



Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations

Warren Carter

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Although New Testament scholars have examined Paul's writings and their relationship to the Roman empire and its imperial policies and writings, they have focused little attention on ways in which the Gospels were influenced by that imperialism. In *Matthew and Empire*, Warren Carter argues that Matthew's Gospel protests Roman imperialism by asserting that God's purposes and will are performed not by the empire and emperor but by Jesus and his community of disciples.

Matthew and Empire makes the claim for reading Matthew in this way against the almost exclusive emphasis on the relationship with the synagogue that has long been a staple of Matthean criticism. Carter establishes Matthew's imperial context by examining Roman imperial ideology and material presence in Antioch, the traditional provenance for Matthew. He argues that Matthean Christology, which presents Jesus as God's agent, is shaped by claims-and protests against those claims-that the emperor and empire are agents of God. In successive chapters Carter pays particular attention to the Gospel's central irony, namely that in depicting God's ways and purposes, the Gospel employs the very imperial framework that it resists. *Matthew and Empire* challenges traditional readings of Matthew and *Empire* encourages fresh perspectives in Matthean scholarship.

Warren Carter is Pherigo Professor of New Testament at Saint Paul School of Theology and author of *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading*.

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