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A Critical Consideration of Three Fulfillment Citations in the Gospel According to Matthew

by

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Abstract

This paper will argue that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23 and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. He achieved this by using hermeneutical methods common in his day and culture, thus embedding in this new text the thematic heritage of the old. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

The results of this investigation are organized into five chapters. Chapter One serves to introduce the topic of investigation, present the thesis, describe the structure of the argument in general terms, and to establish the methodology used to support this inquiry. Chapter Two addresses two factors that may have influenced the evangelist in writing this Gospel. The development of Midrashic and Pesher exegesis in first century Judea and the meaning of "fulfillment." Next, the scriptural background of the themes Matthew draws upon through the fulfillment citations considered are examined in Chapter Three. These two chapters together form the foundation for the argument that demonstrates the thesis of this study. Chapter Four examines the three citations identified above and briefly considers the parallel usage of these citations across the Synoptic Gospels in order to better understand what is unique about Matthew's use of the text and the tradition that lay behind it. Chapter Five pulls together the findings of the previous chapters and considers what can be inferred about the Gospel's original audience. Chapter Six summarizes the work as a whole and concludes the study.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Preliminary Remarks

The thesis of this paper is that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. Some preliminary remarks may be helpful for understanding the argument. These remarks will establish the point of departure for this project, expand upon the thesis statement, describe the structure of the argument, and briefly touch upon the methodology employed.

Point of Departure

The author[1] of the Gospel According to Matthew made extensive use of Hebrew texts in his presentation of the story of Jesus' ministry. He used themes, events and personalities drawn from the books that now make up the Old Testament. He cited some passages directly, made numerous allusions, and he may have used material that already had allusions embedded within them. The author's use of this material gives rise naturally to the question: What was his purpose in doing so? Although there is no common agreement among scholars, one explanation is that he intended to illuminate the story of Jesus and to connect it with the traditions of its original audience.

[1] I shall refer to the author of this Gospel as "Matthew" as shorthand for "the person, or persons, who wrote this book." In so doing I do not mean to imply a specific identity for this person(s), nor exclude the possibility that the author was the Apostle Matthew.

Anthony Apodaca argues that Matthew used such material to elaborate his christology, while also using it to demonstrate the continuity which he believed existed between the emerging Christian Church and the various strands of Jewish tradition portrayed in the Old Testament. He suggests that Matthew may have been engaged in a myth-building exercise using images that might have carried a polyvalent meaning. A polyvalent image is one that carries with it more than one valid interpretation. The interpretation endorsed by a community tells us about that community, as well as the image. So in identifying the polyvalent interpretation of an image in use by a specific community, that community is also recognizing something that distinguishes it from the other that holds a different understanding of the image in question. In using the term "myth" Apodaca does not use the term in a pejorative way, or in the rhetorical sense of invention because a myth does not need to be non-historical according to him. He uses it, rather, in a sociological sense where his audience is better able to distinguish themselves from their cultural matrix through social formation by virtue of their unique beliefs and stories.[2] Philip Esler calls such devices "identity descriptors" because they help foster a common sense of identity within the community. "They tell members what they should think and feel and how they should behave if they are to belong to the group and share its identity."[3] According to this argument then, Matthew is using the citations in a particular way to foster and maintain his audience's identity as a distinctive sub-group within Judaism.

Apodaca also argues that Matthew did not intend to import the context or meaning of the Old Testament references except where "...the new narrative context explicitly demands

[2] M. Anthony Apodaca, "Myth Theory, Comparison and Embedded Hebrew text Texts: Ib Ishaq's Biography of Muhammad and the Mythologizing Function of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Vol. 2: The Gospel of Matthew* (ed. Thomas R. Hatina; New York: T and T Clark, 2008), 21-23; see also Richard Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 76; and J.R.C. Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter: Justin Martyr on Matthew's Fulfilment Quotations," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Vol. 2: The Gospel of Matthew* (ed. Thomas R. Hatina; New York: T and T Clark, 2008), 59.
[3] Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 20-21.

this inference."[4] This could be assessed as a very narrow interpretation of Matthew's purpose in making Old Testament references.

Raymond Brown believes that references to the Old Testament serve a didactic purpose for the benefit of Christian readers given the preponderance of citations related to otherwise hidden aspects of Jesus' life.[5] For Brown, these references are meant to illuminate and explain by directing the audience's attention to a particular citation that allows for a fuller understanding of each point being addressed. Richard Beaton goes a step further in saying:

> It would be simple to say that they serve as mere proof-texts, passages that are removed from their original context and imbued with an altered meaning in their freshly contrived context. To the contrary, they are used in a highly sophisticated manner that imparts to the gospel intricate layers of meaning. They represent the exegesis of the early Christian movement and its attempt to come to terms with the life, work and person of Jesus...[6]

Perhaps this is a very broad understanding of Matthew's purpose.

There are numerous other possible explanations that fall between these two radically different interpretations. Various scholars have argued that Matthew's Old Testament references serve apologetic, rhetorical, biographical or propagandistic purposes.[7] Donald Hagner is also somewhere in the middle with what some might consider to be the most persuasive explanation of the purpose served by Matthew's citations given their content. He writes that they are the most obvious expression of his christology,[8] and as such, form the basis of his Gospel message.[9]

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[4] Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 29.
[5] Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 97-99.
[6] Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 75-76. I shall argue in Chapters Two and Four that Matthew's use of these citations reflects the exegetical practices of his day.
[7] Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 48; and Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 194-195; and F.P. Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 28 (1 2007): 306-307.
[8] Christology is here understood as the "study of the Person of Christ, and in particular of the union in Him of the Divine and Human natures..." E.A. Livingstone, "Christology," *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 116.
[9] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC 33A; Dallas: Word, 1993), lxi; see also Lynlea Rodger, "The Infancy

While these comments are probably applicable to all of the canonical Gospels, there are variations in what materials are used by the Evangelists to support them and the specific literary purposes served by each. Not all of the Evangelists used a particular citation in a given story, and similar citations were used in different ways. This reflects differing attitudes towards their belief systems and the various priorities of the authors. It is useful, therefore, to consider exactly how individual evangelists used these citations, and to recognize what purposes were served in each case.

The value of such inquiry is underlined by recent scholarship that brings into question the literary relationships between the Synoptic Gospels. Armin Baum argues that the Gospels are unique in ancient literature in that while they essentially tell the same story, they do not exhibit the differences and similarities characteristic of other ancient texts that are literarily dependent.[10] While Hagner would probably not go as far as Baum, he does suggest that the Gospels represent parallel accounts of the same tradition considered from different chronological points in time or geographic locations and this leaves open the question of the literary relationship between the gospels.[11] He also contends that the existence of parallel accounts did not stop the subsequent development of the oral tradition that underpinned the gospels, nor continued reference to it by other authors.[12] Therefore, such an analysis can be of assistance in gaining an understanding not only the theology of the Gospel in question,[13] but of the authors of the gospels themselves, the communities they wrote for, and perhaps also the social and political milieu within which they worked.

The Evangelists made a variety of choices when composing their versions of the

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Stories of Matthew and Luke: An Examination of the Child as a Theological Metaphor," *HBT* 19 (1 1997): 61; and Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7* (trans. James E. Crouch; Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 162; cf. Eduard Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (ed. Graham Stanton; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 132-133.

[10] Armin D. Baum, "Matthew's Sources - Written or Oral? A Rabbinic Analogy and Empirical Insights," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 13; for an opposing view, cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, xlvii.

[11] See also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, xlviii-xlix.

[12] See also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, xlix-l.

[13] See also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lx.

Gospel. Some of these choices included what texts should be used in citations and allusions, which events of Jesus' life should be portrayed, and what parts of his teaching should be conveyed. Vernon Robbins referred to the product of these choices, the textual elements that make up the Gospels, as intertexture.[14] In examining these textual elements we can learn about the audience the evangelist wrote for. Furthermore, in examining what sources the evangelists drew upon, how they incorporated the material into their text, built upon it and nuanced it to advance their own works, one can begin to appreciate the skill they brought to the task. Such an analysis, when placed in the context of what is known of first century C.E. Judean[15] politics, education and social institutions, makes possible some interesting speculative inferences concerning the individual evangelists and the communities they addressed.

Understanding the purpose served by the citations used by Matthew is also relevant to the larger task of understanding the history of the early followers of Jesus in the aftermath of the crucifixion. The Gospels are important documents which assist in understanding that history so questions concerning their content, the nature of their literary relationship to each other, and the related questions concerning their origins continue to be relevant grounds for study.[16] Specific textual elements, such as references to the Old Testament, can also contribute to that process of understanding.

The Gospel According to Matthew makes numerous allusions to Old Testament texts and contains more than sixty citations from them.[17] Ten of these citations are called "fulfillment" citations by many scholars because of the formula the author used to introduce

[14] Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 40.
[15] In using the name Judea, I am referring to the territory that made up the Kingdom of Judea under Herod the Great (ca. 4 B.C.E.) was subsequently divided amongst his heirs, and eventually incorporated within the Roman provinces of Palestine and Syria. Jean-Pierre Isbouts, *The Biblical World: An Illustrated Atlas* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2007), 277 and 318.
[16] Eve-Marie Becker, "Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature," in *Mark and Matthew I - Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings* (ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 125.
[17] Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter,"in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 47.

them to the text.[18] A further four citations represent degrees of variation in the formula used to bring them into the text, so they are not necessarily considered to be fulfillment citations by all scholars.[19] The source of these citations is difficult to ascertain as there is no clear association with any particular ancient text as is the case with the non-fulfillment citations Matthew shares with Mark, which appear to have been taken from the LXX. At best, it could be said that the fulfillment citations reveal a familiarity with Hebrew text, the LXX and possibly with relevant exegetical commentaries.[20]

Matthew draws upon the prophetic literature of the Old Testament in making the majority of his citations. He relies principally on Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah 9-14, Jonah, and Malachi. Six of the ten undisputed fulfillment citations are drawn from Isaiah, and one citation was drawn from each of Hosea, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and the Psalms. Similarly, two of the four disputed citations are drawn from Isaiah; while one each came from Micah and Zechariah. This is in keeping with the significant influence of the Book of Isaiah on Second Temple Judaism in general, as well as in the texts found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, which is due in part to the wide array of topics addressed by the prophet.[21]

This study examines three of the five undisputed fulfillment citations that appear in the first four chapters of the Gospel, where Matthew introduces his understanding of the identity of Jesus and provides the context for the story that follows. Not all five passages are considered for reasons of brevity. The passages considered are contained in the pericopes 1:18-23; 2:19-23, and 4:12-16. These passages have been selected because they provide

[18] Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 19-23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10. Holy Bible, NAU (1995); Apocrypha, NRSV (1989).
[19] Matt 2:5-6; 3:3; 13:14-15; 26:56. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 98; cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lv.
[20] James E. Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel Structured Around Ten Messianic Citations of Isaiah," *JTS* 61, Pt 1 (April 2010): 52; see also Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Ramsey: Sigler, 1990), 148; and Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 311.
[21] Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 63; see also Darrell D. Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism of the Second Temple Period," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. Steve & Menken Moyise Maarten J.J.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005), 7and 33; see also Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 81; and John F.A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996), 22.

insight into the major elements of Matthew's christology as it is conveyed through the fulfillment citations. These citations serve as textual markers signifying important aspects of the story line such as key persons or events or ideas, and they do so in a manner that sets them above simple narration.[22]

Matthew's use of the citations is important both in terms of their specific content and the meaning they import into the text, and because of the context in which they now appear. As Marinus de Jonge has pointed out, significant texts are preserved through the act of transmission and they are transformed as well by being read in a new context. Esler speaks of how "...social agents take up identities, ideas, and practices and hand them on to others, often transforming them in the process."[23] This is called appropriation. It is an important part of the sense of continuity a group can have with the past so it is a significant element of the group's identity.[24] So the Old Testament meanings the citations carry should be received within the New Testament context in which they are presented, which is the locus of the theological message of the New Testament text.[25] Of course, as Michael Thompson has pointed out in commenting on allusions in Matthew's Gospel, this literary device fails if the audience is not familiar with the meaning of the text in its original context.[26]

In a similar vein Daniel Boyarin, in presenting his understanding of intertextuality, has argued that there can be no such thing as a value-free interpretation of the text. It is simply impossible to read a text without various filters influencing how the text is received.[27]

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[22] Jeffrey L. Capshaw, *A Textlinguistic Analysis of Selected Old Testament Texts in Matthew 1-4* (ed. Hemchand Gossai; Studies in Biblical Literature 62; New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 91.
[23] Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 22.
[24] Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 22.
[25] Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 204; on the importance of a contextual focus, see also Stanley E. Porter, "Matthew and Mark: The Contribution of Recent Linguistic Thought," in *Mark and Matthew I - Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings* (ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 108.
[26] Michael B. Thompson, *Clothed With Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12:1-15:13* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 29; see also Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 308.
[27] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indianapolis: Indiana University, 1990), 12 and 24-25.

Matthew had his filters in play when he selected a text or adapted a tradition to his needs, as did his audience as they received his Gospel, and so does the modern reader. It is reasonable to assume that Matthew was consciously aware of the predominant filters operating for his intended audience. But Boyarin goes further in presenting his understanding of intertextuality. He argues that each individual's world view is informed, consciously or unconsciously, by the totality of their existential and intellectual experiences and that these in turn influence their self expression.[28] In other words, Matthew's understanding of the Christ event was influenced in part by his exposure to Hebrew texts and that this influence is manifest in the citations he made. Thus, the texts he selected, the traditions they carry with them, and how he used them can help us understand the author better and the audience for whom he was writing.

Thesis

This paper will argue that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. He achieved this by using exegetical methods commonly used in his day and culture, thus embedding in this new text the thematic heritage of the old. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

This particular view supports the argument for the existence of what some scholars have suggested was a group in first century Galilee, the *Netsrim*. Indeed, since the above pattern fits so well with what some infer was the theological perspective of that group, it advances the credibility of the existence of such a group. It is not my intention in this thesis

[28] Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 12-13 and 18-19.

to argue for that group, but I do find this pattern suggestive, and worth further investigation.

Structure of Argument

The results of this investigation are organized into five chapters. Chapter One serves to introduce the topic of investigation and to establish the methodology used to support this inquiry. Chapter Two addresses two factors that may have influenced the evangelist in writing this Gospel: the development of Midrashic and Pesher exegesis in first century Judea; and the meaning of "fulfillment." Next, the scriptural background of the themes Matthew draws upon through the fulfillment citations considered are examined in Chapter Three. Chapters Two and Three together form the foundation for the argument that demonstrates the thesis of this study. Chapter Four examines the three citations identified above and briefly considers the parallel usage of these citations across the Synoptic Gospels in order to better understand what is unique about Matthew's use of the text and the tradition that lay behind it. Chapter Five pulls together the findings of the previous chapters and considers what can be inferred about the Gospel's original audience. Chapter Six summarizes the work as a whole and concludes the study.

Methodology

With respect to methodology, Historical Criticism[29] will be used to address the texts being examined and to consider what they reveal about the first audience. This is appropriate since the primary research source for this project is the Christian Bible, and because the nature of the investigation, the effort to understand the text in context and to learn about the

[29] I will also use literary/source criticism as I try to understand the significance of various literary features of the texts examined. Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2001), 79 and 105.

audience is by its nature an historical inquiry. A gap does exist between the contemporary understanding of the text and the intent of the author of the Gospel. However, this gap can be narrowed through the application of the historical-critical method. The fact that the gap cannot be completely closed does not preclude the drawing of cautious inferences based on a close reading of the text, but it should temper the forcefulness of such assertions.

The analysis of the three fulfillment citations in their literary and historical context will show how the author has used contemporary methods to draw upon his Hebrew heritage in presenting his christology while contrasting this with how the other Synoptic authors have treated the same material. This analysis will assist in the recognition of important details in the text that can inform our understanding of Matthew's community. As Jeffrey Capshaw argues:

> To date there is no known or extant 'non-Greek' model behind Matthew's Gospel. Hence, the Greek text of Matthew's Gospel is most similar to the other twenty-six books in the [New Testament]. It, therefore, fits into the larger framework of other Koine texts from the early Christian period. Certainly the linguistic environment, Matthew's background, his writing purpose, and the Old Testament all had their impact on his style. As such, these factors and others form a unique text that exhibits Matthew's own personal style or idiolect.[30]

This study cannot yield conclusions viewed with certainty, but as Capshaw has suggested given the well preserved Greek text available to us, "...with a measure of probability one can reconstruct an 'external-world' context for the first century in general and, consequently, for Matthew in particular."[31]

In conducting this study, one must guard against the "hermeneutic of suspicion" that Capshaw, and others such as Raymond Brown, note in some modern scholars. Capshaw also warns us against the arbitrariness that allows us to discount what the text actually says while holding onto constructs such as the hypothetical written source 'Q.'[32] I want to follow where

[30] Capshaw, *A Textlinguistic Analysis*, 25.
[31] Capshaw, *A Textlinguistic Analysis*, 17.
[32] Capshaw, *A Textlinguistic Analysis*, 20, and fn 82; for an alternative view of Q as a label for an oral tradition upon which the Gospels are based see Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, xlviii; see also Anders Runesson, "Building

the text leads and to be open to interpretations that fall outside the presuppositions common to the hermeneutic of suspicion while guarding against the arbitrariness that narrows unnecessarily the range of explanations that can accommodate the textual witness.

Conclusion

This chapter established the point of departure for this study. The thesis was presented with some amplification, the structure of the argument was described and the methodology to be used was commented upon briefly. The next chapter will address material that supports the argument for the thesis of this study.

Matthean Communities: The Politics of Textualization," in *Mark and Matthew I - Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings* (ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 385-386.

CHAPTER TWO – FACTORS BEHIND THE GOSPEL

Introduction

This chapter will consider two factors that lie behind the Gospel of Matthew. First to be addressed is the general Midrashic technique of exegesis and then the specific technique of Pesher Midrash is considered. Second, the theme of fulfillment of prophecy and how Matthew might have understood the term "fulfilled" are explored. These influences speak to the possible scholarly formation of the gospel's author, the cultural world view implicit in the hermeneutical methods used, and the specific exegetical techniques that may have been used in writing this Gospel. This chapter will provide the background necessary for understanding how Matthew interpreted the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. This will show how he used the exegetical methods common in his day and culture to embed in the new text the thematic heritage of the old.

Midrashic Exegesis

The word Midrash means to "search" or "study." Jacob Neusner defines the basic meaning of Midrash as "biblical exegesis by ancient Judaic authorities," i.e. Midrash as a process of scriptural interpretation. But the term also refers to the product of the process, i.e. a Midrash, and to a compilation of interpretations, i.e. a book of Midrash.

Modern scholarship views Midrash as commentary on particular Hebrew texts, which

serve much the same purpose as the modern commentaries of today. The need for such commentaries lay in the nature of text as an object of study. Boyarin describes Hebrew texts as having gaps and as being dialogical documents. In another sense, as argued by Boyarin, Midrash can also be understood as a reading of Hebrew texts through a contemporary cultural and theological lens, that is to say, a synchronic reading.[33]

The gaps Boyarin refers to are ones of understanding. There are always gaps of understanding in a written document as authors contend with the task of trying to present their ideas. These gaps may arise from the ignorance of the author, misunderstanding of the audience, or perhaps distance in time and culture between the author and the reader. Hebrew texts are dialogical in that one part can inform the understanding of another part. Furthermore, how we understand a particular Hebrew text can change over time with both the old and the new perspectives remaining valid at the same time, hence one can inform the reception of the other. This process does not require a canonical integrity for a particular collection of literature, nor the perception of this collection as a cohesive whole. Rather a simple awareness within the community of its cultural heritage would be sufficient for the dialogical interplay between the old and the new to occur.

The creative impulse behind a particular Midrash springs forth from the Hebrew text itself and from the cultural perspective of the author. This is Boyarin's concept of intertextuality which was introduced in the previous chapter. The Midrashic authors engaged with a Hebrew text from their own perspective and this in turn yielded commentary that addressed the texts from the perspective of the authors' cultural milieu of which their beliefs formed a part. Thus the Midrash is an effort to fill in the gaps of a Hebrew text, while also engaging in a dialogue with that text, from a contemporary perspective. Boyarin is careful to note that this dialogue does not simply reflect the culture from which it springs, but also the

[33] Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 14-15.

willingness of that culture to engage in dialogue in the first instance.[34]

One of the underlying principles of later written Midrash as a process identified by Reuven Hammer addressed the authors themselves: "The Sages are authoritative interpreters of the text, therefore their interpretation is contained within the revelation at Sinai."[35] According to Hammer, the Midrash of the Sages were viewed as revelation because they were understood to have been part of the range of meaning possible for the original work.[36] This is "oral" Torah as distinct from the "written" Torah of the Hebrew Bible. Oral Torah was present within the text and by its nature the potential for oral Torah was virtually unending, open to successive generations to develop. While Hammer does not say so, we can assume that it was the training these interpreters received and their demonstrated competence that allowed others to view them and their work as authoritative. Presumably this applied to the earlier authors of oral Midrash as well.

Neusner identified three basic types of Midrash derived from three different expressions of Judaism.[37] First, there was parable which included all allegorical interpretations of Hebrew text. This was largely, though not exclusively, the product of those who embraced both the written and oral Torah, i.e. Pharisaic and Rabbinic Judaism. The exegete understood a Hebrew text in terms that were different from those of the original author, thus eliciting a deeper, or perhaps hidden, meaning.

Second, there was paraphrase, which was the work of those who translated the Hebrew texts from Hebrew into Aramaic. The translators were free to change the meaning of the text through word selection and by adding in new material without giving any indication that they had done so.

