

Steve Walton  
*Trinity College, Bristol*

# LISTENING TO MATTHEW THROUGH TOM WRIGHT'S FOUR 'LOUDSPEAKERS'

1

LISTENING TO MATTHEW THROUGH TOM WRIGHT'S FOUR 'LOUDSPEAKERS'

## WHERE WE'RE GOING

- ▶ A look at Wright's 'loudspeakers' approach to the Gospels
  - ▶ some examples from Matthew
- ▶ Listening through the loudspeakers to some passages

2

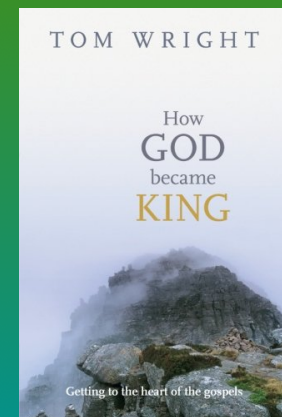
# THE FOUR LOUDSPEAKERS

3

LISTENING TO MATTHEW THROUGH TOM WRIGHT'S FOUR 'LOUDSPEAKERS'

## TOM WRIGHT'S APPROACH IN HOW GOD BECAME KING

- ▶ the neglect of the Gospels in contemporary Christianity
  - ▶ focus on Christ as Lord of glory
  - ▶ treating the Gospels as the 'backstory' of the exalted Lord
- ▶ four neglected ways to listen to the Gospels, pictured as loudspeakers



4

## THE GOSPELS AS THE CLIMAX OF THE STORY OF ISRAEL

- ▶ Jewish people had sense of still being 'in exile', even though physically in the land
  - ▶ promises of return from exile unfulfilled e.g. Isa 40-55
  - ▶ the story was 'stalled'
- ▶ genealogy 1:1-17
  - ▶ Jesus' coming as the climax of Israel's story
- ▶ Israel as God's means to redeem the world Gen 12:1-3

5

“ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,  
“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’”

Matthew 3:1-2, quoting Isaiah 40:3

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 40:1-2

6

## THE GOSPELS AS THE CLIMAX OF THE STORY OF ISRAEL

- ▶ Jewish people had sense of still being 'in exile', even though physically in the land
- ▶ genealogy 1:1-17
- ▶ Israel as God's means to redeem the world Gen 12:1-3
  - ▶ this will happen in and through Jesus
- ▶ look for
  - ▶ story of Israel
  - ▶ key characters from Israel's story
  - ▶ key biblical (OT) echoes in Matthew's story of Jesus

7

## THE STORY OF JESUS AS THE STORY OF ISRAEL'S GOD RETURNING TO HIS PEOPLE

- ▶ God present in Israel's story in the past
  - ▶ accompanying the exodus – the pillar of cloud and fire
  - ▶ sin with the golden calf almost led to destruction
  - ▶ God present only in a 'safe' environment – tabernacle and temple
- ▶ YHWH leaving the temple Ezekiel 10-11

8

“ Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house and stopped above the cherubim. The cherubim lifted up their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight as they went out with the wheels beside them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

Ezekiel 10:18-19

Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. And the glory of the LORD ascended from the middle of the city, and stopped on the mountain east of the city.

Ezekiel 11:22-23

### THE STORY OF JESUS AS THE STORY OF ISRAEL'S GOD RETURNING TO HIS PEOPLE

- ▶ God present in Israel's story in the past
- ▶ YHWH leaving the temple Ezekiel 10-11
  - ▶ 1:23 Emmanuel = 'God is with us'
  - ▶ 28:20 'I will be with you always'
  - ▶ 14:32-33 worship of Jesus after the storm
- ▶ look for idea and language of God visiting his people

### THE GOSPELS AS FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS FOR A NEW MOVEMENT

- ▶ the Gospels as the story of the launch of God's renewed people
  - ▶ 10:5-23 the mission of the twelve

“ Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Matthew 10:17-20

## THE GOSPELS AS FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS FOR A NEW MOVEMENT

- ▶ the Gospels as the story of the launch of God's renewed people
  - ▶ 10:5-23 the mission of the twelve
  - ▶ 28:18-20

13

“ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

14

“ And Jesus came and said to them, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

15

## THE GOSPELS AS FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS FOR A NEW MOVEMENT

- ▶ the Gospels as the story of the launch of God's renewed people
  - ▶ 10:5-23 the mission of the twelve
  - ▶ 28:18-20
    - ▶ Jesus as Messiah is now ruler of the world
    - ▶ Psalms 2, 72, 89; Isaiah 11
  - ▶ Jesus ushers in a new world order
- ▶ look for where material in Matthew
  - ▶ prepares for life after Jesus' death and resurrection
  - ▶ stretches beyond or applies Jesus' death and resurrection

16

## THE STORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD CLASHING WITH THE KINGDOM OF CAESAR

- ▶ God's reign challenges any totalising claims of human kingdoms – in first century, this is Caesar
  - ▶ exodus: challenge to Pharaoh
  - ▶ return from exile: undoes power of Babylon

17

## THE STORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD CLASHING WITH THE KINGDOM OF CAESAR

- ▶ God's reign challenges any totalising claims of human kingdoms – in first century, this is Caesar
- ▶ Matthew 1-2 the Herod family
  - ▶ 2:1-3 birth of king of Jews as threat to Herod
  - ▶ 2:13-14 God warns Joseph to go to Egypt
  - ▶ 2:15, 19-20 on return
    - ▶ 'This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."' 2:15, quoting Hosea 11:1

18

## THE STORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD CLASHING WITH THE KINGDOM OF CAESAR

- ▶ God's reign challenges any totalising claims of human kingdoms – in first century, this is Caesar
- ▶ Matthew 1-2 the Herod family
- ▶ 27:62-66; 28:4, 11-15 Roman guards cannot prevent Jesus' resurrection
- ▶ look for material which signals or speaks to clash of God's reign with earthly powers which oppose God's reign in Jesus

19

# LISTENING THROUGH THE LOUDSPEAKERS

20

## LISTENING THROUGH THE LOUDSPEAKERS

- ▶ Group work on passages from Matthew
  - ▶ listen for the four loudspeakers at work in your passage
  - ▶ all four loudspeakers won't always be playing in every passage
  - ▶ one loudspeaker may be *fortissimo* and others *pianissimo* – listen carefully
- ▶ Produce a poster to share your findings with everyone