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This study reconstructs the apocalyptic eschatology in Matthew's gospel so that we may understand Matthew's time and his concerns. Apocalyptic eschatology can be broadly defined as a comprehensive world view which emphasises the final judgement and its aftermath within a dualistic and deterministic framework. This distinctive and often vengeful vision of reality was vigorously adopted by Matthew and dominates his gospel. Sociological analysis of apocalypticism in Judaism and early Christianity has shown that such a world view was adopted by minority or sectarian groups which were undergoing great crises, and Dr Sim looks at the social setting of the Matthean community, which reveals that after the first Jewish war against Rome, it came into conflict with the Jewish and gentile worlds and the larger Christian church.

The gospel of Matthew was held in high regard in the early church but may repel the modern reader with its division of humanity into righteous and wicked, and its emphasis on the fires of hell. But by understanding the social circumstances of the evangelist and his community, we can see that Matthew wrote not simply to condemn but out of an acute need to protect and enhance his community's sense of distinctiveness, and from pastoral concern for his troubled church. Dr Sim offers for the first time in English an extended and comprehensive analysis of Matthew's eschatological outlook which interprets his gospel in the light of contemporary literature which shares the same view.

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SOCIETY FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

MONOGRAPH SERIES

General editor: Margaret E. Thrall

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Apocalyptic eschatology in the gospel of Matthew

DAVID C. SIM
Lecturer in New Testament,
Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521553650

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First published 1996
This digitally printed first paperback version 2005

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Sim, David C.
Apocalyptic eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew / David C. Sim.
p. cm. – (Society for New Testament Studies monograph series : 88)
Revision of the author's thesis (doctoral) – King's College, London, 1992.
Includes bibliographical references
ISBN 0 521 55365 2 (hardback)
1. Bible. N.T. Matthew – Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Eschatology – biblical teaching. 3. Eschatology – History of doctrines – Early church, ca. 30–600. 4. Eschatology, Jewish. I. Title. II. Series: Monograph series (Society for New Testament Studies) : 88.
BS2575.2.S49 1996
226.2'06–dc20 95–17551 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-55365-0 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-55365-2 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02063-3 paperback
ISBN-10 0-521-02063-8 paperback

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To Robyn

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PREFACE

This study marks a significant stage in a long-held interest in the eschatology of the synoptic gospels and their sources. My interest in Matthew's eschatology was sparked by a Master's thesis on the eschatology of Q when, in the course of reconstructing the text of this hypothetical source, I was struck by Matthew's constant insertion of apocalyptic-eschatological themes. I was then of the opinion that this phenomenon had never been adequately explored or explained, and I decided that my doctoral research would be devoted to this important and neglected subject. The present study is a revised version of my doctoral thesis which was undertaken at King's College London and submitted in October 1992. There are many people who have contributed to the production of this book in its various stages and to whom I wish to give due acknowledgement.

My first debt of thanks is to my supervisor, Professor Graham Stanton of King's College London, who nurtured the thesis in its early stages and saw it through to its completion. While I was in London, Graham was unstinting in his support and always made himself available, even at very short notice, to discuss ideas and drafts. His support continued after I returned to Melbourne in February 1990 to take up a position at La Trobe University. Whether he was responding to queries by letter or on the telephone, Graham's enthusiasm and encouragement provided the guidance and inspiration which enabled me to complete the thesis 'long-distance' while coping with a full-time teaching load. At all times Graham willingly shared his immense knowledge of the gospel of Matthew and encouraged me to develop my own ideas. I can truthfully say that I have learnt much from him.

Sincere thanks must also be given to the British Council for awarding me a Commonwealth Scholarship which enabled me to realise a dream and undertake doctoral study in London. Further

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funding from this institution also made it possible for me to have two extended trips to the Middle East in 1988 and 1989. I must single out two administrators, Kathy Roberts of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Alison Edwards of the British Council, who were always very helpful during my association with them.

A special vote of thanks is due to Dr Margaret Thrall for accepting this study into the SNTS monograph series, and for her helpful comments and suggestions for revision. Other readers of the original thesis who have provided perceptive criticisms include Professor Christopher Rowland, Dr Judith Lieu and the reader for the SNTS monograph series, and I also express my gratitude to them. The final revision of this study was completed at the Australian Catholic University campus in Brisbane, and I must thank the departmental secretary, Ms Fran Wilkinson, for providing much needed assistance in the production of the final draft.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the debt which I owe to certain members of my family. My parents, Gordon and Norma Sim, helped me in many ways in the initial stages of my career and provided the opportunity for my doctoral work. Special thanks are due as well to my brother, Mr Bruce Sim, who agreed to proof-read the whole manuscript at the thesis stage and I thank him for taking on such an unenviable task. Finally and most importantly, I must express my enormous thanks to Robyn, who has lived with this study from beginning to end and consequently has shared the 'highs' and the 'lows'. Whether we were in the heart of London, the middle of the Syrian desert, or the suburbia of Melbourne or Brisbane, her love, support and understanding have been unyielding. Though she has contributed little in terms of the content of this book, I feel that her contribution to it is no less than mine. It is therefore with much love and gratitude that I dedicate this book to her.

While I acknowledge the assistance of all those mentioned above, and emphasise that this study is considerably better for their assistance, I alone remain responsible for any of its errors and deficiencies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentica Upsaliensis
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvT	Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BSR	Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose
BuL	*Bibel und Leben*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZNW	Beiheft zur *ZNW*
CBNTS	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	*CBQ* Monograph Series
CMT	*Currents in Mission and Theology*
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CTM	Calwer Theologische Monographien
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ETS	Erfurter Theologische Studien
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*

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HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDBSupp	*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSS	*JSNT* Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	*JSOT* Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSS	*JSP* Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LD	Lectio Divina
LTPM	Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs
MeyerK	H. A. W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
NCB	New Century Bible
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	*NovT* Supplements
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
PNTC	Pelican New Testament Commentary
RSB	*Religious Studies Bulletin*
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TPINTC	Trinity Press International New Testament Commentary

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TS	Theological Studies
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

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