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[34] Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 17.
[35] Reuven Hammer, *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible* (CWS; New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 26-29.
[36] Hammer, *The Classic Midrash*, 19; see also Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 23.
[37] Jacob Neusner, *What is Midrash?* (ed. Dan O. Via; GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), xi and 8; so also Hammer, *The Classic Midrash*, 14-15; cf. Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 26-27 where he argues for two types of Midrash, paradigmatic, and syntagmatic.

Last, Neusner argues that there was prophecy as is found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of Matthew.[38] Here an exegete associated Hebrew text with events in the contemporary world and endeavoured to explain the latter in light of the former. The prophetic Midrash could contain up to three elements: a narrative; a subscription that establishes the narrative as the fulfillment of the third element; and a prophetic passage. In both parable and prophecy, the line between text and interpretation was clearly indicated.[39] Hammer allows that in some cases exegetes sought to make a polemical or theological point, but usually they were responding to some question, or perhaps to some organic problem, arising from the text itself.[40]

A brief comment should be made concerning the historiographical perspective that underpinned prophetic Midrash. By the late Second Temple period, if not earlier, Hebrew scholars viewed history in a linear fashion.[41] History was composed of single events all of which were important to some degree, and these events formed a pattern as history unfolded. Many of the prophetic writings consist of persons writing and interpreting the history of their times and not actually predicting anything *per se* beyond describing where the pattern of events seemed to be flowing. Jacob Neusner named this "future history."

Prophetic Midrash thus represented an attempt to interpret current events based on their similarity to other events that occurred earlier in the pattern of the history of the Hebrew people as represented in the writings of the prophets. One of the gaps in understanding addressed by the Midrash may have been how the present constitutes fulfillment of the future history represented in the prophecy.[42] If in fact Matthew has employed the exegetical device

[38] Cf. Hammer, *The Classic Midrash*, 15 and 35. Hammer does not agree with Neusner's classification of Matthew's work, nor the Targums for that matter, as Midrash, since he believes the earliest written Midrashic works were probably edited in the third century C.E., though the oral practice had been common since the time of Ezra (4 B.C.E.). He also does not limit oral Midrash to the Dead Sea Scrolls.
[39] Neusner, *What is Midrash*, 7-8; cf. Hammer, *The Classic Midrash*, 42.
[40] Hammer, *The Classic Midrash*, 41.
[41] Jacob Neusner, *In the Aftermath of Catastrophe: Founding Judaism 70 to 640* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 2009), 29.
[42] Neusner, *In the Aftermath of Catastrophe*, 29.

of the prophetic Midrash, as argued by Neusner, this would be a strong support for the argument that will be developed in Chapters Four and Five that Matthew is speaking to an audience the majority of whom are Jewish. He is telling them that something new has happened and does it in a way that will resonate with their beliefs.

In understanding this form of Midrash it is important to recognize the original context of the passage being studied in order to establish a basis of comparison for the new context provided by the Evangelist. It is therefore important to understand where the passage came from, what its distinguishing features were, what purpose it served, and what point it sought to make.[43] In making this comparison, it is important to note both the similarities and the differences that exist between the prophetic passage and the Midrash. The similarities, those elements that attracted the exegete to the particular passage in the first place, address that person's perspective. The differences, if there are any, could represent a change of context or the re-signifying of the Old Testament passage. It is in the change of context that the degree of creative interpretation the author brings to his use of Midrash, and the novelty of the ways in which he sees prophecies fulfilled is found.

Matthew's use of Mic 5:2 provides a brief example of his use of Midrash as a technique of exegesis. This verse appears in Matt 2:6 and it presents a prophecy about the coming of a leader for all of Israel who would be from the town of Bethlehem. Israel is used here in a corporate sense to represent the people. In the wider context of the passage, Micah portrays the people as leaderless, despite having a king on the throne, and beset by foreign enemies. God promises that Israel, and daughter Zion in particular, will be provided a leader and that she will vanquish her enemies, though at a cost as only a remnant would survive the ordeal. Matthew's context has this prophecy repeated to King Herod, the Idumean client king of the Romans, by the chief priests and scribes following the arrival in Jerusalem of the Magi

[43] Neusner, *What is Midrash*, 15.

from the east. The Magi were seeking the newborn King of the Jews, and it was this quest that caused Herod and the people of Jerusalem great concern.

In each instance, a sitting king is found to be inadequate, the people are beset by foreign threats, and a leader is promised. The differences lay in the reactions of the people of Jerusalem and the King. Micah does not give any indication as to how they responded to the promise of a leader, whereas Matthew indicates they were troubled by the advent of the leader's arrival. Herod's reaction seems understandable, as might be that of the people as well, since they faced the prospect of war and slaughter. But by associating Herod and the people in this way Matthew also links them to Herod's response, which was to murder all the suspect children. In this way Matthew presents both the king and the people in the same poor light, thus re-signifying the tradition by filling in some of the gaps, but without altering the context in this case.[44] He also makes the christological point of identifying Jesus with the promised Shepherd who is "from the days of eternity" and "will be great to the ends of the earth (Mic 5:2-4)."

Neusner indicates that one organizing principle for compilations of Midrashim, as distinct from what we find amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls or later rabbinic compilations, is that of the biography, or gospel. As Neusner states:

> The biography of the person under discussion serves as the architectonic principle of the compilation of exegeses into a single statement of meaning. This way of linking exegeses - creating a large-scale collection, as in the earliest rabbinic compilations - shows us another way than the one taken at Qumran, on the one hand, and among the late fourth- and fifth-century compilers of rabbinic collections of exegeses, on the other. What holds the compilation together is the gospel of Jesus Christ; that forms the centerpiece and the principle of cogency. No rabbinic composition in antiquity presents the life of an individual person as the principle of editorial cogency, whether of scriptural exegeses or legal teachings, and the uniqueness of Christianity in its Judaic context is seen in these simple compositions of a highly formalized character in Matthew's Gospel.[45]

[44] Cf. Paul Foster, "The Use of Zechariah in Matthew's Gospel," in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence* (ed. Christopher Tuckett; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 81. Foster characterizes Matthew's use of Zechariah as "haphazard".
[45] Neusner, *What is Midrash*, 38.

Perhaps the uniqueness Neusner refers to is part of the reason why Hammer does not acknowledge Matthew's work as Midrashic. The life of Jesus provides a framework, or a broader context, within which related Midrashim can be brought together and particular Midrash can be understood. Matthew thus presents his audience with a bold and original example of midrashic exegesis.

Michael Knowles, in commenting on Matthew's use of Jeremiah, has argued that the person of Jesus becomes the hermeneutical key to understanding various Old Testament passages for the evangelist.[46] I would nuance that position by saying that the Old Testament passages carry forward their original context, but the followers of Christ understand them as fulfilled in a conclusive way within Jesus' ministry and that this may involve a change of context of the Old Testament passages by Matthew. In other words, while Old Testament passages can certainly be understood in a new way when read through the lens of Jesus' ministry, those passages and the traditions they carry forward also helped Matthew's audience to understand who Jesus was by bringing forward a depth of meaning that would have been absent otherwise.

So in a sense, the Gospel of Matthew is Midrash to the degree that it represents a compilation of prophetic Midrashim related to Jesus that were developed by Matthew. Matthew, possibly a person trained in the study of Hebrew texts and the composition of Midrash, may have taken apostolic recollections of the ministry of Jesus that had served as the didactic foundation of the mission to the Jews, and used them as the basis of an innovative Midrashic interpretation of that ministry in light of the beliefs and traditions of his community.[47]

[46] Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 44.
[47] Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 621-622.

Pesher Exegesis

Pesher is a genre of Midrash associated with the Essene community at Qumran.[48] The name Pesher has been assigned to this genre because of the frequent appearance of the word within the examples found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Hebrew word Pesher has the sense of "realization" or "interpretation" in English.[49] The term Pesher can refer to the genre of commentary, or a particular example of that genre, or the specifically interpretive section within the commentary. The term Pesharim is used to describe a collection of Pesher and some have been dated to a very early point in the history of the community at Qumran (ca. second century B.C.E.).[50]

Pesharim can also appear in other works outside the genre and these are called "isolated Pesharim." Isolated Pesharim identified thus far appear in only two documents of the Qumran community: the Cairo Damascus Document (CD); and the Community Rule (1QS). In both cases these Pesharim are of prophetic texts and address aspects of the community's history and its beliefs.

Pesher was not the only exegetical method employed within the community, but it was significant. Devorah Dimant attributes this to its historical-eschatological quality and the unique way it reflects the "doctrine and attitudes of the Qumran community." Pesharim are considered to be divinely inspired having been revealed directly to the Teacher of Righteousness, a leader of the community. The community believed that future (i.e., eschatological) prophecies were revealed to the authors of scriptural texts who did not necessarily (or fully) understand them given that these authors were so far removed from the Last Day. The true or ultimate meanings of these texts were subsequently revealed to the Teacher who lived nearer to the time prophesied. Dimant cautions that this does not

[48] Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 193.
[49] Devorah Dimant, "Qumran Pesharim," *ABD* 5: 248.
[50] Dimant, "Qumran Pesharim," 5: 245.

necessarily mean that one person wrote all the Pesharim extant. This conviction allowed the Pesher exegetes to be quite bold in their interpretations of the text.[51]

There are three distinctive characteristics of Pesher. First is their purpose. All Pesher vindicate in some fashion the Teacher of Righteousness and the community while at the same time promoting perseverance, hope and faith. Second, all Pesher deal with eschatological subject matter. Last, all Pesher employ a three-part structure. In the first part, the subject of a citation is equated with a contemporary person or event. In the second part, additional points of detail from the citation are related to the contemporary situation in order to strengthen the identification posited in the first part. In the third part, the interpreter presents the meaning of the citation using one of six exegetical techniques all of which are also used in Midrashim. Briefly stated, these techniques are: 1) mirroring the syntactic/lexical form of the citation; 2) use of synonyms for words in the citation; 3) puns based on the citation; 4) atomizing; 5) alteration of words; and, 6) introducing other citations that share one or more words or terms with the principle citation. The exegesis is usually, though not always, introduced by the word Pesher.[52]

Krister Stendahl believes that the fulfillment citations are examples of Pesharim given the formula device employed by Matthew in that formulaic expressions are often used to introduce Pesharim and the deviations of the citations from the Old Testament text. This would explain why it is so difficult to identify what recension of the Old Testament Matthew relied upon in making his citations. As Stendahl points out, the task of identification is impossible given the freedom Matthew enjoyed in changing the text to suit his own purposes.[53]

Geza Vermes agreed with Stendahl in general terms. He believed that the Qumran

[51] Dimant, "Qumran Pesharim," 5: 241-244, 248; see also Anthony J. Tomasino, *Judaism Before Jesus: The Events and Ideas That Shaped The New Testament World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 37; and Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 190 and 194.
[52] Dimant, "Qumran Pesharim," 5:249-250; cf. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 191-192.
[53] Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 195-196 and 200-201; cf. Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 304.

community and that of the early followers of Jesus had similar aims in that they wished to convince their audiences that the prophets were speaking about their respective communities and beliefs. He states that "[t]he fulfillment interpretation or [P]esher is as familiar in the Gospels and Acts as at Qumran."[54]

James Patrick has also argued that Matthew made use of Pesher in his Gospel, and cites the author's use of material from the Book of Isaiah as example. He believes that Matthew has created ten Pesharim organized around the eschatological theme of fulfillment of the prophets. He states that these Pesharim exhibit two characteristics. First, the passage from which the citation is drawn will support the entire Pesher unit as he calls it. I understand him to be referring here to the Old Testament context of the cited passage. Second, other supporting citations may be introduced that are related by specific words or ideas, and Matthew may also use a variety of literary devices in his interpretation of the citation. These might include "numerological or rhetorical patterns." Patrick also speculates that Matthew's use of Pesher exegesis may have been the basis for the comment of the Elder John recorded by Papias, and quoted by Eusebius.[55] In that comment the Elder states that Matthew "...compiled the message in the Hebrew way of speaking..." (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 102, Brister).

F.P. Viljoen does not accept that Matthew's fulfillment citations can be correctly described as Pesher. He points to the significance of the key introductory words, "interpretation" and "fulfillment." The former seeks to understand a passage of Hebrew text in light of current events, while the latter attempts to illuminate an event through the use of an Old Testament passage. These are two fundamentally different perspectives. He goes on to argue that perhaps Matthew was influenced by Aramaic Targums, which commonly used

[54] Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (revised Edition; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1994), 213-214.
[55] Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 37.

paraphrase and interpolation to illuminate the meaning of quotations.[56] I think that Matthew's use of the citations is not exactly like that of the isolated Pesharim of the Damascus Document or the Community Rule as they differ in structure and interpretive devices. But it is reasonable to assert that Matthew was probably aware of this form of exegesis and that he could very well have been influenced by it, or perhaps adapted it to his needs.

Matthew derives from his exegesis of the citations found at Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 the interpretation that has led to their characterization as "fulfilled." A brief examination of what he may have meant by this term is necessary at this juncture.

"Fulfillment" Defined

A Matthean fulfillment citation has three characteristic features.[57] The most obvious one is Matthew's consistent use of the word *πληρωθῇ* (it might be fulfilled) in the formulaic clause introducing this kind of citation. The second feature is the linking of the citation to the actions of Jesus or someone acting in concert with him. In other words Jesus has done something, or is about to do something, which the author believes has been foretold by a prophet of God imperfectly or perhaps only partially. Last, the fulfillment citations exhibit varying degrees of mixed textual forms based on Hebrew texts and LXX. The concreteness of the term "citation" notwithstanding, it is not always absolutely certain what text from which manuscript has been cited.

It is important to distinguish between three types of text: a quotation as a verbatim transfer of text; a citation that is a direct reference to one or more passages that may also include some text as well; and an allusion which is a more or less indirect reference to one or

[56] Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 304-305 and 311.
[57] Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 47.

more passages. The difference between a citation and an allusion can be difficult to determine in some instances. However, this is not the case for quotations. While all quotations are citations, not all citations will be quotations. Thus the challenge becomes one of identifying the referent of the citation.

Once the referent is identified, it may not be immediately clear how the text cited is fulfilled by Gospel events. The doctrine of proving theological propositions based on their fulfillment was a technique commonly used by both the Apostolic Fathers and the Patristic writers. The technique was accepted up until the Reformation when it was displaced by a shift towards literalism in interpreting Hebrew texts. In a post-modern world, arguing fulfillment is a difficult task where empiricism often appears to trump the idea that a transcendent reality guides the temporal world.[58] The task is made harder still by a lack of clarity in scholarly discussions concerning fulfillment.[59] Thus it becomes more difficult for the modern exegete to grasp the full import of what Matthew was communicating to his original audience. This difficulty arises from the related challenge of appreciating the cultural and historical nuances of the Evangelist's work and the traditions he drew upon as we become removed in time from his situation just as Boyarin has suggested. This emphasizes the importance of trying to understand the *Sitz im Leben* of the text. So what does Matthew mean when he says something is fulfilled?

Apodaca argues that claiming that something is fulfilled is more of a myth-building device than a theological one. Matthew is declaring his community to be in continuity with their past and that they still fall within the ambit of Second Temple Judaism. He believes Matthew is invoking the names of particular prophets as a way of garnering legitimacy for his ideas. The specific content of the citations serve solely to advance certain christological

[58] Ruth M. Ames, *The Fulfillment of the Hebrew texts: Abraham, Moses, and Piers* (Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 5; see also Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 303.
[59] James M. Hamilton Jr., "'The Virgin Will Conceive': Typological Fulfillment in Matthew 1:18-23," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 231.

claims, and the original Old Testament context is not seen as being relevant at all.[60]

While I acknowledge the sociological dimension of the fulfillment citations, Apodaca seems to be giving insufficient weight to the substance of the citations themselves and given the fulfillment formula used to introduce each one, the relevance of the original context to understanding what Matthew is actually saying. I think Matthew is doing much more than simply re-signifying traditions. He is engaged in a truly creative process in writing his Gospel. His use of the fulfillment formula asserts the culmination of the history of Israel through the person of Jesus, and the key to understanding this connection lay in the Old Testament context of the citations. In other words, the original context is important, although it is subordinate to that of the final event.

Michael Knowles argues that the life of Jesus is the hermeneutical key to understanding the Old Testament references.[61] This requires us to believe that the Old Testament references are not used to illuminate the Gospel and serve no real apologetic purpose at all. In fact, Knowles asserts the exact opposite, the Gospel illuminates the Old Testament. But Matthew is not using the Old Testament simply as a mirror for the Christ event. He is using it to plumb the depths of the Christ event in order to achieve a fuller understanding of that event. So it is necessary to look beyond Matthew's Gospel to understand what he means by fulfilled.

James Hamilton suggests that we need to understand Matthew as saying the citations are fulfilled in a typological way rather than in a predictive sense.[62] But there is a broad range of meaning to the term 'typological.' Hamilton argues that none of the fulfillment citations are actually predictive in their original form in the sense that the speaker is looking

[60] Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 22-23 and 24.
[61] Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel*, 44.
[62] Hamilton, "The Virgin Will Conceive," in Gurtner and Nolland, *Built Upon the Rock*, 230-233; cf. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. 2 of *Old Testament Theology;* trans. Oliver and Boyd Ltd.; Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1965; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 329. Von Rad states that the Old Testament as a whole was understood as a typological prediction of Christ.

to the distant future and foretelling events. The prophet is interpreting what are current events from his perspective and it is this interpretation that is appropriated by a later audience. This implies that the hermeneutical key lay in the original context and meaning of the citations themselves. This position addresses the fact that the citations are not based on explicit predictions. Matthew's use of a different introductory formula for citations that are explicitly predictive supports the contention that he saw the fulfillment citations as being realized in a different way rather than in their particular details.

Elizabeth Achtemeier has a fairly broad understanding of typology as a simple "...correspondence between traditions concerning divinely appointed persons, events, and institutions, within the framework of salvation history."[63] This form of typology, which tends to employ allegory, focuses on what appear to be recurring patterns.

Gerhard von Rad, Aidan Nichols and John Alsup each argue that typology was an interpretive tool used by the Old Testament prophets themselves in addressing the history of Israel.[64] This form of typology, which tends to use analogy, focused on patterns that suggested some kind of ultimate future. Alsup argues that this use of typology is evident in the work of the Essene community at Qumran and that of the Apostle Paul. James Hamilton's understanding of typology is close to this, but with some important nuances that will be explored shortly.

Alsup believes that to understand how early Christian writers understood typology the use of the word *typos* and its cognates in the Greek New Testament must be considered. These appear in the New Testament and in most of these instances it is not used in a technical sense given the context so it does not speak to any sort of method *per se*.[65] In four instances

[63] Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Typology," *IDBSup*, 926.
[64] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 106; Aidan Nichols, *Lovely, Like Jerusalem: The Fulfillment of the Old Testament in Christ and the Church* (San Francisco, Ca.: Ignatius Press, 2007), 167; and John E. Alsup, "Typology," *ABD* 6: 684.
[65] John 20:25; Acts 7:43, 44; 23:25; Rom 5:14; 6:17; 1 Cor 10:6, 11; 1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:9; Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 1:16; 4:12; 2 Tim 1:13; Titus 2:7; Heb 8:5; 9:24; and 1 Pet 3:21; 5:3. Alsup, "Typology," 6:682-684.

it is used in a technical sense where it indicates a pattern, context, or general direction of divine action.[66] In other words, there is a limited amount of evidence of typology being used as an interpretive tool by the authors of the New Testament during the apostolic period.

Two different schools adapting and advocating the separate approaches to the use of typology outlined above appeared by the second and third centuries. One, the Antiochene school, employed typology in support of a literal interpretation of Hebrew texts, while the other, the Alexandrian school, used it in support of an allegorical approach to Hebrew texts.[67] The Alexandrian school grew in popularity during the Patristic period.[68] These tendencies were seen in Jewish exegesis in these centres in the first century.

Richard Longenecker has the allegorical understanding of typology in view when he discusses the christology of the apostolic period.[69] Von Rad, however, makes a distinction between the Gospels and other books in the New Testament in their use of typology. Some of the Pauline usage of typology seems to him to be allegorical, while the Gospels are seen as analogical. Indeed, von Rad is quite clear in asserting the importance of understanding the historical context of particular Old Testament citations, which is not necessary for an allegorical application of typology.[70] This agrees with what is known of Midrash as well because allegory is not a characteristic of prophetic Midrash.

