 84.

20 See further: Anne-Mareike Wetter, “Balancing the Scales: The Construction of the Exile as Countertradition in the Bible,” in *From Babylon to Eternity: The Exile Remembered and Constructed in Text and Tradition*, ed. Bob Becking *et al* (London: Equinox, 2009), 34–56.

breaking of the pattern is striking and produces a puzzle for the reader until it is resolved in the narrative of vv. 18–25. Joseph seems to be being denied the normal role in procreation, but without explanation.²¹

While the genealogy is intended to ground Jesus in a stable home place, the rupture subtly deconstructs him from this lineage. This breakage in the text supplements the echoes of displacement and foreshadows the breakage from home place that Jesus will subsequently experience in Matt 2:13–23. As will be discussed in the final section, the marginal social space constructed in the infancy narrative motions towards the alienation from home place that Jesus will later encounter during his itinerant ministry.

CONCLUSIONS: THE FORMING OF A MARGINAL IDENTITY

As we have observed, Jesus' identity as a displaced individual is hinted at from the very beginning of Matthew's gospel. In the genealogy, the numerous intertextual echoes to episodes of forced displacement, wandering and exile within the remembered history of the Old Testament, in addition to the ruptures in the text, construct a marginal identity for the gospel's protagonist. The genealogy also gestures towards the explicit episode of displacement in Matt 2:13–23. Rather than focusing on exodus and exile as purely theological categories, displacement is presented as sub-theme that, in addition to evoking the figure of Moses and the story of Israel, enhances the origin story of a marginal outsider.

Displacement reappears a number of times through the rest of Matthew's gospel. As was mentioned above, the verb ἀναχωρέω (to escape/withdraw) which features heavily during the flight to Egypt (2:12, 13, 14, 22) is repeated at various points of geographical migration and political withdrawal: for example, to denote Jesus' escape to Capernaum after hearing of John the Baptist's arrest and the political instability it evokes (4:12); after the Baptist's execution by Herod Antipas (14:13); and directly following a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes (15:21). Moreover, Jesus' lament of homelessness in 8:20 ("Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head") and the rejection from his "hometown" in 13:54–58 are also texts that might awaken the displacement set in motion in Matt 1–2.

This is in stark contrast to the other gospels. Luke's genealogy of Jesus (3:23–28) contains some familiar names, although not as many can be linked intertextually to episodes of displacement, and the deportation to Babylon is not emphasized as it is in Matthew's genealogy. Moreover, even though

21 Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 85.

Luke's Jesus similarly laments the destitution of homelessness in Luke 9:58 (cf. Matt 8:20), and both the Markan and Lukan texts narrate the rejection of Jesus by his hometown (Mark 6:1–6//Luke 4:16–30), the crucial narrative event of the flight to Egypt appears only in Matthew (2:13–23). Furthermore, John's gospel contains none of these episodes. This suggests, I would argue, that a sub-theme of displacement is more pronounced in Matthew than in the other gospels and provides an important narrative category for interpreting Matthew's story of Jesus.

In fact, one might postulate that the external forced displacement of Jesus during his infancy becomes internalized as an experience of perpetual uprooting and displacement. Jesus' itinerant ministry takes place in *reaction* to his physical and social displacement within first-century Palestinian society, as an outworking of the conceptual and psychological shifts that accompany such events.²² This, of course, contributes to an outsider status for Jesus and so he is deemed a criminal nuisance to the stability and security of everyday life. While Jesus forms a surrogate home place around him with what has been called his "fictive kin" (12:46–50; 19:29), his male disciples eventually abandon him, leaving him to face his executioners alone. Only after the resurrection are they reconciled, albeit temporarily (28:16–17).

The production of this vulnerable, outsider identity also helps to explain, sociologically speaking, why Jesus ends up on a Roman cross. Jesus is perceived by the jurisdictional apparatus of the reigning ideological-political order as a criminal, a deviant threat that must be expunged in order that society can return to its smooth, uninterrupted functioning. In actual fact, the crucifixion could, in part, be seen as the extermination of a marginal pest. In much the same way as local governments undertake "street clean ups" to quite literally move, say, the homeless problem out of sight, the spectacle of crucifixion averts our critical gaze from the underlying socio-political machinery that produces deviancy, and in this case, a displaced messiah.

The identity and location of Jesus within Matt 1–2 must not, therefore, be limited to just his geographical location (i.e. where he comes from), or theological location (i.e. his salvific mission), but should also include his social location, which is one of displacement and marginality. The echoes of displacement in 1:1–17, in addition to the double exile of Jesus in 2:13–23, has something to say about Jesus' identity as a marginalized and displaced individual, who later comes into significant conflict with institutions of power in Galilee and, especially, in Judea at the culmination of the gospel narrative.

22 See, for example, Paul Zilonka, "The Pain of Migration," *The Bible Today* 26, no. 6 (1991): 351–56.