

The Gospel of Matthew Controversies and Parables

Interpreting the Text:

1. The notion that Jesus was a source of controversy runs through these chapters. What were the major reasons, as Matthew understands them, for that situation?
2. What is the author of Matthew's role in framing the story of Jesus, "a prophet without honor in his own country" and his teachings? What are his major concerns? Are you in sympathy with them?
3. Why does Matthew emphasize the controversy surrounding Jesus and his activities? How is this emphasis meant to affect our interpretation of Jesus' character?
4. Jesus speaks to his disciples in parables throughout much of Matthew 13. Why might Jesus use this method rather than speaking directly? Why might the author of Matthew have maintained this allegorical form of communication?

Applying the Text:

1. Jesus compares his own activity to that of a burglar and makes comparisons that don't always make edifying points. How provocative do you find the sayings of Jesus? How do these teachings challenge contemporary Christians?
2. How have you come to understand the parables of Jesus in Matthew's gospel? Do you read them in more than one way? Do you have a favorite?
3. Jesus takes on the role of provoking controversy throughout the Gospel of Matthew. How should modern Christians understand our role in society?