

Quotes of Rabbi Michael Skobac on Matthew 1-4

One of the prerequisites of the Messiah being the Messiah is that you have to be the descendant of King David. It's one of the things that the Hebrew Scriptures say most often about the Messiah...Because that's an axiom, a prerequisite, the Christian scriptures spend 2 chapters basically trying to establish the credibility of Jesus' genealogy.¹

How does Jesus then trace himself back to King David if Joseph is not his father? ...One of the responses that's given very frequently...by Christian apologists is that Joseph may not have been the biological father of Jesus but he would have been the legal father through adoption...That's not so simple because basically in the Scriptures there's no evidence really that a person is able to pass on their genealogy through adoption.²

I don't see myself as here to send anybody to Hell. I think I see myself as encouraging people to use the Godly faculty they have of studying and thinking, making informed decisions, and God gave us a sensitivity to truth. One of the things that makes us human is that we are repulsed by that which is false and we appreciate and we love that which is true.³

The Bible's interest is always rehabilitation. Punishment in order to rehabilitate. The Bible says in Deuteronomy just like a father punishes or disciplines their child, that's how God will discipline us. So executing people is not cool, it doesn't help, there are cases obviously where it happens. And clearly in the case of adultery it's going to be really hard to find witnesses.⁴

But we are told that Joseph was righteous. Now that made my ears perk up because we know that one of the major themes of especially what I would call Pauline Christianity is the idea that there are no people who are righteous. In Romans 3:10, Paul really sort of quoting out of context from Psalm 14, Paul uses that to show that there are no good people. There are no righteous people, no, not one. Paul goes on to say in Galatians 2:21 that if it were possible to be righteous through keeping, through observing the Torah, then Jesus died in vain. Meaning it's a huge element of Paul's theology that we human beings are under the control basically of Satan after the Fall in the Garden of Eden. Human beings are not able to resist the power of Satan's appeal...⁵

¹ Tenak Talk, '15) *Matthew Chapter 1 - Cross-Examining the New Testament w/ Rabbi Michael Skobac - 01/28/2015'*, (YouTube, 29/1/2015, 29:00) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqkvHQ2VUoM>>.

² Ibid, 30:16.

³ Ibid, 56:38.

⁴ Tenak Talk, '17) *02 - Cross-Examining the New Testament w/ Rabbi Michael Skobac and host wil'Liam Hall'*, (YouTube, 5/2/2015, 33:14) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FcprXCRd-A&list=PLUXDcYxIBuwa9hOcSEZDkgmMzrptVFK-m&index=2>>.

⁵ Ibid, 33:47

You don't need to have statues of Jesus to have idolatry. Any place where Jesus is worshipped and prayer is directed to Jesus is from a Biblical point of view, idolatry.⁶

The claim here is not just that Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit and this is the origins of Jesus' birth. But Matthew is claiming that this was prophesied. Matthew is claiming that the Prophet Isaiah... taught that we should expect the Messiah to be born to a virgin.⁷

This young woman may or may not be a virgin. You could say that probably most young women might have been virgins but it doesn't change the meaning of the word...In Hebrew there is a specific word for virgin that is used whenever the Bible is concerned about someone's sexual history...Betulah.⁸

The bigger problem is the one of context. If you read the 7th chapter of Isaiah, it's not speaking about how you are going to know who the Messiah is...Speaking about a political crisis that was faced by the Southern Kingdom of Judah about 700 B.C.E.⁹

Many Christians say, 'How would a normal birth be a sign?' They assume that the only kind of sign that would be a sign would be a virgin birth. They say if you are talking about a non-virgin birth, how would that be a sign? So the truth of the matter is if you go through the Hebrew Scriptures, signs are almost never supernatural. The only time signs in the Bible are supernatural are the plagues in Egypt. They are referred to as signs and those are supernatural. But one thing is true of every sign in the Bible is they're always visible. You have to be able to see a sign for it to be a sign.¹⁰

Is the Messiah supposed to be worshipped? We know that in the Tanakh only God is to be worshipped. And worshipping or giving our devotion to anyone or anything else is idolatry. And one of the things that is very clear in the Tanakh is that the Messiah is not God. We see for example in Isaiah 11, we are told that the Messiah will be someone who himself fears God. The Messiah will be a God-fearing person.¹¹

⁶ Ibid, 58:34.