In making his argument, Hamilton acknowledges that some Old Testament passages can have more than one meaning and that there can be multiple orders of fulfillment for a given text. In saying that something is fulfilled typologically, he is saying that an outcome called for in an Old Testament text, an ultimate future, has been realized analogically through the life of Jesus quite apart from the expectations of the Old Testament speaker or his

[66] 1 Cor 10:6; Rom 5:14; Acts 7:44; and Heb 8:5. Alsup, "Typology," VI:682-684.
[67] Alsup, "Typology," 6:682-684.
[68] E.A. Livingstone, ed., "Allegory," *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church (*2nd. Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15-16; and Alsup, "Typology," 6:684.
[69] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1970), 36.
[70] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 330, 365-366 and 371.

audience. This is different from *sensus plenoir* where the manner of prophetic fulfillment is anticipated by the author of the Old Testament passage, though perhaps not the degree or magnitude, in succeeding generations.[71]

Walter Houston essentially agrees with Hamilton when he argues that it is not so much the subjective intent of the Old Testament author that makes the assertion of fulfillment possible, as the openness of the text itself to previously unimagined referents. New referents can be put forward so long as there is correspondence between their contemporary circumstances and that of the Old Testament passage.[72] This then creates latitude for understanding fulfillment in a typological sense analogically, i.e. the arrival of Jesus as the advent of that ultimate future. Hamilton states,

> ... typological fulfillment in the life of Jesus refers to the fullest expression of a significant pattern of events. Thus, typological interpretation sees in biblical narratives a divinely intended pattern of events. Events that take place at later points in salvation history correspond to these and intensify their significance.[73]

He goes on to say that typological fulfillment is characterized by a historical correspondence between the situation described by Matthew in the Gospel and that found in the Old Testament text referred to by the citation. The caveat that correspondence does not mean the contexts are identical should be added to this. Also, there is a degree of escalation between the two texts in that an element of the Old Testament context is present in the Gospel to a greater degree.[74] The citation is fulfilled in the sense that Jesus has taken the pattern of events described in the Old Testament to a new and higher level with an outcome that cannot be surpassed.[75]

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[71] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lv-lvi.
[72] Walter J. Houston, "'Today in Your Very Hearing': Some Comments on the Christological Use of the Old Testament," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 38 and 40.
[73] Hamilton Jr., "The Virgin Will Conceive," 233.
[74] Hamilton Jr., "The Virgin Will Conceive," 240-241; see also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 329.
[75] See also Houston, "Today in Your Very Hearing," 43.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the background necessary for understanding how Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. The discussion addressed two points. First, it considered two related exegetical techniques, Midrash and Pesher, which were in use during the first century C.E. by Hebrew scholars. In this section Neusner's three part formula for understanding prophetic Midrash was presented, which consists of: a narrative; a subscription that establishes the narrative as the fulfillment of the third element; and, a prophetic passage. This structure will be used in the analysis of the fulfillment citations addressed in Chapter Four. This will help to establish whether or not the use of the citations can be properly understood as prophetic Midrash, and to better understand what the author was attempting to convey through their use. The discussion of Pesher exegesis suggested that it was an unlikely candidate for the principal exegetical tool used by the author of this Gospel, though he was probably familiar with it and possibly influenced by it as a result.

The second point addressed what the author may have understood the term "fulfilled" to have meant. It was argued that a literal typology based in an historical context was the most promising hermeneutic. This was supported by historic usage within the prophetic literature of the Second Temple period and by its resonance with Midrash, which also eschewed allegory. This conclusion will be tested in Chapter Four.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the fulfillment citations this study will briefly consider the Old Testament background of several scriptural themes that are present in the fulfillment citations or in the material in the Gospel associated with the citations. This will complete the foundation supporting the argument of the thesis.

CHAPTER THREE – BIBLICAL THEMES IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Introduction

In this chapter the appearance of three general themes in the Old Testament are traced that arise from the Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 which will be examined in the next chapter. These themes speak to Matthew's understanding of Jesus as the messiah and the heir of David. Matthew's understanding of these themes underpins his christology and is unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

These themes were selected because of their contribution to analyzing Matthew's picture of Jesus. The first theme addressed is that of 'messiah,' as seen through the sub-theme of 'son of God' (Matt 1:18-23). Matthew's use of this theme speaks to the identity of Jesus. The second theme considered is that of the 'sovereignty of God,' which is examined through the associated sub-theme of 'shoots of God's planting' (Matt 2:19-23). Matthew's use of this theme speaks to the identity of the community to which Jesus, Matthew, and his audience may have belonged. Finally, the 'universalist' theme of 'light to the nations' (Matt 4:12-17) is considered. Matthew uses this theme to describe an important belief of the community for whom the Gospel was written. This discussion is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of these themes, but one that is sufficient to give a sense of the richness of meaning which Matthew may have intended to access and develop through the use of the fulfillment citations. The overview of these themes advances my argument by describing the background of the traditions that Matthew is drawing upon in making his citations of the Old Testament material, which contributes to his christology when it is placed in the context of

the person of Jesus.

Arguably the presence of the themes of 'messiah,' 'sovereignty of God' and 'universalism' in the citations Matthew uses is the principle reason he uses them. Other themes that are touched upon by the fulfillment citations that will be in the next chapter are those of kingship, righteousness, messiah as Regent, messiah as representing a corporate Israel, the new covenant, and the renewal of creation. These themes are not addressed in this study for reasons of length and because their contributions to Matthew's christology in the citations to be examined are secondary in nature.

Messiah – Son of God

There is a wide variety in the messianic hopes conveyed through the Hebrew texts available to us. There is also coherence within the tradition, one strand of which was the popular conception of the 'messiah' as a descendant of David sitting on an earthly throne as the vice-regent of God ruling the nations with wisdom and justice.[76] This view was rooted in the interpretation of such biblical passages as Gen 49:10, Num 24:17 and Isa 11:4, as well as, in the hopes of Jeremiah (Jer 33:14-22) and Ezekiel (Ezek 37:24-27) for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty.[77] The departure of Zerubbabel, an heir of David, made this restoration a remote possibility for the post-exilic community as there were no other likely candidates in view. A restored monarchy thus became the providence of God. The anointed heir to the throne, while he could be seen in many guises, was thought of as a humble and peaceful

[76] Peter F. Ellis, "Jeremiah," *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, 340; and William Horbury, "Jewish Messianism and Early Christology," in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament* (ed. Richard Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 10 and 15-16.
[77] George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1981), 14-15; and Horbury, "Jewish Messianism," in Longenecker, *Contours of Christology*, 14.

person. To say otherwise would have attracted the attention of the Persian overlords.[78]

The messianic theme of the 'son of God' is suggested by the circumstances of Jesus' conception (Matt 1:18, 20), though the title itself does not appear in connection with Matt 1:18-25.[79] While the title phrase 'son of God' occurs forty three times in the New Testament the phrase itself does not appear at all in the Old Testament.[80]

The familial relationship that the title speaks to, however, does come up in the Old Testament. A reference to Israel in a corporate sense as the 'son of God' appears at Exod 4:22, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.'"" We find a similar understanding of God as the father of his people at Deut 32:6, "Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you." The Prophet Hosea is a bit more direct at Hos 1:11, "Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, 'You are not My people,' It will be said to them, '*You are* the sons of the living God.'" These passages suggest the authority of the father and the obedience of the son.

The Prophet Jeremiah shows us that it was common practice to refer to God as 'father' in prayer at Jer 3:4, "Have you not just now called to Me, 'My Father, You are the friend of my youth?'" And again at Jer 3:19, "Then I said, 'How I would set you among My sons And give you a pleasant land, The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!' And I said, 'You shall call Me, My Father, And not turn away from following Me.'" At Jer 31:9 the Lord declares, "…For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn." These passages evoke images of the son as an heir to the father and place them in a personal context.

[78] Carol Meyers and Eric Meyers, *Zechariah* (AB 25C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1993), 171; see also Horbury, "Jewish Messianism," in Longenecker, *Contours of Christology*, 16.
[79] Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," *Int* 46 (4 1992): 393.
[80] Seven times in Matthew; three times in Mark; six times in Luke; nine times in John; twice in Acts; fifteen times in various epistles; and once in Revelation.

The relationship Son to Father takes on a royal connotation at Ps 89:26-27 where the Lord is speaking of his servant David and having anointed him, "He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.' I also shall make him *My* firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth." This passage clearly speaks of the kingship of the son as does Ps 2:7, "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" A more definite connection is also present at 2 Sam 7:14 where God pledges to David concerning his heir, "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me…" This passage, sometimes referred to as the promise tradition, gives rise to the expectation that an heir to the throne from the House of David will arise as messiah to reign forever over his kingdom (2 Sam 7:12-16).[81] This understanding is reinforced by Isa 9:7, "There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore…" And again at Isa 11:1-12 as well as in various Essene documents found at Qumran (1QSb, 4Q285, 11Q14).[82] We see here a blending of the corporate and personal emphasis seen earlier, giving rise to one where the king assumes the role of the son as a representative of his people.

The explicit use of the phrase 'son of David' with its implicit royal connection occurs nine times in the Old Testament. In eight instances it is used to establish a genealogical relationship between David and one of his many sons, usually Solomon. In one instance, Ecc 1:1, it is used in a titular sense to establish a relationship between the subject and David. The phrase also occurs in the New Testament sixteen times (ten times in Matthew; three times in Mark; three times in Luke). Its first appearance in Matthew occurs at Matt 1:1, the introduction to the genealogy. Its second appearance is at Matt 1:20 where Joseph is identified by the angel of the Lord as a descendant of David, so Jesus is also a 'son of David.'

[81] Jouette M. Bassler, "A Man for All Seasons: David in Rabbinic and New Testament Literature," *Int* 40 (2 1986): 158 and 163.
[82] Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 12.

In the balance of instances Matthew uses it as a title in place of Jesus' name four times (Matt 9:27; 20:30; 21:9; 21:15), and in a genealogical sense four times (Matt 12:23; 15:22; 20:31; 22:42). Mark and Luke have a similar balanced approach to how they use the expression. When Matthew uses the expression in a titular sense he connects Jesus with the thematic strands of obedience, being an heir of God, and kingship.

In considering the familial theme elicited by the 'son of God' motif we have seen that it was common to view God in a familial sense as the father of His people and that the word 'son' could be understood in one of three ways according to context. It could refer to the people as in 'sons of Israel', it could have a corporate meaning as in 'my son Israel', or it could refer to a person as in 'my son David.' Where the expression refers to a person, it could be implying a metaphorical adoption,[83] or it could be referring to the king's relationship with God as representative of that of his people. In this last sense the thematic strands of obedience, heir to the father, and kingship were prominent. The expression 'son of David' seems to carry more weight as it is consistently used to connect individuals with David and the 'promise tradition' hence the messianic significance that came to be attached to the title during the Second Temple period. Matthew's use of the titular expression in connection with the thematic strands described serves to emphasize Jesus' messianic credentials.

[83] See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; The Biblical Resource Series; Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1958; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 51-52; and Frederick W. Knobloch, "Adoption," *ABD* 1:76-77 and 79. Roland de Vaux defines adoption as the acknowledgement of the legal rights and duties of a child not of one's own blood. While there is ample evidence of this practice in the ancient near east, there is no mention of regulations governing it in the Torah or in later Jewish law. There are numerous biblical references that appear to present the rite of adoption, but these are not clear examples as they tend to be concerned with relationships within the family unit or blood line, hence do not fit with the working definition provided above. However, as Knobloch notes, this was common in the ancient near east. Amongst these examples are those of surrogate mothers. In some cases the primary wife rejects the children of the slave as in the case of Sarai and Hagar (Gen 16:2) and in others she embraced them ritually as in the case of Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah (Gen 49:1-28) thus implying adoption if only in a spiritual sense rather than a legal one. Other cases deal with the adoption of foreigners or adoptions on foreign soil so they are not clear indicators of Jewish practices or beliefs in this regard. There are also numerous references that touch upon adoption metaphorically in the context of relationships with God, but only Ps 2:7 seems to be an explicit act of adoption.

Sovereignty of God

The sub-theme related to the sovereignty of the Lord to be examined is that of the 'shoot of My planting' brought forth by the reference to "Nazarene" at Matt 2:23. The expression 'shoot of My planting' is drawn from Isa 60:21. The Hebrew text reads נצר מטעו.[84] As a verb נצר means 'to guard' or 'to possess' and it occurs eleven times in this form. As a noun נצר means 'shoot' or 'sprout' and occurs just once in the Old Testament in this form (Isa 60:21). The LXX renders the same phrase as *τὸ φύτευμα ἔργα χειρῶν* or 'the branch work of the hands.'[85] This noun occurs in the nominative eight times in the Old Testament and can usually be translated as 'plant' or 'tree.' The accusative form of the noun occurs just three times and can best be rendered as 'plant' (Isa 17:10) or as 'branch' (Isa 60:21) or as 'planting' (Isa 61:3). The parallel Hebrew text for Isa 61:3 has מטע, which means 'place' or 'the act of planting.' Thus there is a correlation with the Hebrew text use of 'shoot' and 'planting' and the LXX use of 'branch' and 'planting.'

An early example of the prophetic use of the metaphor of planting appears at Amos 9:15, "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land that I have given them, says the LORD your God." The metaphor is extended to include the branch as a symbol of the people at Isa 4:2, "In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *will be* the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel."

The meaning of the branch becomes more specific and it is linked to the term shoot at Isa 11:1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit." At Isa 53:2 we find the prophet using the metaphor of the shoot in describing the Servant in terms that evoke a sense of vulnerability, "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground…" His use of branch broadens again at

[84] BHLen (WTT).
[85] LXT (1935).

Isa 60:21 to include those who turn away from transgressions and it is linked to righteousness, "Then all your people *will be* righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified." The link between plantings and righteousness is repeated and strengthened at Isa 61:3 where the faithful are described as "…oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

The link is extended to include kingship as well by the prophet Jeremiah at Jer 23:5, "'Behold, *the* days are coming', declares the LORD, 'When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.'" And again at Jer 33:15 when the Lord states, "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth." The prophet Zechariah also uses the image of the branch in relating his vision of Joshua, a priest, receiving a message from an angel of the Lord at Zech 3:8, "Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you--indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch." It is not clear from the immediate context who the Servant is, however, at Zech 6:11-12 we discover that the Servant is in fact Joshua, "Take silver and gold, make an *ornate* crown and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD.'" Amongst the Essenes of Qumran the 'Branch of David' becomes shorthand for the Messiah, who is also referred to in some documents as the Prince of the Congregation (4QFlor 1 i.11; 4Q252 v.3-4).[86] This title might reflect what some believe to be the Essene expectation of two persons acting in concert

[86] Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 13.

as the Messiah, one as the Davidic heir, the other as a priest.[87]

It can be seen from the foregoing examples that some Jewish prophets referred to the faithful using the terms 'branch', 'planting', or 'shoots'. While 'shoots' and 'plantings' came to be associated with the community, 'branch' became more closely identified with the messiah.

Universalism

The Universalist theme of the 'light of the nations' will now be considered. Matt 4:12-16 cites a passage from Isaiah that speaks of a light (Isa 9:1-2). The word used in the Hebrew text is אור the basic meaning of which is 'light' but it has a range of nuanced meanings from types of lighting, such as 'morning light' or 'moonlight', to a source of spiritual enlightenment. The context of Isa 9:1-2 suggests that the use of the word "light" conveys a sense of spiritual enlightenment or instruction.[88] The parallel word used in the LXX is *φῶς* and it has the same sense in translation as the Hebrew parallel.[89] The Lord's instruction is directed towards nations besides Israel at Isa 34:1, "Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it." The Prophet builds upon this meaning at Isa 42:6-7 where God declares,

> I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

Here Isaiah brings together the ideas of 'righteousness' and 'covenant' with that of 'light' in the sense of instruction, and places them in a universal context in the phrase 'light to the nations.'

[87] Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 14; see also Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, 109.
[88] F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, "אור," *BDB*, 21.
[89] W. Bauer, et al., "*φῶς*," *BDAG*, 1073.

The Hebrew word used here for nations is the plural noun גוים which means 'nations', or 'peoples', and it always refers to foreigners.[90] This word appears one hundred and thirty four times in the Old Testament. In the majority of cases it is simply a reference to more than one nation, or an assertion of the sovereignty of God over all the nations. In sixteen cases it is used in a 'universalist' context.

The Greek word used at Isa 42:6-7 is the plural noun *ἐθνῶν* which also means 'nations,' 'peoples' or 'gentiles.' In its singular form this word can refer to the Jewish people, but in the plural it always refers to foreigners.[91] This word appears two hundred and thirty three times in the Old Testament. The significantly greater number of instances in Greek is explained by the wider semantic range of the Greek word, or conversely, by the more nuanced meanings of the Hebrew word; in Hebrew a separate word, עמים is often used for 'peoples.'

The passage cited above is part of a larger unit that describes the mission of the Servant whom the Lord is sending out. The Servant is not being sent just to the faithful of Israel, but to those amongst all the nations of the world who are faithful to God, hence the 'universalist' quality of the passage.[92] We see this in Isa 42:1b where the Lord speaks of his justice, "I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations…" and again even more explicitly at Isa 49:6,

> It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

Similarly Isa 51:4 also speaks of the Lord's justice being brought to the nations, "Pay attention to Me, O My people, And give ear to Me, O My nation; For a law will go forth from Me, And I will set My justice for a light of the peoples." The Servant will also instruct the nations by his conduct, "Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on

[90] F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, "גוים," *BDB,* 156.
[91] W. Bauer, et al., "*ἐθνῶν*," *BDAG,* 276-277.
[92] Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 148.

account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand" (Isa 52:15).

The 'universalist' role is not restricted to the Servant. At Isa 60:3 the Prophet speaks of how the nations will be attracted by the faithfulness of God's people, "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising." And at Isa 60:5 he describes how the faithful will prosper as a result, "Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice; Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you." These faithful will be found amongst all the nations, "For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, And as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise To spring up before all the nations" (Isa 61:11).

Other prophets also employ the 'universalist' theme. The Prophet Micah speaks about the nations seeking out the Lord and receiving instruction,

> Many nations will come and say, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths.' For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Mic 4:2).

Jeremiah speaks of nations worshiping the Lord, "And you will swear, 'As the LORD lives,' In truth, in justice and in righteousness; Then the nations will bless themselves in Him, And in Him they will glory (Jer 4:2)." Zechariah speaks of the unifying influence the Lord will have over all peoples, "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you" (Zech 2:11).

In the Psalms the 'universalist' theme emerges in passages such as "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You (Psa 22:27)." The Lord's salvation is promised, "That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations (Psa 67:2)." The faithfulness of the

nations is called forth in several passages such as, "Let all nations call him blessed (Psa 72:17e)." And in "All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name (Psa 86:9)." And again, "Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples!" (Psa 117:1).

In considering the 'universalist' theme of the 'light to the nations' it has been argued that, in the context of the phrase, 'light' refers to spiritual enlightenment or instruction and 'nations' to the faithful amongst all the peoples of the world, not just the Hebrews. Furthermore, this thread runs through the writings of several of the prophets and the psalms, and speaks to the promise of salvation for all who acknowledge the Lord as sovereign.

Conclusion

In this chapter three general themes in the Old Testament were considered that were suggested by the fulfillment citations Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16. The themes addressed were: 'messianism' and its related sub-theme of the title 'son of God'; the 'sovereignty of God' and its associated sub-theme of 'shoots of God's planting'; and lastly, 'universalism' as witnessed by the phrase 'light to the nations.' These themes speak to Matthew's understanding of Jesus as the messiah and the heir of David. Matthew's understanding of these themes underpins his christology and is unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

In considering the messianic sub-theme of the 'son of God' it was shown that it was common to view God in a familial sense as the father of His people and that the word 'son' could be understood in one of three ways according to context: it could refer to the people as in 'sons of Israel'; it could have a corporate meaning as in 'my son Israel'; or it could refer to a person as in 'my son David' in which case either a metaphorical adoption was implied or

this was simply a specific expression of the more general understanding of all the faithful being sons of God. The expression 'son of David' seems to have carried more weight. It was consistently used to connect individuals with David and the 'promise tradition' hence the messianic significance that came to be attached to the title during the Second Temple period.

The discussion of the sub-theme of the 'Shoots of God's Planting' showed that it was common in some circles for the faithful to be referred to as 'branch', 'planting', or 'shoots' within the prophetic literature considered. While 'shoots' and 'plantings' seemed to be associated with the people, 'branch' was more closely identified with the messiah.

Lastly, in considering the 'universalist' theme of the 'light to the nations', it was established that 'light' referred to spiritual enlightenment or instruction and 'nations' to the faithful amongst all the peoples of the world.

This completes the presentation of the material that serves as the foundation of the argument for the thesis of this study. The next chapter will examine the three citations considered by this study in light of the conclusions of this and the previous chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR – ANALYSIS OF THREE FULFILLMENT CITATIONS

Introduction

This paper argues that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. This chapter will examine each of these citations and show how Matthew used the exegetical methods common in his day and culture to embed the thematic heritage of the Old Testament in his new text. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

The analysis of each fulfillment citation begins with the delimiting and translation of the pericope from the Gospel text and the consideration of any significant variants.[93] This is followed by consideration of the most likely Old Testament referent as it appears in both the Hebrew text and the LXX in order to establish the most likely source used by Matthew. Neusner's method of Midrashic analysis is then used to identify the context, features, purpose and point of the Old Testament passage. The Matthean pericope will then be analyzed in a similar fashion. This analysis of the Hebrew text, Old Testament and New Testament passages serves as the basis for an understanding of how Matthew saw the citation as being fulfilled in Jesus.

[93] These passages have been selected because they allow one to see the major elements of Matthew's christology as it is conveyed through the fulfillment citations.

The Origin of Jesus - Matt 1:18-25

Delimiting the Pericope

The first fulfillment citation to be addressed concerns the origin of Jesus. The passage is delimited by four factors. First, the change of subject matter differentiates v. 17 from 18 where v. 17 recounts the genealogy of Jesus and v. 18 discusses his origin. Second, there is the use of a full noun phrase to introduce Jesus as the subject of the following passage even though he was also the subject of the preceding passage.[94] Third, there is the introduction of major characters to the story, in this case his parents Mary and Joseph. Finally, the account of the origin of Jesus is brought to an end with the naming of the new born child in v. 25. This literary structure also conforms to the three-part structure proposed by Neusner for prophetic Midrash. The narrative portions are vv. 18-21 and 24-25, the subscription appears in v. 22 and the citation in v. 23. The pericope is thus delimited as vv. 18-25 and my translation is as follows:

> [18]Now this was the origin of Jesus Christ. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. [19]Joseph her husband, because he was righteous and did not wish her to be disgraced, was determined to release her secretly. [20]But while he pondered this – behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to receive Mary as your wife, for in her the one begotten from the Spirit is holy. [21]She will give birth to a son, and you shall name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." [22]And all this had happened so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, [23]"Behold, the virgin will be with child and she will give birth to a son, and they will call him the name Emmanuel," which is to be interpreted 'God with us.' [24]And after Joseph awoke from the sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and he took to himself his wife, [25]but he did not come to know her until she bore a son, and he called his name Jesus (NA[27], Brister).

