I am near the end of this thread on the Jewishness of Matthew’s Gospel. I have several more posts to go, so I’m not completely at the finish line; but it’s within sight. (I should stress that I am not intending to give an exhaustive analysis of the problem and all the relevant issues. That would take a very long book. In fact, scholars have indeed written significant books on the topic. One of my graduate students, Judy Siker, wrote her dissertation on one aspect of the issue.) I hope to close out the thread with posts on three related topics: this post and the next on whether Matthew was himself Jewish; the one after on whether Matthew – whether Jewish or not – was anti-Jewish (I hope to do that in just one post, but it may take more); and finally one on whether Matthew and the apostle Paul would have or could have seen eye-to-eye on the relationship of the new faith (call it Christianity) in relationship to the Jewish law. So, after all I’ve posted so far, was Matthew Jewish? We might mean several things by that question. One would be: was Matthew (that is, the author of the Gospel, whatever his name really was) born and raised as a Jew and did he continue to practice Judaism by following the Jewish law after becoming a follower of Jesus and at the time of the writing of the Gospel? Another would be: was Matthew a gentile who was converted to Judaism before he became a follower of Jesus and who continued to practice Judaism afterwards, by following the Jewish law? Another would be: was Matthew a gentile who became a follower of Jesus and in so doing came to think that he was obliged to practice Judaism by following the Jewish law? There are probably other things it could mean as well.

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