⁷ Tenak Talk, '21) 03 – Cross-Examining the New Testament w/ Rabbi Michael Skobac', (YouTube, 26/02/2015, 42:40)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI2GcOQPqI0&list=PLUXDcYxIBuwa9hOcSEZDkgmMzrptVFK-m&index=3>>.

⁸ Ibid, 44:21.

⁹ Ibid, 48:51.

¹⁰ Ibid, 52:23.

¹¹ Tenak Talk, '25) 04 – Cross-Examining the New Testament w/ Rabbi Michael Skobac', (YouTube, 12/3/2015, 19:07)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m28p2DcTuBI&list=PLUXDcYxIBuwa9hOcSEZDkgmMzrptVFK-m&index=4>>.

The question is, what does the New Testament teach? Does the New Testament actually teach that Jesus is God? And I think there are three possibilities. One possibility would be that the Greek scripture, the New Testament, clearly teaches that Jesus is God. That's one possibility. The other possibility would be that the New Testament teaches clearly that Jesus is not God, meaning that you'd have one or the other stated or taught definitively and clearly. The third possibility is that there are mixed signals in the Christian bible, and it seems to me that's probably what we're dealing with. I think that the simplest proof of this is that for the past 2,000 years, Christians themselves—meaning the people who follow the New Testament—have been fighting over this very question for 2,000 years. So, the fact that it's been argued about for so long just proves one thing: that it's not clear. If the information was clear, you wouldn't have 2,000 years of internal Christian debating. You know, when it comes to the Jewish concept of God, Jewish people were clear that God is one, and so the absolute monotheism of Judaism was never debated amongst Jews because our Scriptures were clear about things.¹²

Now, one problem here is that this story in Matthew conflicts with the story in Luke... In the Gospel of Luke, there's no flight to Egypt; there's no story in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus is in great danger and he has to get out of dodge and he has to go down to Egypt. The whole story is just not there. So, we have really two different takes on what happened to the baby Jesus. Either he flees to Egypt as we see in the book of Matthew, or he doesn't flee to Egypt in the book of Luke. But more importantly, this is totally not what the Prophet Hosea was speaking about. What Matthew does very conveniently is he chops off the first part of the verse. He doesn't quote the entire verse from Hosea; he just conveniently skips the first half of the verse and only quotes the second half. Hosea says in the beginning of the verse (11:1), "When Israel was a child, I loved him," God says. "When Israel was a child, I loved him," and then Hosea goes on to say, "And out of Egypt I called my son." People might be surprised by the Bible speaking about Israel as God's son because they may be preconditioned to only think about God having one son, that being Jesus. So, the truth is that the Bible speaks about Israel, the Jewish people, as being God's son. In Exodus 4:22, God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my firstborn." So this is not so strange in Hosea. If you've studied the whole of Chapter 11 of Hosea, it's a story; it's a chapter about the history of the Jewish people. So, what you have here really is Matthew co-opting (quoting) this passage in Hosea out of context. The context has nothing to do with the Messiah going down to Egypt. The actual passage in Hosea is talking about the history of the Jewish people, when, in the infancy of their history, in the very beginning of Jewish history, they had to basically come out of Egypt at the birth of their nation. That's what Hosea is speaking about: the leaving of the Jewish people after their slavery in Egypt. And so, really, this proof text is like cotton candy. You know, when you eat cotton

¹² Ibid, 21:14.

candy, as soon as you put it into your mouth, it evaporates; it's not there. So, when you examine these proof texts, we've been finding this to be the case with every single proof text we've studied so far with Jonno. These are, generally speaking, none of them are real Messianic prophecies. They are transformed into Messianic prophecies by the Gospel writers and by missionaries who find them as convenient hooks to point to Jesus because in their minds these are verses that sound like Jesus. But they really are misusing and misrepresenting the original context of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹³

¹³ *Ibid*, 44:37.