One variant of note affects v. 18 and involves the replacement of *γένεσις* (birth, origin, existence, genealogy) with *γεννητὸς* (one born, human being).[95] The former appears six times in the Old Testament and New Testament. In three cases (Wis 3:12; 12:10; 18:12) it

[94] Stephen Levinsohn, "Participant Reference in Koine Greek Narrative," in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis* (eds. David Allan Black, Katharine Barnwell and Stephen Levinsohn; Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 41.
[95] W. Bauer, et al., "*γένεσις*," *BDAG*, 192-193; and "*γεννητὸς*," *BDAG*, 194.

appears to mean "existence," and in two cases (Ezek 16:3, 4) "birth." In one case, Matt 1:18, it can be taken as "birth" or "origin." The latter term (*γεννητὸς*) appears five times in the Old Testament, all of which are in the Book of Job (11:2, 12; 14:1; 15:4; 25:4) where it seems to mean "birth." The occasions of *γεννητὸς* in Job appear to be a specialized use referring to birth whereas in Matthew it relates to origins. Furthermore, the sense of origins agrees with Codex Vaticanus (B03) dated to the fourth century. This text has been found to be very closely related to $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, dated to around 200 C.E., which means these manuscripts probably had a common ancestor dated to the second century if not earlier.[96]

Donald Hagner translates *γένεσις* as "birth," but notes that Matthew speaks of the "record of origin" of Jesus in Matt 1:1.[97] Jack Kingsbury argues that it is important to understand *γένεσις* to mean "origin." How one understands this term shapes the reception of the text as a whole. If it is translated as "birth," then one ends up with a passage that does not actually speak of the birth beyond affirming that it happened, and a citation that does not add anything to the text.[98] With this interpretation the entire passage becomes one-dimensional as the focus narrows to one particular event in Jesus' life and much of the material in the pericope becomes extraneous to describing the birth. On the other hand, if the term is translated more broadly as "origin," then the text begins to establish the context and the relationships that illuminate the identity and role of Jesus. This in fact fits well with the preceding genealogy and the content of the citation used by Matthew.

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[96] Tommy Wasserman, "The Implications of Textual Criticism for Understanding the 'Original Text'," in *Mark and Matthew I - Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings* (ed. Eve-Marie Becker and Anders Runesson; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 79.
[97] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 17-21.
[98] Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Birth Narrative of Matthew," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study* (ed. David E. Aune; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 156; see also Krister Stendahl, "Quis et Unde? An Analysis of Matthew 1-2," in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (Graham Stanton ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 61; and Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 392.

Analysis of the Old Testament Referent

Scholars agree that the most likely referent of the citation in v. 23 is Isa 7:14. The portions of Isa 7:14 cited by Matthew agree almost word for word with the text of the LXX^{A}, ^{B} and ^{S}. The sole variation lay in Matthew's use of *καλέσουσιν*, "they will call," which appears in 25 to 50% of the known minuscule, in place of *καλέσεις*, "you will call," which appears in the major codices. The Masoretic Text can be translated as follows, "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign – behold, a pregnant young woman, and she will bear a son, and she will call his name 'God with us.'"

There are two significant differences between translations based on the LXX and the Masoretic Text. One important difference lay in how these texts each present the bringing forth of the child. The Masoretic Text uses וילדת, the Qal participle of "to beget." This would have been best rendered by *γεννάω* had Matthew relied upon the Masoretic Text, but he used *τίκτω*, "to give birth," as does the LXX.

Another significant difference lay in the description of the child's mother. The Masoretic Text refers to her as עלמה, a young woman who is sexually mature, possibly a virgin, possibly newly married.[99] But both the LXX and Matthew use *παρθένος*, "a young woman of marriageable age with or without focus on virginity" whilst the related lexical entry for *παρθενία* notes that the word describes the "state of being a virgin."[100] So while the mother's virginity might be inferred from the Masoretic Text, this interpretation seems unlikely since there are no unusual circumstances associated with the conception of the child *per se*. On the other hand, such an inference appears to be strongly implied in the LXX. It therefore seems likely that Matthew relied upon the LXX for the text of Isa 7:14, rather than a Hebrew text.[101] He also seems to have had copies of Isaiah, or access to copies, which have

[99] F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, "עלמה," *BDB*, 761; see also John J. Collins, "Isaiah," *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, 422.
[100] W. Bauer et al., "*παρθένος*/*παρθενία*," *BDAG*, 777.
[101] So also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 116; and Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 21; cf. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 40.

come down to modern scholars as the major codices and minuscules.

The setting for Isa 7:14 is Jerusalem during the Syro-Ephraimite War ca. 734 B.C.E.[102] Aram and Israel have devastated the region surrounding Jerusalem, but have failed to storm the city and depose young King Ahaz.[103] Isaiah is sent by the Lord, accompanied by his son Shear-jashub, whose name means "a remnant shall return,"[104] to deliver a message of reassurance to Ahaz: If he is faithful to the Lord, he and his kingdom will be delivered from their enemies. Isaiah encounters Ahaz while he is inspecting the city's water supply and delivers the message and urges Ahaz to ask for a sign of the Lord's fidelity. Ahaz says that he refuses to put the Lord to the test, but Isaiah sees through his duplicity. Ahaz has already sought the aid of the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III and entered into a foreign alliance wherein he will submit to the Assyrian rather than trust in the deliverance of the Lord (2 Kgs 16:7-9). Isaiah then delivers to Ahaz the prophecy found at Isa 7:14-25.[105]

This prophecy will come to pass by the time the child of a young woman, who is pregnant at the time the prophecy is proclaimed, is able to distinguish good from evil. The prophecy itself is rather vague.[106] Who is the woman? What is the role of the child? Is this a prophecy of salvation or of judgement?

As a prophecy of salvation it can be understood to mean that a male child will be born soon and that the child will be a sign of God's fidelity to the faithful as symbolized by his name, Emmanuel. This fidelity will be demonstrated by the destruction of Israel and Syria by the Assyrians before the time when the child knows right from wrong. The presence of Shear-jashub may mean that only a remnant of the northern kingdom will eventually return to

[102] Henri Cazelles, "Syro-Ephraimite War," *ABD* 6:284.
[103] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1 – 39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 229-231.
[104] F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, "*Shear-jashub*," *BDB*, 984b.
[105] Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 231.
[106] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 66; so also Collins, "Isaiah," 422; cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1 – 39*, 232-234.

their homeland.[107]

However, it seems more likely that this is a prophecy of judgement because of Ahaz' infidelity. In this case, the prophecy of the Lord reveals that not only will all who oppose Assyria be destroyed, i.e., Aram and Israel, but that this fate will also befall Judah as well if the sign is not taken to heart. The symbolism of the male child remains the same, and that of Shear-jashub applies to both kingdoms. Isaiah goes on to prophesy about the growing threat from Assyria which "will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel (Isa 8:8)." And the infidelity of the people of Jerusalem, "…many shall stumble thereon; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken (Isa 8:15)." These prophecies seem to arise out of the rejection of the message delivered to Ahaz.[108] In vv. 8:16-17 Isaiah commands that the prophecy be sealed until a time set by the Lord. This is rooted in Ahaz's lack of faithfulness and the growing separation of himself and those like him from God and the people who do remain faithful.[109]

The text of Isa 7:1-25 exhibits several important features: The distant threat represented by the relationship with Assyria, the faithless king on the throne of Judah and his people who tremble in fear, Isaiah himself as the messenger of God, Shear-Jashub representing the faithful remnant, the pregnant young woman, the child as a sign that God continues to be present despite the calamities that descend upon Judah.

The overall purpose of the prophecy indicates that God acts within and through creation and is sovereign over history. God works out his plan for his people through the efforts of mediators – such as the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III, the young woman, and the child and he acts within history rather than by direct action from outside of it. Not

[107] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 231-232.
[108] Childs, *Isaiah*, 76; see also Collins, "Isaiah," 422.
[109] Childs, *Isaiah*, 67.

surprisingly the prophecy came to be understood in a messianic context.[110] Matthew adopted this perspective of God acting within history through actors as he presented his Gospel. The point of the prophecy was to recognize that God was always present, no matter how desperate the circumstances appeared to be, as illustrated by the name of the child - Emmanuel. In this instance, the coming hardships were God's retribution for the lack of faith of the people, i.e. King Ahaz and his foreign entanglements, and the child represents the promise of salvation for those who do remain faithful.[111]

Analysis of the Matthean Pericope[112]

The verses of this passage will be examined according to the three part structure proposed by Neusner for prophetic Midrash as set out at the beginning of this section, vv. 18-21 and 24-25 (narrative), v. 22 (subscription), and v. 23 (citation). The first unit opens with an emphatic statement introducing the account of the origin of Jesus. The balance of the verse explains Mary's situation. She is betrothed to Joseph which, according to cultural mores (Exod 22:16; Deut 22:13-21),[113] suggests that she is a virgin and must remain so until being formally married to her husband. She is also pregnant through a miracle, i.e., the intervention of the Holy Spirit. This would have been understood to mean the spiritual-creative power of God, which is a Jewish understanding, rather than an overt physical-sexual

[110] Childs, *Isaiah*, 67-69; cf. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, 195.
[111] Childs, *Isaiah*, 68; see also Victor H. Matthews, *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 91.
[112] There is nothing similar to this story in the Gospel of Mark. Luke, however, does treat of the origin of Jesus. In his account (Luke 1:26-38) there is no genealogy connecting Joseph to David, rather, this relationship is simply stated as fact - the genealogy appears after Jesus' baptism. Also, there is no explicit reference to the Old Testament, nor is there any effort to interpret the meaning of names; absent are the Jewish Messiah and his salvific role. Instead, Luke has the messenger angel deliver all the necessary information without explanations. He speaks of Jesus as a king; he is the son of God; he will reign forever; and, his kingdom will have no end. The unusual circumstances surrounding Jesus' conception are retained, but without the Semitic context for the supernatural explanation that accounts for them. The result is that Luke's version lacks that sense of continuity with the past evident in Matthew's account, Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 22-23.
[113] See also Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 30 concerning the expectation of virginity.

act as a pagan would likely have received it.[114] This passage identifies Jesus as the son of God.[115]

In v. 19 Joseph, being a righteous man, decides to divorce Mary. His righteousness is expressed in two significant ways. He seeks to uphold the law by not ignoring the presumed adultery of Mary, but will fulfill the law in a compassionate manner by proceeding in secret.[116] Joseph's resolve is overturned in v. 20 by the appearance of an angel who addresses him as "son of David" and who confirms all that Mary has likely already told him. This passage reiterates Jesus' identity as the son of God.[117] The passage also underlines the link through Joseph to his Davidic lineage.[118] The link with David was first established in the genealogy at vv. 1 and 6-16. It is reiterated here to emphasize the importance of Joseph to connecting Jesus to the Davidic line. This is the only passage in the New Testament where the title is applied to anyone other than Jesus.[119] Indeed, establishing the Davidic credentials of Jesus is probably the reason for focusing attention on Joseph in an account of Jesus' origin.[120] In the Old Testament the roles of 'son of God' and 'son of David' are linked together several times, most explicitly at 2 Samuel 7:8-17.[121]

In v. 21 Joseph receives instructions concerning the naming of the child and the angel interprets what the name means. This reflects the Jewish belief that names described the

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[114] Cf. Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 23; see also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 120; and Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 17.
[115] Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 393; cf. John Nolland, "No Son of God Christology in Matthew 1:18-25," *JSNT* 62 (1996): 5-8.
[116] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 119; and Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 18; with the ancient witnesses found in Anonymous, "Joseph's Inward Musing," *ACCS* Ia:15; and John Chrysostom, "The Self-Restraint of Joseph," *ACCS* Ia:14-15.
[117] Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 393.
[118] As discussed above (fn. 80) Jewish adoption ordinances are not addressed in any legal texts and while there is some biblical support for the idea that children of surrogate mothers were adopted by their fathers there is nothing addressing the analogous situation of the surrogate father. Presumably Joseph performed what appears to be the rite of adoption (Gen 48:12; 50:23), thus making the adoption of Jesus himself a new and innovative act. See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 51.
[119] Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 392.
[120] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 18-19; see also Stendahl, "Quis et Unde," in Stanton, *The Interpretation*, 61; and, Bassler, "A Man for All Seasons," 163.
[121] 2 Sam 7:14; Pss. 2:7; 89:26-27; 1 Chr 17:12-13. Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 393; see also Nolland, "No Son of God," 11-12.

individual in some profound way,[122] and the rabbinic belief that the messiah had been named before creation (Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 54a).[123]

The name "Jesus" means "Yahweh is salvation" though Matthew does not state this, possibly because it was a fairly common name.[124] Hagner asserts that Matthew's omission of explaining Jesus' name suggests the degree to which the Greek elements of the early church had absorbed this Hebrew etymology.[125] But, it seems more likely that it indicates Matthew was writing for a Hellenized Jewish audience. However, Matthew does interpret the meaning of the name by stating that the child "...will save his people from their sins", which defines what sort of salvation Jesus represents.

Hagner argues that Matthew's readers would have understood "people" in terms of the members of the early followers of Jesus, Jew and Gentile, rather than the people of Israel, which seems reasonable.[126] This interpretation of Jesus' name highlights a nuance of the meaning of the name – Yahweh will save his people through a human agent. Perhaps highlighting this nuance was more important to Matthew than simply repeating information that may have been well known to his audience already.[127]

Luz believes that this verse is the second time that Matthew has asserted Jesus' identity as the Messiah, v. 16 being the first.[128] It is in fact the third time given Matthew's anarthrous Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ of v. 18. This last assertion of Jesus' identity as Messiah speaks to the understanding of the Messiah as an agent of salvation from sin as opposed to one of national liberation from foreign oppressors. This rejects the possible political understanding of the role of the Messiah.

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[122] Gen 4:1; 25:26; 27:36; 29:31-30:24; 35:18; 38:29; Exod 2:22; 1 Sam 4:21; Isa 7:3; 8:3; Hos 1:4,6,9;12:4. See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 43.
[123] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 19.
[124] F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, "Jesus," *BDB*, 221b and 447a.
[125] See also Stendahl, "Quis et Unde?" in Stanton, *The Interpretation*, 61.
[126] David R. Bauer, "The Kingship of Jesus in the Matthean Infancy Narrative: A Literary Analysis," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 310.
[127] Cf. Nolland, "No Son of God," 8-10.
[128] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 121.

In v. 22 Matthew introduces the citation which he indicates will be fulfilled by the happenings he has just described. This is done through the use of a formula which appears in the subscription of all the agreed-upon fulfilment citations, but he does not name the prophet he cites in this instance. The formula used by Matthew will be considered later in this section.

In v. 23 he presents the citation which is based upon Isa 7:14 as discussed above. The Davidic connection is thereby reinforced through the use of this passage which speaks of the birth of a Davidic heir.[129] Matthew includes here the observation that the name Emmanuel means "God with us" which is noteworthy because this meaning would have been apparent to a predominantly Jewish audience, but would have to be explained to a Gentile one. What do these conflicting signals mean? Luz points out that the emphasis on all aspects of the preceding narrative brought about by the adjective *ὅλον*, "all," used in the introductory formula indicates that the three elements of the prophecy - the virgin, the child, and Emmanuel - are all important to the announcement and that their christological meaning becomes apparent as the Gospel unfolds.[130] This interpretation is reasonable, but in a more immediate sense, Matthew seems to be drawing on all elements within the prophecy and interpreting them in a messianic context, so he emphasizes the interpretation of Jesus' name and the meaning of Emmanuel because of their messianic overtones. Klassen-Wiebe argues that Matthew presents the significance of Jesus' birth through his discussion of these names.[131] It is the implications of this discussion that are unpacked by the Gospel.[132]

Joseph's obedient response to the angel with his public acceptance of Mary as his

[129] Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 63.
[130] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 121; Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," 65; and Morna Hooker, "Beginning with Moses and from All the Prophets," in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge* (ed. Martinus C. De Boer; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 216; cf. Hagner, who does not see a conflict here, believes this is an effort to establish a connection to Matt 28:20 "I am with you always, to the close of the age", Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 21; Kingsbury also does not see a conflict here and draws attention to the pronoun preceding Emmanuel to note that this becomes a confessional statement by believers, Kingsbury, "The Birth," in Aune, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 162.
[131] Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 394.
[132] Cf. Klassen-Wiebe, "Matthew 1:18-25," 394-395.

wife is presented at vv. 24-25. This unusual union would likely have been more acceptable in light of the genealogy that precedes this pericope where the irregular unions of the House of David and God's advancement of their line were given prominence.[133] Matthew then asserts the necessary detail that the couple did not have sexual relations preceding the birth of Jesus in order to forestall any questioning of Jesus' divine origin.[134] This passage indicates how the divine plan will be realized through Joseph's naming the child Jesus.[135]

The textual elements that Neusner suggests should be evident in Midrash will now be briefly considered. These elements are the distinguishing features of the text, the purpose served by the pericope, and the point made by the author.

There are several distinguishing features within Matthew's account. In terms of a general setting it is known that the events related in the text occurred in Judah during the last years of Herod's reign (ca. 4 B.C.E.), a client king of the Romans.[136]

As far as the Matthean passage itself is concerned, first there is Mary, the pregnant young woman who is later described as a virgin. Next is the reference to Joseph, and his characterization as a righteous man. Then we have the angel of the Lord who reiterates the supernatural nature of the child's conception and gives instructions to Joseph. We also have the meaningful juxtaposition and interpretation of the names. Lastly, we have the assurance that Joseph followed the angel's instructions in every respect, and even refrained from having sexual relations with his wife, which served to ensure the fulfillment of the prophecy exactly as it was related to him by the angel.

The purpose served by the passage appears to be threefold. First, it establishes Jesus as an heir of David. Second, it accounts for the unusual circumstances related to his birth.

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[133] Bassler, "A Man for All Seasons," 165.
[134] Cf. Dale C. Allison Jr., "Divorce, Celibacy and Joseph: Matthew 1:18-25 and 19:1-12," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 9-10.
[135] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 21; see also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 122; cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 114 and 118.
[136] David C. Braund, "Herodian Dynasty," *ABD* 3:174.

Third, it identifies Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, the passage is meant to establish that Jesus is the instrument whereby God's promises to the faithful will be realized.[137]

The point made by the passage speaks to the role Jesus will fulfill. In other words, the supernatural aspect of his birth combined with the association of the names "Jesus" and "Emmanuel" announce that this child is the anointed one of God. He will act as the agent of God's salvation, while also serving as a sign of God's constant presence and fidelity to his people.[138]

These textual elements compare well with those identified in the discussion of Isa 7:14 above, which are presented together in Table 4.1. As the table shows there are several features common to both texts, sufficiently so that it can be said that Matthew respects the original context of Isaiah and builds upon it by adding details that broaden the understanding of that context. [139]

It is in the similarities between the two texts that one can see why Matthew was attracted to Isa 7:14 – God intervenes in history through the birth of a child for the benefit of the faithful. We see in the differences between the two texts the creativity Matthew brings to his task through his bold enhancements of the original context by adding in the information concerning the manner of Jesus' conception, and the details concerning Joseph his adoptive father. Matthew builds upon the purpose of the original text and the point it makes, which leads to an enhanced understanding of both past and current events through his skillful midrashic comparison. His treatment of the citation suggests a Pesher influence in that he uses a current event, the birth of Jesus, to illuminate the past, Isaiah's prophecy. Furthermore, he uses the past, the context of Isaiah's prophecy, to comment on the situation in Judea. Matthew has provided the reader with a sophisticated interpretation of Hebrew text

[137] Rodger, "The Infancy Stories," 62.
[138] Cf. Rodger, "The Infancy Stories," 68, for an interesting complimentary interpretation of the point of the passage.
[139] Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 16; and Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 115.

that can be described as Midrash and he appears to also be familiar with the Pesher method as well. These factors suggest that Matthew had received some formal training in exegesis.

Element	Matt 1:18-25	Isa 7:1-25
Distinguishing Features	Romans eventually assumed direct rule of Judah.	Distant threat to Judah represented by the relationship with Assyria.
	Herod is an Idumean client king of the Romans.	Faithless king on the throne of Judah; people who tremble in fear.
	There is the angel of the Lord	Isaiah as the messenger of God.
	Supernatural nature of the child's conception.	Child as a sign of God.
	Juxtaposition and interpretation of the names of Jesus, the instrument of God's salvation, and Emanuel, the sign of his presence.	Shear-jashub representing the faithful remnant. Emanuel, God continues to be present despite the calamities that descend upon Judah.
	Mary, the pregnant young woman who is later described as a virgin.	Pregnant young woman.
	Reference to Joseph, son of David and heir to the throne, and his characterization as a righteous man.	- no parallel
	Assurance that Joseph followed the angel's instructions in every respect, and even refrained from having sexual relations with his wife, which ensured the fulfillment of the prophecy exactly as it was related to him by the angel.	- no parallel
Purpose	To establish that Jesus is the instrument whereby God's promises to the faithful will be realized.	Indicate that God acts within and through history for the salvation of his people.
Point	Passage speaks to the role Jesus will fulfill. He will act as the agent of God's salvation, while also serving as a sign of God's constant presence and fidelity.	Recognizes that God is always present as illustrated by the name of the child - Emmanuel. The child represents the promise of salvation for those who remain faithful.

Table 4.1

In terms of style, it seems likely that this pericope was authored by Matthew rather than redacted from other sources. Some scholars have noted what they believe to be Matthean expressions and distinct vocabulary, while discounting the possibility that there was

a collection of infancy stories from which to draw.[140] They also note that there are parallels between this account and the various extra-biblical strands of tradition related to the birth of Moses (the father is righteous; receives instructions in a dream; reconciles with his wife; prediction made that Moses will save Israel), but it is difficult to say if Matthew had such traditions in view when he wrote. Certainly the element of the virgin birth has no parallel in Hebrew literature, though it was not alien to Hellenistic thinking.[141] There is much, however, about supernatural births and "prenatal annunciations" in Hebrew literature.[142] It is reasonable to suggest that at this stage of the Gospel the points of contact between the infancy narratives of Jesus and Moses simply reflect a common Hebrew background, and possibly an allusion to be further developed as the story progresses.

There are three grammatical constructions of interest in this pericope. The first is the genitive absolute participle occurring in v. 20, *ενθυμηθέντος*, 'while he was thinking.' In this instance, it introduces the 'angel of the Lord.' In later passages it will mark the appearance of the Magi (Matt 2:1) and the 'angel of the Lord' again (Matt 2:13, 19). This construction is serving as a discourse marker signalling the start of a new pericope, or subsection of a pericope, and the arrival on scene of a new person or thing. Matthew uses this construction for this purpose approximately forty two times throughout his Gospel.[143]

The second occurs in v. 21 and involves the imperatival use of a future indicative verb, *καλέσεις*. This form and usage is common to the Old Testament and in Matthew, though not in the balance of the New Testament.[144] It reflects the literary influence of Hebrew texts on the author of this Gospel and supports the contention that he was a well-

[140] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 117; see also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 14-15; and cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 102, 104 and 105; and Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (New Edition; 1999; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 82.
[141] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 117-118.
[142] Gen 16:11; 21:2; 25:21; 30:6, 17; Judg 13:3-14; 1 En 106:1-107:3. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 84.
[143] William Varner, "A Discourse Analysis of Matthew's Nativity Narrative," *TynBul* 58 (2 2007): 214-217.
[144] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 569.

educated student of Hebrew texts. Similarly, the birth announcement of v. 20 reflects an Old Testament schema (Gen 16:7-12; 17:19; Judg 13:3-5; and Isa 7:14), which also suggests that Matthew was comfortable working with Hebrew texts and that he was a trained exegete.[145]

The third construction is the subscription found in v. 22, *ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*, "by the Lord through the prophet." The phrase indicates both the ultimate and the intermediate agency for the prophecy cited in the next verse, which reveals the relationship between God and prophet. This is done in a formulaic way which is used fairly consistently in presenting the fulfillment citations.[146] Use of such a device is also characteristic of Hebrew texts, particularly the Book of Chronicles.[147]

The structure of the formula becomes apparent through comparison of the three relevant passages. In Matt 1:22 one finds *ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*, "that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Next, there is Matt 2:23 - *ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι*, "so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophets," and finally Matt 4:14 - *ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου*, "that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet."

In the first subscription God's role as the ultimate agent is identified explicitly as is the prophet as the intermediate agent. In subsequent passages God as ultimate agent is implied while reference to the prophet as intermediate agent remains explicit; the latter issue implies the former. Each passage also clearly establishes that its object has been prophesied, and that this event is now fulfilled, given the context of the citation in the Gospel, by something Jesus has done. Matthew is being quite precise in his introduction of these citations and his assertion that they are fulfilled in some way.

Another interesting variation to the formula Matthew uses for the subscription lay in

[145] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 116; see also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 16.
[146] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 434.
[147] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 49-50.

the attribution of the texts. In the majority text Matt 4:14 is attributed to Isaiah, but Matt 1:22 and 2:23 are not attributed to a particular prophet.[148] Matt 2:23 cannot be attributed as there is no prophetic passage similar to that which is cited. This issue is addressed more fully later in this chapter. But what of Matt 1:22, which is attributable to Isaiah? Capshaw argues that Matthew's decision not to attribute the citation and instead use a definite reference, i.e. *τοῦ προφήτου*, signals that his audience already knew the referent without it being made explicit.[149]

It is also germane to consider why some citations are presented as fulfillment citations and others are not. Luz offers two possible explanations.[150] First, Matthew presents fulfillment citations as he does simply because the Old Testament context allows for it. But this does not account for Matt 2:19-23 where the quotation cited is invented by Matthew. The second explanation Luz offers suggests that those citations that are programmatic for the entire Gospel, as opposed to relevant just for the immediate context, are presented as fulfillment citations. They serve an over-arching theological purpose in that Matthew is establishing his christology, an important aspect of which is Christ as the fulfilment of God's promises made in the Old Testament.[151] This sounds reasonable and certainly would apply to the three citations considered here.

Hagner points out another interesting aspect of the fulfillment citations in contrast to the more numerous non-fulfilment citations Matthew shares with Mark. He argues that the fulfillment citations are of a mixed text form that reflect both the LXX and the Masoretic Text, while those Matthew shares with Mark are uniformly Septuagintal. So while Mark is only familiar with the Hebrew text, Matthew seems to be particularly comfortable in working

[148] The *Syrus Sinaiticus* ms. ascribes the citation found at Matt 2:15 to the prophet Hosea by including his name in the subscription.
[149] Capshaw, *A Textlinguistic Analysis*, 73-74.
[150] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 162.
[151] Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lv-lvi; and Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 104; see also Varner, "A Discourse Analysis of Matthew's Nativity Narrative," 225.

with that source.[152]

Viljoen proposed another possible explanation when he suggests that Matthew felt it was necessary to defend the beliefs of his community as they relate to the life of Jesus by presenting them in terms of the fulfillment of the Hebrew text.[153] It seems reasonable to say then the citations that are structured as fulfillment citations in the Gospel are Matthean in origin, address key elements of Jesus' story, and are christological in their content.

We can now consider in what way Matthew might have meant that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. The essential elements of Isaiah's prophecy are that Ahaz' policy will lead to the destruction of the kingdom and most of the people as the Lord punishes them for their faithlessness, but a faithful remnant will survive. There are also many similarities between the two contexts as has already been noted.[154]

There are, however, also several elements of escalation from the Isaiah account to that of Matthew in that an element of the Old Testament context is present in the Gospel to a greater degree.[155] Arguably the Romans who had already marched through Judea and installed their client king whilst defeating all other regional powers were a greater threat to the national existence than Assyria had been. Not only was Herod faithless, he also was not a son of Israel, rather he was an Idumean. Not only was the Judea of this period inundated with Gentiles as foretold by Isaiah, but many Jews had been deported from the Promised Land since the prophecy was made.

While the Davidic king had been part of the problem when the prophecy was made, now Jesus as the heir of David was perceived as a source of messianic hope and a means to salvation. Instead of a human prophet there is an angel of the Lord. Instead of the witness of one man representing the faithful remnant, there is Matthew's audience witnessing the

[152] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lvi; see also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 103; and cf. Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 52; and Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 310-311.
[153] Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 308.
[154] Hamilton Jr., "The Virgin Will Conceive," 240-241.
[155] Hamilton Jr., "The Virgin Will Conceive," 240-241; see also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 329.

unfolding of the story of the Gospel. The pregnant young woman conceives through the Holy Spirit and remains a virgin. The child is not just a symbol of God's faithfulness; he is the instrument of God's will. The symbolism of the child becomes secondary to the role he will play as the instrument of God's will, which is of primary importance. His birth is the actualization of God's will as He acts within creation through the child rather than by direct action from outside of creation.

In citing Isa 7:14 Matthew reminds his audience of the substance of the prophecy and of its fulfillment in history. The way in which he uses the prophecy and surrounds it with escalating details signals that it is now fulfilled in a new and greater way: Jesus, the heir of David, the Messiah, the son of God, will save his people, not from political threats to the nation, but from their own sins, while demonstrating that God remains with the faithful always.[156] So there is a somewhat open-ended prophecy from Isaiah related to a similar pattern of events in contemporary Judea with a degree of escalation, as a pattern identified in Hamilton's schema. Matthew reflects a literal understanding of the Isaiah account in the way he uses it in his text and builds upon it with new material. This fits well with the understanding of typological fulfillment in terms of historical patterns and as a midrashic interpretation of Isaiah.

The Return from Egypt - Matt 2:19-23

Delimiting the Pericope

The second fulfillment citation to be addressed deals with Joseph's decisions to return from Egypt and to settle in Nazareth. The pericope is defined by a shift in subject matter from v. 18 to v. 19 in that the death of Herod ends the imminent danger to Jesus' life. The

[156] Kingsbury, "The Birth," in Aune, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 164.

change of subject is emphasized by the introduction of the angel with a "behold" statement.[157] Here again there is a discourse marker in the form of a genitive absolute followed by the 'behold' statement to introduce the new unit.[158] The story of the return of the family concludes in v. 23 with details of where they establish their home and why. In terms of Neusner's three part structure for prophetic Midrash, there is the narrative portion at vv. 19-23a, the subscription appears in v. 23b, and the citation in v. 23c. The pericope is, therefore, defined as vv. 19-23. My translation is as follows:

> [19]And after Herod died – behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt, [20]saying: "After you awake, take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel - for they have died who seek the life of the child." [21]Then he awoke and took the child and his mother and he went into the land of Israel. [22]But when he heard that Archelaus ruled Judea in place of his father Herod, he feared to go there; then after he was instructed in a dream he withdrew into a part of Galilee, [23]and went and he lived in a town called Nazareth so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazorean. (NA[27], Brister)

There are no significant issues arising from the variants to the text.[159]

Before addressing the question of sources, a point of grammar needs to be considered. The conjunction *ὅτι* in v. 23 is translated as a recitative in many texts, as was done here and presents what follows, *Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται*, as a quotation.[160] But this word combination does not actually occur in the Old Testament so this is probably not a direct quotation. But if one accepts that a citation need not necessarily be a direct quotation (as argued earlier), then the conjunction can be translated as a declarative that transforms the direct assertion of fulfillment into the indirect assertion of what Jesus will be called, a Nazorean.[161] In this case, v. 23 would read, "...and went and he lived in a town called Nazareth so that it might be

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[157] Levinsohn, "Participant Reference," in Black, Barnwell, and Levinsohn, *Linguistics*, 32.
[158] Varner, "A Discourse Analysis of Matthew's Nativity Narrative," 217.
[159] *Ναζαρέτ* is a place name and it appears twelve times in the New Testament (Matt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; Mark 1:9; Luke 1:26; 2:4, 39, 51; 4:16; John 1:45, 46; Acts 10:38). While its form changes according to its case it is consistently translated as "Nazareth" in the NAU, NAB, NIV, NJB, NKJ, RSV, and the NRSV. There are also variants which present the word as *Ναζαρεθ* and *Ναζαρα*. Cf. with Matt 4:13 in the NA[27] and its entry in the apparatus.
[160] Cf. Maarten J.J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven: Leuven, 2004), 161.
[161] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 150.

fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophets that he will be called a Nazorean." This changes the character of the investigation of sources and passages from a search for suitable quotations to one of themes.[162]

Analysis of the Referent

In the New Testament Jesus is referred to as a *Ναζωραῖος*. Morphologically this is a group name, but it is frequently treated as a place name. Despite the morphological meaning of a group name, *Ναζωραῖος* is translated as a place name approximately 70% of the time. This was a common way of identifying people at the time.[163] However, this method of translation obscures the fact that the New Testament, and later rabbinic authors, seem to be referring to Jesus' membership in a particular group of people rather than his home town.

Ναζωραῖος appears thirteen times in the New Testament.[164] It usually appears in the construction *Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος* or *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου*. The two exceptions to this are Matt 2:23 where it appears as *Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται*, and Acts 24:5 which has *τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἱρέσεως*. Wallace argues that *κληθήσεται* functions as an equative verb here, but to what is *Ναζωραῖος* being equated? Most scholars would say Nazareth.[165]

Adrian Leske disagrees, arguing that such a word would more likely be *Ναζαρηνός* as is used in Mark (1:24; 10:47; 14:67; 16:6) and Luke (4:34; 24:19). Leske believes that *Ναζωραῖος*, like *Σαδδουκαῖοj* and *Φαρισαῖος*, probably indicates a group of people. The implication of this being that *Ναζωραῖος* is being equated with a group not otherwise

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[162] Cf. James A. Sanders, "Ναζωραῖος in Matthew 2:23," in *The Gospels and the Hebrew texts of Israel* (Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner eds.; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1994) 120; and Jerome, "Commentary on Matthew 1.2.23," *ACCS* Ia: 37.

[163] Ben Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in the New Testament* (Eugene: Cascade, 2009), 17.

[164] Matt 2:23; 26:71; Luke 18:37; John 18:5, 7; 19:19; Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 24:5; 26:9.

[165] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 210; Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 165; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 40; and Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 149; see also W. Bauer, et al., "*Ναζωραῖος*," *BDAG*, 664-665.

explicitly identified within the text.[166]

The NIV, NKJ, RSV and the NRSV translate all instances of *Ναζωραῖος* as "Nazareth" except for Matt 2:23 where they use "Nazarene" to refer to people from Nazareth, and Acts 24:5 where it refers to a group of people who are part of a sect.[167] The NAU and the NAB recognize that *Ναζωραῖος* refers to a group of people and translates most instances as "Nazorean." The exceptions are Luke 18:37 in both, and Matt 26:71 and Acts 26:9 in NAU, where they use "Nazareth" for reasons that are unclear. The NJB, however, translates all instances as "Nazarene," which can be understood to mean "one of the Nazoreans." Nazarene is the English translation of the Hebrew word used in some manuscripts of the *Birkat ha-minim* to refer to heretics to be banned from the synagogue as shown in the following passage:

> For the renegades let there be no hope, and may the arrogant kingdom soon be rooted out in our days, and the Nazarenes and the *minim* perish as in a moment and be blotted out from the book of life and with the righteous may they not be inscribed. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.[168]

In the preceding passage "and the Nazarenes" is translated from *w'ha-Netsrim*. This rabbinic passage was written during the later part of the first century C.E.[169] Therefore the names Nazorean, *Netsrim*, and *Ναζωραιῶι* are synonymous.

Jesus was referred to as a member of the *Netsrim* numerous times in rabbinic literature.[170] Unfortunately all these references are just as enigmatic as their Christian counterparts and do not help us in coming to terms with the etymology of the name Nazarene.

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[166] Adrian Leske, "Jesus as Nazoraios" in *Resourcing New Testament Studies: Literary, Historical, and Theological Essays in Honour of David L. Dungan* (eds. Allan J. McNicol, David B. Peabody & J. Samuel Subramanianm; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 70; see also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah,* 209; and cf. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 198-199. Cf. also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 149.

[167] Tertullus describes the Apostle Paul before Felix, the Roman Governor of Judea. "For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes."

[168] *Benediction 12* as cited in C.K. Barrett, ed., *The New Testament Background* (San Francisco, Ca.: Harper Collins, 1989), 210-211.

[169] Barrett, *The New Testament Background*, 210.

[170] Avodah Zarah 6a, 16b-17a(twice); Tanit 27b; Sota 47a; Sanhedrin 43a (four times), 107b (twice). See also R.A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period Until its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 16 and 95-97; and Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 114.

The use of this name predates that of 'Christian,' which originated outside of Judea amongst Gentile pagans to name the Gentile followers of Jesus. Presumably the use of 'Christian' overtook that of *Netsrim* when the Gentile influence overshadowed that of Judaism amongst the followers of Jesus.[171] This leaves us with a historical link between Jesus and a group known as the *Netsrim* that dates back to the earliest days of Jesus' ministry, and this appears to be the name used within Judea to refer to his earliest followers during the first century.

Of those scholars who accept that *Ναζωραῖος* refers to a group rather than a place, most believe the reference is to one of three groups.[172] One group is that of the *Nazirites*.[173] Their candidacy is based etymologically on the linking of *Ναζωραῖος* with *Nazir*, the Greek root for *Ναζιραῖος*, or *Nazirite*.[174] How the "i" is changed to a "*ω*" is uncertain. Luz argues that Matthew switched the vowels himself as an exegetical technique common in his day. This would establish a connection between *Nazirites* and the place name of Nazareth because Luz believes that *Ναζωραῖος* and *Ναζαρηνός* (a place name) are synonyms.[175] But Luz does not then go on to explain what purpose would be served by making such a connection. Furthermore, would this mean that Jesus was a *Nazirite*?

The scriptural basis of the *Nazirites* is Num 6:1-21 where it is established that they take a vow dedicating them to God. They are not to eat grapes or any product derived from them, such as wine. They must also refrain from cutting their hair, and avoid contact with dead bodies. Lam 4:7 uses the term to describe the spiritual purity of a person. Eventually *Nazir* becomes synonymous with being a holy person.[176] Isa 4:3 refers to those who will survive the Day of the Lord as "holy," though it does not use *Nazir*. In Judg 13:5, 7; and 16:17 *Ναζιραῖος* is used in the LXX^A to describe Samson whose origin parallels that of Jesus

[171] Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 11, 13, 14-15 and 95-97.
[172] Cf. Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 165.
[173] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 41; so Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 167 and 171-172.
[174] Cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 209.
[175] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 149.
[176] Cf. Sanders, "Nazoraios," in Evans and Stegner, *The Gospels*, 121.

in some respects as it is presented by Luke.[177] The argument then would be that Matthew connects Nazareth with the *Nazirites* as an oblique way of identifying Jesus as a holy man. His reliance on Isaiah and Judges makes the reference to "*των προφητων*" in the subscription problematic because he does not draw upon a second prophetic source in making his reference.

This line of argument is unconvincing for several reasons. First, Jesus does not observe any of the practical limits placed on the *Nazirite.* Second, there is no record of him taking a vow dedicating himself to God. Third, there is no record of him performing any of the rites required of the Nazirite (Num 6:13-21). Fourth, to imply that he is a *Nazirite* simply invites criticism of him as one who has betrayed vows taken before God, which would compromise the assertion of his obedience to God even to the point of his own death during the passion.[178] Fifth, describing him as holy in a way associated with *Nazirites* leads to the same problem.

The Patristic author Chromatius attempts to deal with this problem by recognizing that Christ, in his divinity, is the source of all holiness so he is holy "like" the *Nazirites*.[179] But the text does not suggest that Jesus will be "like" a *Ναζωραῖος*. Sixth, if Jesus was a *Nazirite* why not simply state the fact rather than risk obscuring the point with an elliptical reference that depends upon an etymological sleight of hand, which would probably be lost on most of his audience to make its point?[180] Seventh, including this information at this point in the Gospel is inappropriate. If the purpose here is to highlight Jesus' holy disposition, why is that done in this chapter where it does not fit the context of the narrative? *Nazirites* were dedicated from birth so this connection should have been made in vv. 1:19-25 and placed in

[177] Sanders, "Nazoraios," in Evans and Stegner, *The Gospels*, 122-123 and 125-126; see also Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 172 and 176; and Rodger, "The Infancy Stories," 66.
[178] Cf. Sanders, "Nazoraios," in Evans and Stegner, *The Gospels*, 128; and Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 210-211.
[179] Chromatius, "Tractate on Matthew 7.2," *ACCS* Ia: 37.
[180] Cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 223-224.

relation to Isa 7:14.[181] Finally, this interpretation ignores what the text actually says, i.e. *Ναζωραῖος*, the meaning of which is attested to in the New Testament, and the parallel word used in rabbinic literature to refer to the followers of Jesus, the *Netsrim*.[182]

The second group that Matthew may have been alluding to is that of the *Netsrim.* This was a name given to the faithful by Trito-Isaiah.[183] Its use as an appellation for the faithful during the time of Jesus is reflected in the Qumran Essenes' psalms (1QH 6:15; 7:19; 8:5-10).[184] Adrian Leske believes that members of a movement who thought of themselves as the *Netsrim* settled in Galilee.[185] He also argues that it is possible that Nazareth gained its name from נצר given the etymological similarities between the Hebrew form of Nazareth, נצרת, and the Hebrew root of נצר.[186]

Bargil Pixner, citing a third century author named Julius Africanus of Emmaus (ca. 220 C.E.), also believes that the Nazoreans settled in Galilee. He argues that they were descendants of David who were waiting for the day when their fortunes would be restored. They preserved their genealogies as a written record to prove their royal lineage. These people established towns in the region and gave them messianic names such as Nazara,[187] 'village of the branch,' and Cochaba, 'village of the star.' They seemed to have a political understanding of the messiah, which would explain why Jesus was rejected in his hometown and in other Galilean towns such as Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matt 11:21; 13:57).[188]

R.A. Pritz argues that a group known as the Ebionites broke away from the

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[181] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 41.
[182] Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 16 and 95-96.
[183] Edward P. Blair, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 162.
[184] Adrian M. Leske, "Isaiah and Matthew: The Prophetic Influence in the First Gospel - A Report on Current Research," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins* (ed. W.H. Bellinger Jnr. and William R. Farmer; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), 162.
[185] Leske, "Isaiah and Matthew," in Bellinger Jnr. and Farmer, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, 162; cf. William H.U. Anderson, "Jewish Education Around the Time of the New Testament (100 BCE - 100 CE)," *JBV* 18 (2 1997): 223.
[186] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 41; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 207, 208 and 211-212.
[187] *Ναζαρα* is a variant of *Ναζαρέτ* (Nazareth).
[188] Bargil Pixner. *Paths of the Messiah and Sites of the Early Church from Galilee to Jerusalem: Jesus and Jewish Christianity in Light of Archaeological Discoveries* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 3-4.

mainstream of the Nazorean community late in the first century over a matter of doctrine.[189] Other Patristic sources mistakenly associated the *Ναζωραιῶι* with the Ebionites who held distinctly different beliefs that strayed towards Gnosticism.[190] *Ναζωραιῶι* is also the name used by some Patristic sources to identify a first century Jewish-Christian sect some believed to be Christian heretics because they were thought, apparently incorrectly, to have questioned the pre-existence of Christ.[191] While there is mention of a group called the *Ναζωραιῶι* in Patristic literature, little is known of them as there is no written record of their beliefs that can be attributed directly to this community. According to some Patristic sources, the Nazoreans that did embrace the message of Jesus believed in the virgin birth, his divinity, his freedom from sin, his resurrection, and the divine inspiration of the prophets. They are also believed to have relied upon an early form of the Gospel of Matthew, which was known to them as the Gospel According to the Hebrews. We also have the witness of Epiphanius and Jerome to the continued existence of the Nazoreans in Judea into the fourth century.[192]

The surviving documentary evidence for the Nazoreans is pretty scant. That being said certain things can be inferred from what is known. One would expect the existence of such a group to be acknowledged in the writings of other period authors, which it seems to be. Besides the numerous references within the early Christian writings that eventually were included in the New Testament canon, there are numerous other witnesses within rabbinic and Patristic sources.[193] Unfortunately none of these are particularly definitive so it cannot be said with any certitude there was an organized group or community known as the Nazoreans.

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[189] Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 108.
[190] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 442-443 and 444.
[191] Fitzmyer, *The Semitic Background*, 442-443.
[192] Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 108.
[193] I acknowledge the tenuous nature of conclusions concerning the first century C.E. based upon rabbinic and Patristic sources given their late date of authorship. I site them here as supporting evidence for an argument rooted in New Testament sources. This demonstrates an agreement between the various sources and strengthens my assertion that the term Nazorean referred to a group of people. When an individual alone was referred to the term used was Nazarene.

This leads to the third possibility of a group who were inspired by the messianic writings of the Prophet Isaiah, but not necessarily associated with a sect *per se*. Keeping in mind the broad range of messianic beliefs, one thread may have begun with Isa 11:1. Isa 11:1-10 was regarded as a messianic passage by some elements of Judaism by the first century B.C.E. as attested by the Essene documents 1QSb, 4Q285 5 and 11Q14. It was considered to be a proof text for the advent of a Davidic messiah, his actions and his qualities. The Davidic messiah is referred to as the 'Prince of the Congregation' and also as the 'branch of David,' which seems to have been the preferred usage according to 4QFlor 1 i.11 and 4Q252 v.3-4. This reflects not only the essence of Isa 11:1, but also the possible influence of Jer 23:5 and 33:15, as well as Zech 3:8. Similarly, a Messianic understanding of Isa 11:1 is also reflected in the Similtudes of Enoch (ca. first century B.C.E to first century C.E.) and in 4 Ezra (ca. late first century).[194] נצר also served as a messianic title for the Essenes of Qumran in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH 6:15; 7:19; 8:6, 8, 10).[195] Rabbinic literature, targumic and Qumran usage all reflect a messianic interpretation of the term נצר.

People who believed that the messiah would be a 'branch of David' may have been referred to as 'people of the branch', the *Netsrim* or Nazoreans. Matthew could have been associating Jesus with the belief that the messiah would be a 'branch of David' by asserting his Davidic lineage, by putting him in Nazareth, the 'place of the branch' and by identifying him as a Nazorean.

Since we are tracing a theme rather than searching for a quotation, the question is no longer what source did Matthew use, but what version of the text was he pointing to, a Hebrew text or the LXX? The majority text of the LXX for Isa 11:1 can be translated as: "And a scepter will come from the root of Jesse and a flower from the shoot will come up."

[194] Hannah, "Isaiah within Judaism," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 12-13, 18 and 20.
[195] Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 114; see also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 41.

'Scepter' is a metonym for 'rod, staff' and comes from the word *ῥάβδος*.[196] 'Root' and 'shoot' come from *ῥίζης*. The messianic sense of this passage is clear with the reference to sceptre couched in terms of the Davidic line, but *ῥίζης* is clearly not the root of *Ναζωραῖος*, though it may have influenced the transliteration of the equivalent Hebrew word as it was put into Greek.

As discussed earlier, the Hebrew root of *Nazrat* (Nazareth, *Ναζαρέτ*) and *Netsrim* (Nazorean, *Ναζωραῖος*), is נצר, "shoot, branch." נצר is found in the majority Masoretic Text of Isa 11:1, which can be translated as: "And a branch will go out from the stump of Jesse, and a shoot from his root will bear fruit." Perhaps the messianic imagery is less explicit here, but the connection to *Nazrat* and *Netsrim* is certainly more so. The substance of the related passage Isa 60:21, "shoot of My planting", is similar in both the Masoretic Text and the LXX so while the tradition resides in both texts, the explicit connection made based on the etymology of *Netsrim*, Nazorean, *Ναζωραῖος* only arises out of the Hebrew text. So one can deduce from this that Matthew's audience, or portions of it, was probably quite familiar with the Hebrew form of Isaiah, at least orally, and that the allusion to נצר the 'shoot, branch' was meaningful to them.

Isa 11:1-10 is believed by some to have been written by Isaiah during the height of the Assyrian crisis ca. 715 to 701 B.C.E., and may have been intended as a form of encouragement for King Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz as he ascended the throne.[197] The first verse refers to a new beginning for the House of David, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."[198] Childs accepts this rough dating but rejects the interpretation of the oracle as simply one of hope and support for the new king as an unnecessary historicizing detail. Rather, it serves as the culmination of the eschatological discourse concerning the messiah begun in Isa 7:14 and developed throughout

[196] W. Bauer, et al., "*ῥάβδος*," *BDAG*, 902.
[197] Collins, "Isaiah," 425.
[198] Childs, *Isaiah*, 100-102.

chapters 8 and 9. For Childs, the reference to the "stump of Jesse" is explicit recognition of the failure of the House of David and a determination to return to the uncorrupted source, Jesse.[199]

The description of the ideal king and his reign is provided in vv. 2-5.[200] He will be a person gifted by the Lord with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, strength, and courage; all good kingly traits. He will be a perceptive man who will not rely on what he hears and sees to decide a matter. He will be a just person and his faith and righteousness will come naturally to him, worn effortlessly as a belt around his waist. The peaceable kingdom that this king will bring about is then described in vv. 6-9.[201] It will encompass the earth, there will be no war, and it will be filled by the knowledge of the Lord. The peace of this kingdom will extend even to the wild animals. This can be understood as an eschatological return to the peace which preceded the Fall of Adam. In v. 10 the King's universal appeal for the gentiles is declared.[202]

Isa 11:1 is developed further at Isa 60:21, and 61:3 but this is not to imply an intertextual relationship, simply a thematic similarity.[203] Isa 60 is believed to have been written by Third Isaiah, possibly shortly after the return from Babylon given its exuberance before the difficulties that accompanied the Restoration became apparent.[204] The chapter is focused on Jerusalem and describes a restored city that is the centre of international attention for both economic and spiritual reasons. The faithful remnant has been gathered from near and far and they will enjoy the divine presence in their midst. At v. 21 the Lord proclaims that all the people will be righteous, and that he will be glorified by them as a result. His righteous people will be "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands," where the word

[199] Childs, *Isaiah*, 101.
[200] Collins, "Isaiah," 425; see also Childs, *Isaiah*, 103.
[201] Collins, "Isaiah," 425.
[202] Childs, *Isaiah*, 106.
[203] Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity*, 14; cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 499.
[204] Collins, "Isaiah," 448; again, Childs accepts the dating, but rejects the historicizing detail in favour of continuity with the situation of Second Isaiah. Childs, *Isaiah*, 494-495.

used for branch is that of נצר, or 'shoot,' and the word used for 'planting' is מטעו. Blenkinsopp interprets this passage as a description of the ideal people of God, as opposed to describing the effect of the presence of God amongst his faithful remnant.[205]

Isa 61 continues to describe the righteous people who will be blessed by an anointed one who will, "…bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; (Isa 61:1c-1f)." These people will be so blessed that they, "…will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified (Isa 61:3e-3f)." The word used here for "plantings" is מטע. These people will be the ones who restore Israel and her cities; because of their labours and fidelity to God they, "…will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast (Isa 61:6)." The Lord pledges to make an everlasting covenant with these people and he will cloth the anointed one with "garments of salvation" and a "robe of righteousness" (Isa 61:8-10). The prophet ends the chapter with a declaration that the, "…the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise To spring up before all the nations (Isa 61:11c-11d)."

These passages are distinguished by several features. In the background of Isa 11:1 is the foreign threat posed by the Assyrians. In this instance the new king appears to be the 'shoot from the stump of Jesse' and so a source of hope rather than disappointment. The prophet as a messenger of God is present, as is the idealized description of the king, and the kingdom he will bring about. There is also the 'universalism' present in the final verse. Isa 60:21 is unique among the verses we have examined so far in that there is no foreign threat *per se*, though neither is Judah independent of the Persians. The prophet conveys the message of hope concerning the restored Jerusalem, the presence of the Lord, and his righteous people. This message is also cast in a 'universal' context as is Isa 61:3 where the

[205] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 218.

promise of the messiah is made explicit and his good works described in terms reminiscent of Isa 42:7.

The purpose of the three passages seems to be to describe the ideal state of their respective subjects. Isa 11:1 seeks to present a picture of how the king should be, and what sort of kingdom the ideal king would give rise to while emphasizing that this king would be from the House of David. Isa 60:21, with the Lord present in Jerusalem as that ideal king, describes the people as righteous, the "shoots of his planting." Isa 61:3 describes how the people will flourish in the presence of the Lord as represented by the messiah.

The point of these passages seems to be that only a king of exceptional gifts and abilities can bring about a just and peaceful society, while only God can bring people to righteousness, and that these are attributes valued amongst all nations.

Analysis of the Matthean Pericope[206]

Matt 2:19-23 will be examined according to the three part structure proposed by Neusner for prophetic Midrash as set out at the beginning of this section as follows: vv. 19-23a (narrative); v. 23b (subscription); and v. 23c (citation). Besides the announcement of Herod's death, this unit also contains the third and last angelic dream visit to Joseph. The dream of vv. 19 sends the holy family back to Israel. Joseph's presence in Egypt and the direction to "go to the land of Israel" build upon the Mosaic theme introduced in Matt 2:13, for which there are many parallels in the current situation.[207] The Mosaic connection is emphasized by Matthew in his framing of the angelic command to go to Israel rather than to

[206] In the Gospel According to Mark we find simply an acknowledgement that Jesus came from Nazareth at Mark 1:9. The context for this observation is the baptism story. The comment carries no theological import, nor does it appear to be an allusion. It simply states a biographical detail. Likewise in Luke we have a similar presentation of biographical detail, but as part of the infancy narrative where the Evangelist notes the return of the holy family to the town of Nazareth following the presentation of the babe in the Temple.

[207] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 112, 114 and 217; see also Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 112; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 34-35; and Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 144; cf. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, 196.

Nazareth in Galilee straight away, even though this creates the awkwardness of having to revise the angelic message.[208] Joseph's obedience to the angelic command is recorded at v. 21.

In v. 22-23a there are two more statements that serve as geographic pointers for the development of the narrative. The first one directs Joseph to take the holy family to Galilee to avoid the Ethnarch Archelaus. The literary purpose of the passage appears to be to set the stage for Matt 4:12-17 and its reference to Galilee, otherwise Matthew could have simply replaced Galilee with Nazareth and shortened the text somewhat.[209] The second pointer is to Nazareth, an otherwise politically insignificant town.[210] The subscription of the citation to "the prophets" is unclear given that there is no identifiable quotation or combinations of text that can identified as its source. A possible connection between the place name of Nazareth and the messianic term נצר has been discussed above. Hagner argues that both Jeremiah and Zechariah used similar language in a messianic context so that the prophets referred to by Matthew might be Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah.[211] That is a reasonable explanation of the passage, but Matthew may also be simply acknowledging that Isa 11:1, 60:21, and 61:3 were written by different people, hence the plural vice the singular reference.[212] The significance of the text of v. 23c, has been discussed at length already. Suffice to say that this verse brings Matthew's infancy narrative to a close.[213]

There are several distinguishing elements in this pericope. There is the ubiquitous threat lurking in the background, this time in the person of the Ethnarch of Judea, Archelaus, the Idumean client of the Romans and son of Herod.[214] The messenger of God appears twice

[208] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 39; cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 148.
[209] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 35, 39; cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 150.
[210] Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 113; cf. Sanders, "*Nazoraios*," in Evans and Stegner, *The Gospels*, 127.
[211] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 41; see also Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 166.
[212] Leske, "Jesus as *Nazoraios*," in McNicol, Peabody, and Subramanian, *Resourcing New Testament Studies*, 80-81; see also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 149-150.
[213] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 33.
[214] Bauer, "The Kingship of Jesus," 315.

to Joseph in his dreams. The holy family travels out of Egypt into the Promised Land and is then directed to Galilee, which highlights the fragmented nature of the kingdom in that Joseph can return to the land of Israel and still be beyond the reach of the ruler of Judea.[215] Also, strictly speaking, the reference to Galilee is unnecessary to the narrative. Perhaps it is mentioned here as an oblique 'universalist' reference given the Gentile presence in cities such as Sepphoris and Tiberias, as well as the trade routes running through the area. Joseph settles the family in Nazareth, though the text is silent on why this particular town was chosen by Joseph over that of its neighbours. We also see in this story the righteousness of Joseph, the heir of David, hence a legitimate heir to the throne, as an obedient servant of the Lord in stark contrast to the present ruler of Judea, Archelaus. Lastly, there is the assurance that this had occurred as the fulfillment of prophecy, "…that he shall be called a Nazorean."

The purpose served by the passage is twofold.[216] First, it complements the general intent of the chapter where Matthew presents Jesus as the personification of the faithful of Israel. In this passage Matthew completes the re-enactment of the history of his people who also returned to Israel from their time of exile in a foreign land.[217] Second, the passage seems to connect Jesus to the messianic tradition associated with the term נצר.

The point made by Matthew through this text concerns the identity of Jesus in a broad sense. He is representative of Israel in that he has personified his people's history through the events and travels of his early life. Furthermore, Matthew may have connected him directly to a specific understanding and set of expectations regarding the messiah in naming him a Nazorean and locating him in Nazareth.

The textual elements of these passages are similar to those identified in the discussion of Isa 11:1, 60:21, and 61:3. There are several points of contact between Matthew and the

[215] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 217-219.
[216] Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 176; and Warren Carter, "Matthew's People," in *Christian Origins: A People's History of Christianity, Volume 1* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 148.
[217] See also Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 63.

texts that I have proposed underpin his citation. In this case Matthew seeks to connect with the messianic tradition related to the term נצר. At the same time he continues to foster an appreciation for Joseph and his commitment to the holy family, as well as, his obedience through complete submission to the will of the Lord. Joseph, the heir of David and a truly righteous man, stands in stark contrast to the cruel and iniquitous Archelaus.

Once again, it is in the similarities that one can see why Matthew was attracted to the Isaian passages. These similarities were the threat to the faithful; the righteousness of the obedient servant; the allusion to the 'branch of David'. However, it is through the differences between the two texts that he advances his narrative by presenting Jesus as Israel personified. Matthew appears to successfully present Jesus as the ideal king described at Isa 11:1-7, which connects him with a messianic tradition inspired by texts such as Isa 60:21 and 61:3. Once again this is an example of the skilful development of a Midrash that addresses aspects of each Isaian passage. It also suggests a strong Pesher influence in that the advent of Jesus is used to inform an understanding of the past prophecy for the present circumstances.[218]

The genitive absolute used in v. 19 is an interesting point of grammar. It is based upon a temporal participle + noun construction, *Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρῴδου*. This clause resumes the narrative following a quotation from Jeremiah and it functions as a transition between scenes in the narrative. It also provides information essential for understanding the movements of the holy family. Matthew has included a lot in this brief phrase which suggests that he comes to the task of writing with a notable degree of skill.

In terms of style, Matt 2:19-23 is similar in form to that of Matt 1:18-25, but mirrors almost exactly Matt 2:13-15, the insertion of v. 22 being the only difference. Matt 2:19-23 is also parallel in content to Matt 2:13-15.[219] Brown argues Matthew inserted vv. 22-23 into Matt 1:19-25 when he borrowed it from another source, and given the similarities, has done

[218] Patrick, "Matthew's Pesher Gospel," 63-64.
[219] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 33 and 39.

the same here with Matt 2:19-23.[220] What then of 2:13-15, is it also pre-Matthean? Brown does not account for the similarity. Furthermore, the parallel endings of Matt 1:18-25 and 2:19-23 go beyond similarities of form.[221] In both cases the author makes a significant interpretive statement concerning the identity of Jesus – such a parallel is unlikely to be an accident and suggests a structured flow or coherence to the narration that reflects a plan of writing in the mind of the author. The textual evidence supports the view that these passages are Matthean in origin.

Another stylistic point of note concerns the 'behold' statement, which immediately follows the genitive absolute discourse marker of v. 19. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of Matt 1:18-25, the 'behold' statement is an idiomatic expression, a Hebraism, which signals something about the author and his audience.[222] At the very least they were familiar with Hebrew texts, and they were probably mostly Judeans themselves.

The last point about style concerns the use of the preposition *ὅπως* in v. 23. George Soares Prabhu states that Matthew uses *ὅπως πληρωθῇ* instead of *ἵνα* whenever he is concluding a collection of pericopes that are theologically related. He gives Matt 8:17 and 13:35 as examples of this. So Matt 2:19-23 could be understood as a concluding passage for the preceding section.[223] Perhaps the section in view in this case is the infancy narrative of chapters one and two.

It is difficult to say what exactly Matthew considers to be fulfilled in this instance given the absence of a clear Old Testament referent to which one can point. It could be that Matthew was referring to the general messianic expectation for the appearance of an heir of David with all that that implies. Perhaps then the fulfillment to which Matthew refers in this citation is the appearance of Jesus as the "shoot from the stump of Jesse" as Hamilton

[220] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 108.
[221] Stendahl, "Quis et Unde," in Stanton, *The Interpretation*, 59-60.
[222] Varner, "A Discourse Analysis of Matthew's Nativity Narrative," 215.
[223] George M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew : An Enquiry into the Tradition History of Mt 1-2* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 52.

argues.[224] However, Matthew might also have considered the messianic expectations represented by Isa 60:21 and 61:1-3 also as fulfilled. The principle point made by Matthew in proclaiming the prophecies fulfilled is that the messianic branch of David is among us.

In a more general sense, Matthew also appears to be presenting another typological fulfillment in that Moses brought the faithful out of Egypt and saved them from physical bondage; Jesus, coming out of Egypt, will save the faithful from spiritual bondage; a new Moses and a new Exodus giving us the similar patterns but with escalation in fulfillment.[225]

The Move to Capernaum Matt 4:12-16

Delimiting the Pericope

The last of the fulfillment citations to be considered is Matt 4:12-16. This pericope is set apart from the surrounding text by the changes in the subject of the narrative. It is preceded by the story of the temptation of Jesus and followed by a transition statement concerning the start of his preaching.[226] The opening verse presents a change in subject as the ministering angels of v. 11 are replaced by news of John's detention in v. 12, which is introduced by a temporal genitive absolute discourse marker.[227] The verses that follow v. 12 in the passage situate Jesus in Galilee at the start of his ministry. This verse concludes the presentation of the introductory material that precedes the story of Jesus' ministry proper which begins at v. 17.[228]

In terms of Neusner's three part structure for prophetic Midrash, the narrative portion is vv. 12-13, the subscription appears in v. 14 and the citation in vv. 15-16. The pericope is therefore defined as vv. 12-16. My translation is as follows:

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[224] Hamilton Jr., "The Virgin Will Conceive," in Gurtner and Nolland, *Built Upon the Rock*, 246.
[225] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 33-34.
[226] Cf. Levinsohn, "Participant Reference," in Black, Barnwell, and Levinsohn, *Linguistics*, 40.
[227] See Varner, "A Discourse Analysis of Matthew's Nativity Narrative," 214-217.
[228] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 192.

> [12]But when he heard that John had been betrayed, he withdrew into Galilee. [13]And he left Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum which was by the sea in the regions of Zebulon and Naphtali; [14]so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: [15]"Land of Zebulon and land of Naphtali, toward the sea, other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles, [16]the people who are seated in darkness have seen a great light, and those who are seated in the land and shadow of death, light has risen on them. (NA^{27}, Brister)

There are no significant variants for this text.

Analysis of the Old Testament Referent

Most scholars would agree that this quotation is of Isa 9:1-2 (Isa 8:23- 9:1 in the MT and LXX). There is only about 40% agreement between the text Matthew quotes and how it appears in the LXX^{A}. There is virtually 100% correspondence between the portion used by Matthew and how it appears in the LXX^{B}. The changes to the LXX^{B} text involve four verbs and a pronoun as shown in Table 4.2.

Isa 9:1 (LXX^{B})	**Matt 4:16 (NA^{27})**	**Isa 9:1 (BHS)**
πορευόμενος – the one who is walking/going	καθήμενος – the one who is seated/living	ההלכים – the ones who walk/go
ἴδετε – see! (2p, imp)	εἶδεν – he/she saw	ראו – they have seen
κατοικοῦντες – the ones who live/dwell	καθημένοις – the ones who are seated/living	ישׁבי – the ones who sit/dwell
λάμψε – it will shine	ἀνέτειλεν – it has risen	נגה – it has shone
ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς – upon you	αὐτοῖς - them	עליהם – upon them

Table 4.2

The changes to the verbs appear to accomplish three things. First, they reflect a shift in perspective in that while Isaiah was proclaiming a prophecy, Matthew was recounting its fulfillment. Second, the use of the *κάθημαι* participles improves the readability of the passage and its aural quality. It also harmonizes the text with the thematically related text of Isa 42:7.[229] Last, the use of *ἀνατέλλω* is interesting. In one sense it may serve as an allusion

[229] Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 24.

to Isa 58:10.[230] From another perspective it provides the audience with a reference point to use in understanding the directional statements which precede it. The Isaian passage is ambiguous because there is no indication given of the direction of travel envisaged by the author. Matthew resolves this ambiguity by introducing the image of the dawn, or rising sun, as the point of reference. Moving from the east where the sun rises, towards the west where it sets, one goes towards the sea, both Galilee and Mediterranean, and crosses over to the other side of the Jordan to the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, the land of Galilee of the Gentiles.[231] While this editorial change may have been more effective had it preceded the directions, Matthew respects his source by preserving its structure.[232]

In comparing Matt 4:16 with that of Isa 9:1 as it appears in the LXX^B and the Masoretic Text one quickly notices the similarity between the latter two. Matthew's choice of *κάθημαι* falls within the semantic range of יָשַׁב and his change of pronoun at the end of the passage harmonizes his quotation of the LXX^B with the original Hebrew text.[233] The foregoing discussion leads me to conclude that in this instance Matthew relied upon the LXX^B for the text he quoted in Matt 4:16 and that his adaptation of it was coloured by his familiarity with the Hebrew text.[234]

There appears to be two separate textual units that contribute to the context of Isa 9:1-2. The first unit (8:16-22) was probably written during the reign of Ahaz and concerns the prophetic function and process. It then leads into the state of the northern kingdom following the loss of territory to Assyria ca. 738-735 B.C.E.[235] The second unit (9:3-7) seems to have been written around the time that Ahaz was succeeded by his son Hezekiah.[236]

In Isa 8:16-22 the prophet begins by recording the command of the Lord to "bind up"

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[230] Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 26.
[231] W. Bauer, et al., "ὁδὸς," *BDAG*, 691-692, and "πέραν," *BDAG*, 796-797.
[232] Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 73; and Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 193.
[233] See also Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 15, 22 and 27.
[234] Viljoen, "Fulfilment in Matthew," 310-311.
[235] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 196.
[236] Collins, "Isaiah," 423; see also Childs, *Isaiah*, 75 and 80; and Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 249.

the prophecies he has made throughout Isa 7-8. Childs makes an interesting point concerning this passage when he notes a certain "canon-consciousness." He expands on this by explaining:

> By this is meant the prophetic witness that was not received when first proclaimed has been collected and preserved in faith for another generation. These collected testimonies retain their truth and authority in spite of the passing of time and continue to serve as God's word for a future age.[237]

This is not to suggest an expectation of typological fulfillment on the part of Isaiah, rather we see more of an intuitive understanding of the lasting importance of the words provided to him.

Isaiah goes on to describe how he and his children are signs from the Lord for his people and Ahaz, but that they have been ignored. He speaks of "mediums and spiritists", wondering why they consult the dead instead of God. He tells how these people lack insight, and how they will in turn blame those who accepted their advice when things turn out poorly. He closes by noting the grim state of these people, how they are anxious, depressed and living in darkness. The next verse (v. 23 Masoretic Text, LXX – 9:1 Eng) serves as a transition to the unit that follows it. Given the nature of this passage and the difference in dating of the material that precedes and follows it, it is difficult to say who wrote this passage and when.[238] The author declares that the time for depression and anxiety is over. The regions of Galilee that had fallen to the Assyrians are described as having been treated with contempt. Now they will be made glorious. In vv. 2-5 Isaiah explains that a light will shine on the people of the oppressed region and they will enjoy justice, peace and prosperity.[239] He explains in vv. 6-7 that this will be brought about by the Lord acting through a Davidic king who will establish this eternal kingdom with justice and righteousness.

This passage is distinguished by the foreign threat of the Assyrians in the background,

[237] Childs, *Isaiah*, 76; see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 243-244.
[238] For a full discussion of the possibilities see Childs, *Isaiah*, 79. Blenkinsopp suggests that vv. 19-22 could be post-Exilic, while 23 is likely part of 9:1-6. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 244.
[239] Collins, "Isaiah," 424.

along with the receding presence of Ahaz and the faithlessness of the kingdom under his leadership. This is in contrast to the descriptions that follow of the kingdom to be created by God and that of the Davidic king who will bring it about on the Lord's behalf. Not only is there the prophet as the messenger of God in these passages, but there is also a reference to false prophets such as the "mediums and spiritists." There is the geographic reference to Galilee and the directional pointers associated with it. There is also the imagery of the people, the light, and the darkness, "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them."

The purpose served by the passage is to affirm the Lord's faithfulness to the covenant even though the judgement arising from the faithlessness of the people might suggest otherwise. This builds upon the Emmanuel prophecy of Isa 7:14 by placing the promised sign of the child in a clear messianic context.[240] The Lord's faithfulness will be realized through his messiah who will bring about the ideal kingdom.

The point made in and by these passages is that the Lord has not withdrawn his election of the chosen people, and that those who remain will be saved. It seems to be an eschatological discourse that reassures the faithful remnant concerning the advent of the messiah and his kingdom.[241]

Analysis of the Matthean Pericope[242]

Matt 4:12-16 will be examined according to the three part structure proposed by

[240] Childs, *Isaiah*, 81.
[241] Childs, *Isaiah*, 80.
[242] Mark acknowledges Jesus' presence in Capernaum (Mark 1:21), but does not provide an interpretation for it as does Matthew, nor does he cite Isa 9:1-2 elsewhere. Similarly, Luke acknowledges Jesus' presence in Capernaum (Luke 4:31), but does not cite Isa 9:1-2 here in this context. Luke cites Isa 9:2 and 40:3 as part of the prophecy of Zacharias concerning his newborn son John (Luke 1:67-79) where he establishes that John will be the prophet of the Lord who will prepare his way (Luke 1:76; Isa 40:3), and that the Lord's mercy will shine on those who sit in darkness (Luke 1:79; Isa 9:2). Thus Luke uses the Isaian passage in a christological way, but in a broader context by excluding the geographic references that might not have been meaningful to a late first century gentile audience. In doing so he removes the citation from its original context. While he retains the value of the literal meaning of the passage he forgoes the depth and richness of the original context, which Matthew brings into his text.

Neusner for prophetic Midrash as set out at the beginning of this section: vv. 12-13 (narrative); v. 14 (subscription); and vv. 15-16 (citation).

Matthew begins with a statement that implies a causal connection between the start of Jesus' ministry and the arrest of John the Baptist. This brings to mind Isa 40:1ff and Matthew's belief that John was the voice crying out in the wilderness (Matt 3:3). Perhaps John's arrest signalled the end of the preparation of the way of the Lord. In terms of the passage in general, Keener argues that the detail of vv. 12-13 is probably historically accurate. Nazareth, being a bit out of the way, would not have served Jesus well as a base from which to operate. Capernaum was astride a main road on the shore of the Sea of Galilee so Jesus would have had better exposure for his ministry in such a location.[243]

William Walker makes the interesting observation that Luke presents the rejection of Jesus in Nazareth immediately after the story of his temptation and before the start of his ministry. Matthew presents the rejection much later in his Gospel even though the context of his presentation suggests that the event still occurred shortly after his temptation (Matt 13:53-58). Walker argues that Luke's is the more accurate rendering of events given the superior detail he tends to present to his audience.[244] This allows for an alternative explanation for why Jesus may have made the move to Capernaum and that is to escape those of his own community who had rejected him. But Walker seems to have overlooked the reference to Capernaum in the midst of the rejection story and all the work Jesus had already done there before he was rejected in Nazareth. Clearly the move to Capernaum had already occurred before the rejection of Jesus. Apparently Matthew's version is the more accurate in this case, and the move was most likely for practical reasons associated with the start of Jesus' ministry.

Hagner notes that all the [canonical] Gospels place Jesus in Capernaum, and that

[243] Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 145-146.
[244] William O. Walker, "'Nazareth': A Clue to Synoptic Relationships," in *Jesus, the Gospels, and the Church: Essays in Honor of William R. Farmer* (ed. E.P. Sanders; Macon: Mercer, 1987), 107.

Galilee in general offered better prospects of success for his ministry as it was more accepting of different expressions of Judaism than was the case in Jerusalem.[245] Keener also suggests that Jesus' strategy may have enjoyed local success given that Capernaum figures as a schismatic centre in later rabbinic writings. He speculates that these things are alluded to in the pericope under consideration, and the citation included in the following verses, to counter the criticism of Matthew's opponents whilst acknowledging the strength of the community of followers in the area after Jesus' death.[246] Gundry argues that Matthew has expanded upon the tradition received from Mark by adding in the details concerning the location of Capernaum, "…by the sea, in the regions of Zebulon and Naphtali..." just to improve the parallelism between his text and that of Isa 9:1-2.[247]

In v. 14 Matthew mentions the Prophet Isaiah in the subscription. This is the second direct attribution to a prophet and the first one to Isaiah. Keener believes that the citation of vv. 15-16 serves primarily to foreshadow the mission to the Gentiles. He argues that while there were Gentiles present in Galilee, primarily in the two largest centres of Sepphoris and Tiberias, the region was still a predominantly Jewish environment in Jesus' day. This text points towards an eventual mission to the Gentiles and does so in a way that reminds people of the Davidic messiah because of the citation used.[248] Sawyer, however, believes that just Isa 9:1-2 was cited instead of the rest of the unit of which it is part because Matthew only wanted to justify the beginning of Jesus' ministry amongst the Gentiles of Galilee rather than the Jews of Jerusalem.[249] This view, however, ignores the actual content of the Gospel and its dominant Semitic influences and the likelihood that Matthew's community was predominantly Jewish. Hagner, on the other hand, notes that the inclusion of the citation

[245] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 72.
[246] Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 145-146.
[247] Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, 197.
[248] Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 146-147; see also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 73; cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 193; and Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 68-69.
[249] Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 34.

lends "a midrashic flavour" to the pericope, which to my mind, reflects the Hebrew essence of Matthew's style of writing.[250]

There are several distinguishing features in this passage that are of interest. First, there is the threat from Herod Antipas as suggested by the arrest of John the Baptist. Then there are the numerous geographic cues that are present outside of the quotation, i.e. "withdrew into Galilee," "leaving Nazareth," "settled in Capernaum," and "in the region of Zebulon and Naphtali." This is followed by the subscription that attributes the quotation to the Prophet Isaiah as a messenger of God. There are also the numerous geographic pointers within the quotation that reverse the direction of travel found in the first set, i.e. "Land of Zebulon and land of Naphtali, toward the sea, other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles," as well as the description of the people, "who are seated in darkness have seen a great light." Last, there is the proclamation concerning those who "are seated in the land and shadow of death, light has risen on them."

The purpose served by the passage is twofold. First, it situates Jesus' ministry in Galilee and centres it upon Capernaum. Second, it places Jesus' ministry in the context of the prophecy provided to Ahaz by Isaiah in Isa 7-8, and Hezekiah at Isa 9. The point of the passage is to put Jesus forward as the light that has risen on the people seated in darkness and in the shadow of death.

There are several points of contact between Matt 4:12-16 and Isa 9:1-2. As in the previous citations there is a threat operating in the background, and there is a messenger of God present. Unique to this citation are the geographic markers found in both passages, the description of the people, and the proclamation delivered. The differences are the absence in Matthew of a description of the kingdom of God, and any mention of false prophets. Matthew also places a greater emphasis on the geographic pointers by repeating them and by

[250] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 72.

changing the proclamation slightly to present the light as rising over rather than simply shining upon the people, which colours how the geographic references are understood and perhaps also how the passage can be seen as fulfilled.

The purposes served by the two passages are different. While Isaiah seeks to communicate that the Lord will act for the salvation of the faithful through his anointed one, Matthew wishes to establish a link between Jesus and the prophecy concerning the anointed, and to situate his ministry in Galilee. The purposes of these passages is, on the one hand, for Isaiah to present the anointed as the instrument of God's salvation, and for Matthew to put Jesus forward as the messiah.

Once again one gets a sense of the Midrashic flavour of Matthew's treatment of the Isaian material as noted earlier by Hagner.[251] Matthew's understanding of Isa 9:1-2 is different from that of the Prophet in the way he sees the messiah. They share the understanding of the messiah as a son of David, anointed by God to bring about the eternal kingdom, which will be characterized by righteousness. But Matthew recognizes Jesus as more than simply anointed, someone greater than the servant, or an heir of David; he is all these things, but he is more than them too – he is also the son of God given the circumstances of his conception. This is something not envisaged by the Prophet. Matthew's understanding elicits a deeper, hidden meaning in the prophecies contained in Isa 7-8 and culminating in Isa 9:1-2, which is very much a characteristic of Midrash. This is in keeping with the spirit of Oral Torah. There is also a Pesher influence at work here in that Matthew uses Isaiah to comment on current events. The simple fact that he cites these Isaian passages at all, bound by the command of God, indicates that he believes the messiah has arrived and that the kingdom of God is at hand.

[251] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 72.

In terms of style, there appears to be a chiastic structure in this passage, which is organized as follows:

A^1 - [12]But when he heard that John had been betrayed,

B^1 - he withdrew into Galilee.

C^1 - [13]And he left Nazareth,

D^1 - he went and lived in Capernaum

E^1 - which was by the sea

F^1 - in the regions of Zebulon and Naphtali;

G^1 - [14]so that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying:

F^2 - [15]"Land of Zebulon and land of Naphtali,

E^2 - toward the sea,

D^2 - other side of the Jordan,

C^2 - Galilee of the gentiles,

B^2 - [16]the people who are seated in darkness have seen a great light,

A^2 – and those who are seated in the land and shadow of death, light has risen on them."

There are some interesting parallels within this structure.

The author begins the pericope by making reference in A^1 to John the Baptist who has been imprisoned. This is juxtaposed with A^2 and the audience knows that John was eventually executed, so the image they are left with is one of a man sitting in the darkness in the shadow of his own death awaiting his fate. Part of the significance of this turn of events is that it seems to have been a catalyst for the start of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, which is brought out in the next passage, B^1.

Matthew interprets this event at A^2 and B^2 by making it analogous to the situation of the people through the use of the third person plural pronoun and the reference to Isaiah.

There is a sense of a 'beginning' through Matthew's use of the word 'risen' instead of 'shine/shone' as in the original. He then explains that the people saw the light that had risen over them, and that it was a 'great light.' The term 'light' refers to instruction or spiritual enlightenment, and that the people in view are those of Galilee through the reference at B^1. Thus, Matthew tells the reader that the start of Jesus' ministry following the arrest of John was tantamount to a new understanding becoming available to the people. This understanding or enlightenment was superior to that which was possible prior to the arrival of Jesus, i.e. it was 'a great light.' Furthermore, the people of Galilee understood what had been revealed to them by Jesus in terms of his teachings, and in the person of Jesus, as far as the meaning of his coming was concerned.

The next section, passages C through F appear to be simply contrasting geographic pointers depicting a sense of movement from west to east in the first group (C^1 thru F^1) and from East to West in the second group (F^2 thru C^2). The pointers add to the impact of the pericope by seeming to direct attention inward to a central point in time and space in both a literal and a figurative way. They also foster a sense of sweeping movement towards that point when read in relation to each other. One is left with a sense of events swirling around Jesus who stands at the centre of history, indeed of all creation.[252]

The focus of the passage appears to be the prophecy of Isaiah and the fact that it is now fulfilled as noted in G^1. Isaiah, as the servant-messenger of God in contrast to the "mediums and spiritists," prophesizes the coming of the one anointed by God to bring understanding to his people and to establish his kingdom, a kingdom characterized by justice and righteousness. Furthermore, just as this Isaian prophecy serves as the culmination of the related prophecies found in Isa 7-9, so too does this Matthean passage complete the explanation of who Jesus is and thus the introduction to his Gospel.

[252] Cf. Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 68-69.

In what way should one understand the prophecy of Isa 9:1-2 to be fulfilled? In a very general sense, Matthew seems to be telling his audience that the prophecies of Isa 7-9 that were ordered bound up by God have been unsealed by the advent of Jesus and not by the proclamation of a prophet or messenger of God. The implication of this is that Jesus is representative of God. In a more specific sense, Matthew tells us that not only does Jesus bring the light, the promised knowledge, but that he is the light, he is revelation in his very person. He is the "great light." Thus the prophecy is fulfilled in an unanticipated way, and in a way that is escalated well beyond that of the original text for it is not God's regent who will establish the kingdom, but his own son.

Conclusion

This paper argues that the author of the Gospel according to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. This chapter examined each of these citations and showed how Matthew used the exegetical methods common in his day and culture to embed the thematic heritage of the Old Testament in his new text. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics.

In terms of sources it appears as though Matthew relied upon recensions of the LXX for Matt 1:18-23 and 4:12-16 and a Hebrew text for Matt 2:19-23. Furthermore, in the latter two cases while the likely source can be identified, the influence of the Hebrew text on Matt 4:12-16 and the LXX on Matt 2:19-23 can also be recognized. Clearly, the author had access to multiple recensions of Isaiah in both languages some of which have come down to modern scholars as the major codices and minuscules.

The analyses has consistently shown that Matthew has provided the reader with a

sophisticated interpretation of Hebrew text that can be described as Midrash and that he also appears to be familiar with the Pesher method as well.

Matthew uses Hebrew literary devices and methods of expression to a degree and in a manner that suggests that he is very comfortable working with Hebrew texts. He also appears to have authored the textual units containing the citations himself and integrated them into his gospel according to a plan of writing. In doing so he respects the integrity of the citations while still being able to adapt them to serve in fairly complex literary structures. He also displays a command of Greek grammar and syntax that allows him to say much with an economy of words. These factors of source, method and style all suggest that Matthew had received some formal training in exegesis.

As far as fulfillment goes, Matthew reflects a literal understanding of Isa 7:14 in the way he uses it in his text and builds upon it with new material. This fits well with the understanding of typological fulfillment in terms of historical patterns. He also seems to have considered the messianic expectations represented by Isa 11:1, 60:21 and 61:1-3 also as fulfilled in the person of Jesus. This seems to be the principle point made by Matthew in proclaiming the prophecies fulfilled in Matt 2:19-23.

In a more general sense, Matthew also appears to be presenting here another typological fulfillment. Just as Moses brought the faithful out of Egypt and saved them from physical bondage, so too did Jesus come out of Egypt to save the faithful from spiritual bondage. Thus there is a new Moses and a new Exodus providing similar patterns but with escalation in fulfillment. The simple fact that Matthew cites Isa 7-9, passages bound by the command of God, indicates that he believes that the Messiah has arrived and that the kingdom of God is at hand. In a very general sense, Matthew seems to be telling his audience that these prophecies have been unsealed by the advent of Jesus and not by the proclamation of a prophet or messenger of God. Thus the prophecies are fulfilled in unanticipated ways,

and in ways that are escalated well beyond that of the original text.

Last, it can be said with a reasonable degree of confidence that Matthew associated Jesus with a messianic tradition in Galilee that identified itself with the term נצר, and that in doing so he sought to present Jesus as the promised messianic 'branch of David'.

The next chapter will consider how Matthew's use of these themes through the fulfillment citations contributed to the message of his Gospel and what can be inferred concerning his audience.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This paper argues that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David. He achieved this by using exegetical methods common in his day and culture, thus embedding in this new text the thematic heritage of the old. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics. This chapter builds upon the analyses of the citations and the findings made. It will show how Matthew's use of these citations formed his christological message and consider what can be said about his community.

The Message of the Gospel

Matthew seeks to convey three elements of his christology through Matt 1:18-25. His first goal is to establish Jesus as a descendant of David through Joseph in a way that complements his divine origin, thus satisfying a well attested expectation that the messiah would be a 'branch of David'.[253] Indeed, Bauer argues that Matthew is saying that Jesus can

[253] Bassler, "A Man for All Seasons," 158. This should be understood within the context of a continuous living tradition as described by Horbury, which was rooted in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Isa 11:1-4), various mythical narratives, and in a tradition of prayer (*Psalms of Soloman*; Qumran *Blessings*; *Eighteen Bendictions*). He argues that while there were many strands within this living tradition, there was a coherence in that the various developments were not necessarily inconsistent. In other words, there was no one definitive messianic tradition, but many strands embraced by various groups and communities, and these strands did not contradict one other. Horbury also argues for the existence of a "spiritual messianism" during the latter Second Temple period. This theme saw the messiah as an embodied spirit. He mentions descriptions of a superhuman and spiritual messianic figure in various works (Parables of Enoch; 2 Esdras). While I acknowledge the

function as the son of David because he is conceived by the Spirit and called the son of God.[254] In other words, Jesus is a son of David because of the action of the Spirit and not because of any hereditary link through Joseph. While I disagree with Bauer's understanding of the passage, I do accept his premise that the passage established Jesus as an heir of David.

The second is to identify Jesus as the messiah, which he does directly by naming him as such, and indirectly through the interpretation of his name.[255] In doing so Matthew establishes the salvific role of Jesus as central to his identity and role. This provides the hermeneutical key needed for understanding Jesus' ministry. Matthew also characterizes this salvific activity as a moral-spiritual one because of the focus on sin rather than as a political-military one.[256] Third, Matthew establishes Jesus' authority as being of God through the citation of Isa 7:14 and the explanation of the meaning of the name Emmanuel. This citation also serves to establish a connection between Matthew's understanding of Jesus and the messianic expectations of his audience as seen through the Hebrew text.[257] Matthew uses Isa 7:14 in an explicitly christological fashion in establishing Jesus' identity.[258]

Matthew's use of this prophecy implies that it is being unsealed (Isa 8:16) because Jesus has arrived to fulfill it. This would affirm the presence of God with his people, and as the followers of Christ, the role of his audience as the faithful remnant. By respecting the original context Matthew draws upon his audience's understanding of the Book of Isaiah and their knowledge of the development of particular themes.[259] This adds layers of meaning to Matthew's text that serve to clarify Jesus' identity and role in contemporary Judea, and

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messianic theme that Horbury is describing, I do not think it was the primary influence on Matt 1:18-25 in light of the prominence given to the role of Joseph throughout the infancy narrative. Horbury, "Jewish Messianism," in Longenecker, *Contours of Christology*, 14-16 and 18-20.

[254] Bauer, "The Kingship of Jesus," 309.

[255] Kingsbury, "The Birth," in Aune, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 160.

[256] Bauer, "The Kingship of Jesus," 310; cf. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, 94.

[257] Cousland, "Matthew's Earliest Interpreter," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 59.

[258] Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 22-23; see also Stendahl, "Quis et Unde," in Stanton, *The Interpretation*, 61-62; and Kingsbury, "The Birth," in Aune, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 162-163. For a narrower interpretation of Isa 7:14 and its use by Matthew, cf. Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 65-66.

[259] Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 23 and 25; cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 97.

perhaps just as importantly from the perspective of Matthew's audience, it clarifies the identities and roles of his followers as well.[260]

A theme that Matthew draws upon through his use of Matt 1:18-25 is that of the messiah with its diverse range of competing concepts. This theme is referred to in three ways. First, there are the unusual circumstances surrounding the conception of Jesus in that he has no earthly biological father. The implication of this is that God is his Father, which is a dramatic re-statement of a common Old Testament view of God as Father, though understood in a radically new way. Second, the reference to Jesus' surrogate father Joseph as 'Son of David' may have brought to mind the 'promise tradition' of 2 Sam 7:12-16 where God says he will make the heir of David his own son and place him on the throne forever. Lastly, the citation of Isa 7:14 with its promise that 'God [is] with us' and the understanding that the prophecy following this passage, which had been sealed by Isaiah and was supposed to remain so until the messiah had come to fulfill it, implies that this person had arrived.

The conclusion of the Infancy Narrative at Matt 2:19-23 completes Matthew's presentation of Jesus within the context of the history of Israel. As Matthew related the story of Jesus, he also recounted the major outlines of the history of Israel from the time of Moses to that of the early Restoration. In essence, he presented Jesus as analogous to the faithful of Israel by mirroring their journey, and also as a new Moses who would lead them to their salvation. Jesus would be greater than Moses, for he would lead them to their salvation from sin and to a righteous and everlasting kingdom.

The description of Jesus as a Nazorean and the name of the village of his youth, Nazareth, seem to point to the theme of the 'branch', 'shoot' or 'planting'. This appears to be an allusion to the message of Isa 11:1 and the hopeful expectation engendered in the faithful by the promised "...shoot from the stump of Jesse.." and the Servant of Isa 53:2, "For he grew

[260] Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 75-76; cf. Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 24 and 29; Foster, "The Use of Zechariah," in Tuckett *The Book of Zechariah*, 81; and Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel*, 44.

up before him like a tender shoot…" There may also be allusions to Jer 23:5 and its linkage between kingship and the "righteous branch," and to Zech 6:11-12 with its connection between branch and priest.[261]

The reference to Isa 11:1 points back to the Emmanuel prophecy of Isa 7:14 and underlines Jesus' role as the promised messiah. The implications of this for the people are brought out in Isa 60:21. In this passage the promise of a just and righteous kingdom, to be brought about through the efforts of the Lord, is made to the faithful who are described as the "branch of my planting, the work of my hands." The word "planting" and the expression "branch of my planting" are metaphors for salvation and describe a specific group of people, i.e. the faithful. The promise of a messiah is made explicit at Isa 61:1-3 as is the recognition that the faithful will be known as "...oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord…" This is followed by the promise of the everlasting covenant at Isa 61:8. The message is clear and that is that Jesus is that messiah, the 'branch of David', and those who believe and follow him will be the 'oaks of righteousness' who shall reside in the just and righteous kingdom to be brought about by him, and subject to the new covenant.

Matthew's treatment of Isa 9:1-2 at Matt 4:12-16 represents the culmination of his introduction of Jesus. In the immediate context Matthew is presenting Jesus as the 'light' referred to in the prophecy, the source of instruction and the embodiment of spiritual enlightenment. He is also explaining why Jesus' ministry began in Galilee instead of Jerusalem. He does this in such a way as to signal an openness to the Gentiles, which connects Jesus to the scriptural theme of 'universalism'. This is achieved in two ways. First, there is the overt reference to "Galilee of the Gentiles" at Isa 9:1. Matthew could have removed this reference from the quotation had he not wanted the association it implies. Second, the reference to 'light' as a metaphor for instruction or spiritual enlightenment has a

[261] See also Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 77-78; and Apodaca, "Myth Theory," in Hatina, *Biblical Interpretation*, 22-23.

'universalist' connotation when used in conjunction with Gentiles.

Matthew is also saying something significant for his community about the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. He implies that John's instruction was inferior to that of Jesus. He accomplishes this through the way he juxtaposes John's detention and the people sitting in darkness (A^1 vs. A^2) with the effect of Jesus' ministry (B^2 and A^2) within the chiastic structure presented in the previous chapter. The point here is that Jesus is greater than John.

In the wider context of Matthew 1-4, his use of Isa 9:1-2 brings together the various strands of Jesus' identity the evangelist has woven into his account. Elements such as divine sonship, the House of David, the messianic tradition associated with the term נצר and its 'universalist' perspective, are all brought together in the context of the person of Jesus to present him as the Messiah.

Matthew's Community

Most scholars believe the Gospel According to Matthew was written in Antioch; others argue for somewhere east of the Jordan, mainly Pella; and fewer still for a location within Judea. By assuming an early date of writing one possibility only is eliminated, that of Pella, the destination of choice for many Christians fleeing Jerusalem prior to the siege in 70 C.E.[262]

The argument in favour of Antioch is largely one that can be made for any cosmopolitan centre in the ancient near east. This view takes note of the Semitic flavour of the Gospel and the strong emphasis on the mission to the gentiles, and from these deduces that the author wrote for Jewish followers of Jesus living amongst Gentiles. This could

[262] Dennis Duling, "Matthew," *ABD* 4:621.

describe a community in Caesarea Maritima, Sepphoris, Tiberias, Tyre, Sidon, or Damascus just as much as Antioch.[263] As Burton Mack and Vernon Robbins state, "In Palestine alone there were over thirty Hellenistic cities during the time of Jesus, twelve within a twenty-five mile radius of Nazareth."[264] Thus the characteristics of the Gospel do not help in assigning provenance.

The conflict between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees is variously understood to reflect the ongoing friction between Christian Jews who still attend synagogue and their Jewish cousins, or between Christian Jews who have left the synagogue, but still have close contact with their cousins. This description of Matthew's community accommodates both late and early dating of the Gospel, as well as, any location within Judea or the Diaspora. A variation of this position considers the Semitic influence to be a cultural echo, and suggests that the Gospel was written for a predominantly Gentile audience that was once Jewish but had parted company with the synagogue and its practices.[265] This fits particularly well with attribution of the passage to a late date and although it can also describe an early one as well, this seems unlikely. Again, the conflict within the Gospel does not help in identifying its provenance.

One author has taken the reference to Greek terms for coins – the *drachma* and the *stater* (Matt 17:17-24) as indicating a Syrian place of origin. This is a thin argument given the mobility of currency in the ancient near east. By this same logic the reference to a Roman coin (Matt 22:17-21) would lead us to assume Roman provenance for the Gospel. The same author argues that the reference to "all of Syria" supports his contention of Antiochian provenance (Matt 4:24).[266] If this is the case, then what should be made of the reference to

[263] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lxxv.
[264] Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 29.
[265] Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lxxvi; see also Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992; repr., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 131-132 and 135; and Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 60.
[266] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 93.

the cities of the Decapolis, Galilee and Judea that follows shortly afterwards (Matt 4:25)? Perhaps these passages should be accepted at face value as indications that the word of Jesus spread quickly throughout the regions where he travelled.

Another author argues that the Gospel would have to be associated with a prominent Church for it to have influence in the wider church, and then goes on to suggest that the apparent influence of Matthew on Ignatius, and possibly the *Didache*, supports an Antiochian provenance.[267] Neither of these factors requires the Gospel to have been written in the same place as the later works it influenced. In fact the Gospel is believed to have had a significant influence on numerous works in the centuries following its appearance.[268] This can be explained simply by asserting that the Gospel was carried forth after its composition and embraced by new communities on the basis of its excellent catechetical and missionary qualities.

Let us give closer consideration to what can be inferred about the gospel audience given the analysis of the citations in the previous chapter. It seems likely that the language of authorship was Koine Greek given that there are no Hebrew manuscripts of the Gospel extent and because there is no definitive evidence to suggest that the Greek manuscripts that have survived are translations from Hebrew. Therefore, it can be inferred from this that the audience understood Koine Greek.[269] There is also the weighty evidence of the Semitic influences in the gospel. For instance, there is no effort to explain some of the Hebrew names, no explanation of the action of the Holy Spirit with its implicit Hebrew conception of what this meant and there is the reliance on a Hebrew citation in each pericope studied. There is also the apparent Hebrew style of scriptural commentary employed and there is the theme of the piety (with particularly Jewish characteristics) of Joseph. Given these cultural

[267] Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 212; see also Hagner, Matthew 1-13, lxxv; and Luz, Matthew 1-7, 82.
[268] Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 81-82; see also Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 138.
[269] Cf. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 208.

markers, it seems likely that the author wrote for a predominantly Hebrew audience that had been exposed to such commentaries before. These commentaries were meaningful for them, and they were, or had been, attending Synagogue such that they were reasonably familiar with the Book of Isaiah. Therefore, assertions of fulfillment would also have been quite meaningful for them.[270]

When Matthew made the reference to Jesus being called Nazorean, *Netsrim*, *Ναζωραῖος*, it was the depth of tradition that lay behind Isa 11:1 that he was identifying with. He was associating Jesus with the messianic expectation of the 'branch of David'. The implication of this for his followers was that they were the faithful, the 'Oaks of righteousness' and the 'shoots of God's planting' and who likely also identified themselves as Nazoreans (Acts 24:5).

Matthew's use of *Ναζωραῖος* poses some problems to the modern reader, but no such difficulty should be presumed for his original audience. Matthew uses it without explanation which leads Stendahl to argue that the expression must have been so familiar and its use so widespread amongst predominantly Gentile audiences prior to the adoption of the term "Christian" that it did not require explanation.[271] Alternatively, Matthew was writing for a mostly Jewish community who understood what he was alluding to. In later years, the reference probably would still have been clear to a Jewish Christian, but less so for a Gentile Christian.[272]

The argument in favour of a predominantly Jewish audience is strengthened by the consistent use of Hebraisms and the emphasis on Jesus' role as Christ/Messiah. This title was emphasized elsewhere in the New Testament in writings such as in the fourth Gospel, the

[270] Hagner supports my conclusions, but he also acknowledges that it is possible that the Gospel was written by a Gentile, for Gentiles. I too acknowledge the possibility, but I think it quite unlikely. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lxiv; see also Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 C.E* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 47.
[271] Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 198-199.
[272] Leske, "Jesus as Nazoraios," in McNicol, Peabody, and Subramanian, *Resourcing New Testament Studies*, 70.

Acts of the Apostles, the Letter to the Hebrews, and in parts of 1 Peter, which were directed towards what appear to have been predominantly Jewish audiences. Jesus' title as messiah gets little emphasis in the second and third Gospels, and the letters of Paul.[273] It is fair then to suggest that the emphasis on Jesus as messiah and the relatively frequent use of Christ in the titular sense supports the contention that Matthew's audience was predominantly Jewish.

Matthew's community comes more into focus through his interpretation of Isa 9:1-2. Once again there is the impression that the audience was predominantly Jewish by virtue of the usage and the adaptation of the Isaian text, and by Matthew's manipulation of the Hebrew symbol of 'light.' This growing sense of communal identity is made more acute by Matthew's selection of Isa 9:1-2 with its focus on Galilee and the association with the נצר messianic tradition already established. Matthew seems to be speaking to an audience in Galilee, or with strong ties to the region,[274] who seem to be open to the idea of a mission to the gentiles.[275]

Finally, we are also able to recognize a superlative sense to the Matthean community's understanding of Jesus. They did not simply see him as a messenger of God. Rather, for them he embodied God's authority in his very person as evidenced by his opening of the bound prophecies through his presence, as opposed to proclaiming them so on behalf of God. This superlative view of Jesus is made explicit in Matthew's treatment of Isa 9:1-2 where he contrasts Jesus and his teaching with John the Baptist and his message.

It is difficult to say with certainty how Matthew's audience would have received these two citations and the depth of tradition which lay behind them.[276] It can be said that during this time approximately half of the weekly readings in the Synagogues were drawn from Isa 40-61. We also know that 2/3 of the 250 New Testament references to Isaiah were also

[273] Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, 81.
[274] See also Leske, "Jesus as Nazoraios," in McNicol, Peabody, and Subramanian, *Resourcing New Testament Studies*, 80-81.
[275] Beaton, "Isaiah in Matthew's Gospel," in Moyise, *Isaiah*, 77-78.
[276] Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 23.

drawn from these same chapters.[277] Most of these references were made by Matthew, but Mark, Luke and John also made use of Isaiah. It seems reasonable to infer from this that Matthew's audience would have understood the traditions and themes that underpin the citations Matthew has used.

The reception of the traditions Matthew draws attention to through the citations is coloured by the point of entry to the original texts, the citations themselves. Keeping in mind that Matthew's audience did not have an Isaian scroll before them to which they could refer, they would need to know the wider context from which the citation is drawn. In other words, they would need to know pre-Exilic history and the earliest writings of Isaiah in order to enter into an understanding of Isa 7:14. They would also need to be familiar with portions of Exodus, Numbers, Judges and possibly the Pseudepigrapha to enter into Isa 11:1. Their knowledge would have to include the storyline as well as the intertextual connections of these works because they did not have the benefit of chapter and verse nomenclature to delineate structure. It seems doubtful that a Gentile would have had such depth of familiarity with Hebrew texts. Mark and Luke seem to make relatively modest use of citations in comparison with Matthew as they composed their Gospels for a primarily Gentile audience.[278] So why then would Matthew do otherwise? Presumably the conclusion should be that his community was primarily Jewish.

Matthew's use of these citations in particular would have been important to such an audience. The Gospels are not primarily missionary documents, rather they are didactic in the sense that they are directed towards the faithful for the purpose of illuminating the beliefs of the early followers of Jesus.[279] The use of Isa 7:14 and 11:1 would have been of seminal

[277] Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 25.
[278] Which is not to say they do not make use of it at all, just considerably less. Cf. Mark Goodacre, "Mark, Elijah, the Baptist and Matthew: The Success of the First Intertextual Reading of Mark," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Vol. 2: The Gospel of Matthew* (Thomas R. Hatina ed.; New York: T and T Clark, 2008) 77.
[279] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 99.

value in connecting Jesus with the promised messiah, the 'branch of David', and with all that that entails by virtue of the tradition standing behind these citations.[280]

Conclusion

This chapter built upon the analyses of the citations and the findings made earlier. It showed how Matthew's use of these citations formed his christological message and considered what could be said about his community.

The christology that emerges from the examination of the three citations considered presents Jesus as a descendant of David, the long awaited messiah, the son of God, and one who carries with him the authority of God. He will lead the faithful to their salvation and establish a righteous and everlasting kingdom in which they will reside. Jesus will be a light for his people as the embodiment of spiritual enlightenment, and his people will be drawn from all the nations.

Matthew seems to have been a member of a community of Jewish followers of Jesus who closely identified themselves with the messianic expectations related to the term נצר, and they seem to have been located in Galilee. Not all of this community accepted Jesus though, as witnessed by his rejection in Nazareth, as well as in Chorazin, and Bethsaida.

[280] For a more modest assessment of the purpose served by Isa 11:1 cf. Stendahl, "Quis et Unde," in Stanton, *The Interpretation*, 58; and Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 97.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that the author of the Gospel According to Matthew employed the citations within Matt 1:18-25; 2:19-23; and 4:12-16 to demonstrate that Jesus was the messiah and the heir of David as understood by the adherents to the נצר tradition. He achieved this by using exegetical methods common in his day and culture, thus embedding in this new text the thematic heritage of the old. This formed the basis of his christology and it was a view unique to this Gospel in comparison to the other Synoptics. In doing this he allowed us a glimpse of his community.

Chapter Two examined two factors that rest behind the Gospel. First, it considered two related exegetical techniques, Midrash and Pesher, which were in use during the first century C.E. by Hebrew scholars. In this section Neusner's three part formula for understanding prophetic Midrash was presented. This consisted of a narrative, a subscription that establishes the narrative as the fulfillment of the third element and a prophetic passage. The discussion of Pesher exegesis suggested that it was an unlikely candidate for the principal exegetical tool used by the author of this Gospel, though he was probably familiar with it and possibly influenced by it as a result.

The second point addressed was the meaning of the term "fulfilled" as Matthew used it. It was argued that a literal typology based in an historical context was the most promising hermeneutic. This was supported by historic usage within the prophetic literature of the Second Temple period and by its resonance with Midrash, which also eschewed allegory.

Chapter Three considered three general themes in the Old Testament that were

suggested by the fulfillment citations under consideration. The themes addressed were: 'messianism' and its related sub-theme of the title 'son of God'; the 'sovereignty of God' and its associated sub-theme of 'shoots of God's planting'; and lastly, 'universalism' as witnessed by the phrase 'light to the nations.'

In considering the 'messianic' sub-theme of the 'son of God' it was shown that it was common to view God in a familial sense as the father of His people and that the word 'son' could be understood in one of three ways according to context. It could refer to the people as in 'sons of Israel', or it could have a corporate meaning as in 'my son Israel'. It could also refer to a person as in 'my son David' in which case either adoption is implied or this is simply a specific expression of the more general understanding of all the faithful being sons of God. The expression 'son of David' seems to carry more weight as it is consistently used to connect individuals with David and the 'promise tradition' hence the messianic significance that came to be attached to the title during the Second Temple period.

The discussion of the sub-theme of the 'shoots of God's planting' indicated that it was common for the faithful to be referred to as 'branch', 'planting', or 'shoots' within the prophetic literature considered. While 'shoots' and 'plantings' came to be associated with the community, 'branch' was more closely identified with the messiah.

Last, in considering the 'universalist' theme of the 'light to the nations', it was established that 'light' referred to spiritual enlightenment or instruction and 'nations' to the faithful amongst all the peoples of the world.

Chapter Four addressed a considerable amount of material in the analyses of the three citations. It was the exegesis of these three citations that showed how Matthew imported the original context and themes of the references into his text. Matthew seems to have relied primarily upon recensions of the LXX for Matt 1:18-23 and 4:12-16 and a Hebrew text for Matt 2:19-23. Furthermore, in the latter two cases while the likely source can be identified,

the influence of the Hebrew text on Matt 4:12-16 and the LXX on Matt 2:19-23 can also be seen. Clearly, the author had access to multiple recensions of Isaiah in both languages. The analyses show that Matthew has provided his audience with a sophisticated interpretation of Hebrew text that can be described as Midrash and that he also appears to be familiar with the Pesher method as well. Matthew uses Hebrew literary devices and methods of expression to a degree and in a manner that suggests that he is very comfortable working with Hebrew texts. Furthermore, he appears to have authored the textual units containing the citations himself and integrated them into his gospel according to a plan of writing. In doing so he respects the integrity of the citations while still being able to adapt them to serve in fairly complex literary structures. Last, Matthew displays a command of Greek grammar and syntax that allows him to say much with an economy of words. These factors of source, method and style all suggest that Matthew had received some formal training in exegesis.

Matthew reflects a literal understanding of Isa 7:14 in the way he uses it in his text and builds upon it with new material. This fits well with the understanding of typological fulfillment in terms of historical patterns. He seems to have considered the Messianic expectations represented by Isa 60:21 and 61:1-3 as fulfilled in proclaiming the prophecies fulfilled in Matt 2:19-23. Matthew also appears to be presenting here another typological fulfillment in that just as Moses brought the faithful out of Egypt and saved them from physical bondage, Jesus coming out of Egypt will save the faithful from spiritual bondage; a new Moses and a new Exodus giving us the similar patterns but with escalation in fulfillment. His use of material from Isa 7-9, passages bound by the command of God, indicates that he believes the Messiah has arrived and that the kingdom of God is at hand. Matthew seems to be telling his audience that these prophecies have been unsealed by the advent of Jesus. Thus the prophecies are fulfilled in unanticipated ways, and in ways that are escalated well beyond that of the original text.

Chapter Five drew together the threads of the argument in presenting a synopsis of the christology conveyed by the citations considered and a brief picture of the Gospel's audience based upon the textual evidence, ancient witness, and reasonable conjecture. The christology that emerges from the examination of the three citations presents Jesus as a descendant of David, the long awaited messiah, the son of God, and one who carries with him the authority of God. He will lead the faithful to their salvation from sin and establish a righteous and everlasting kingdom in which they will reside. Jesus will be a light for his people as the embodiment of spiritual enlightenment, and his people will be drawn from all the nations.

The implications of this for further study suggest the utility of continuing to examine the fulfillment citations of Matthew in detail. The literary relationship established between the passages Matt 1:18-25; 2:13-15; and 2:19-23 suggest a unity to Matthew's introduction and a providence not normally embraced by mainstream scholarship. It would be interesting to see what more can be inferred about the early chapters of this Gospel as a literary unit through an examination of Matt 2:13-15; 3:1-6; and 4:14-16 in relation to the passages already considered here.

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