

THE USE OF FULFILMENT QUOTATIONS IN
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

M.A. (THEOLOGY) THESIS

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THE USE OF FULFILMENT QUOTATIONS IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

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of Arts (Theology)



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Declaration by Candidate

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for any other award.



(Jonathan Samuel Nkhoma)



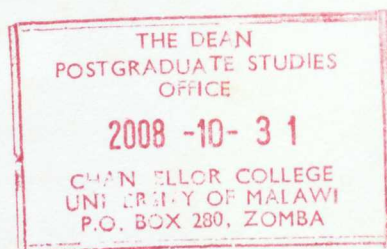
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Declaration by the Supervisor

I hereby declare that this dissertation is submitted with the approval of the Supervisor.



(Dr Hilary B.P. Mijoga, Associate Professor)



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An abstract

The central mission of the Christian Church is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. This essentially consists of his Person and his redemptive work. This is what is called the *kerygma* or Gospel. The New Testament gospel writers seek to explain this *kerygma* by using Old Testament categories like Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man and others. The New Testament, along with the Old Testament, remains the ultimate authority on matters of Christian faith and practice.

In the search for an understanding of the concept of Messiah in the Gospel according to Matthew, a study of the evangelist's fulfilment quotations offers one of the most significant alternative approaches. This approach is exactly what the present inquiry, in the following pages, seeks to apply in an attempt to determine how this particular evangelist understands Jesus as the Messiah. Once we grasp what the evangelist understands by the concept of Messiah, we can proceed, safely, to apply that meaning to our contemporary situations.

The study of fulfilment quotations in the Gospel according to Matthew is not a new development. As early as 1885, E. Massebieau argued that they have an apologetic function, designed to contribute to Christian "vindication" over against Judaism. Throughout the past century, scholars have in many ways contributed to our understanding of these special Matthean quotations. The primary focus in these studies was, however, on the literary problems of these quotations. To my knowledge, none of these previous scholarly attempts focused on their theological significance in light of their Old Testament prophetic word.

The objective of the present research is to investigate how an understanding of these quotations, in view of their Old and New Testament contexts, would contribute to our understanding of the evangelist's theology, especially in terms of his views of Jesus as the Promised Messiah. It also aims at investigating the problem of origin, and character, of the fulfilment quotations under study. In the process, the research seeks to contribute to the on-going documentation of Matthean theology.

The research presents to us quite a significant challenge. It demands that we engage in a five-step hermeneutical procedure required in the investigation of any genre of Scripture. These are, according to Virkler, historical-cultural and contextual analysis; lexical-syntactical analysis; theological analysis; genre identification and analysis; and application. This analytical method is later referred to simply as an exegetical literary approach or as grammatical-historical method. As the reader will soon discover, these hermeneutical concepts are used as tools and instruments in the exegetical-theological process of the present

inquiry. These analytical tools are applied to the quotations in their double settings of Old Testament prophecy and Christian gospel.

The results of the research shed new light on the role of the prophetic word in the evangelist's Christological understanding of the Messiah. The results also have implications for the manner in which the evangelist wrote his gospel, and these are likely to stimulate further discussion, especially on Matthean authorship and the Synoptic Problem in general.

The study does not claim to be exhaustive, let alone conclusive, at all the crucial points. Despite this limitation, however, the research provides a new perspective on the role of prophecy in the Christological understanding of the New Testament writers, especially the evangelist Matthew. It also presents the evangelist as an independent Christian theologian with the ability, like his New Testament counterparts, to construct a Christology of his own, using the raw materials of gospel tradition (both oral and written) and Biblical prophecy, a role which Matthean critical scholarship has for long denied him. Previous Matthean critical scholarship, with a few exceptions, has generally seen the evangelist as a Marcan "disciple."

List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AKJV	Authorised King James Version
ATJ	<i>Africa Theological Journal</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DSPS	Duquesne Studies Philosophical Series
ET	English Translation
Heb.	Hebrew
Gr	Greek
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JTSA	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
LBC	Layman's Bible Commentary
LXX	The Septuagint, Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece, i.e. The Greek Old Testament Bible
MSS	Manuscripts
MT	Massoretic text
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
OTL	Old Testament Library
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries

Dead Sea Scrolls

CD	The Damascus rule, a Cairo Genizah text of the Damascus Document
IQS	The Community Rule from Qumran Cave 1
IQM, 4QM	The War Rule from Qumran Caves 1 and 4
4QP Bless	The Blessings of Jacob from Qumran Cave 4
4Q161-4	Commentaries on Isaiah from Qumran Cave 4
4Q166-7	Commentaries on Hosea from Qumran Cave 4
IQ14	Commentary on Micah from Qumran cave 1
4Q169	Commentary on Nahum from Qumran Cave 4
IQP Hab.	Commentary on Habakkuk from Qumran Cave 1
4Q171, 4Q173	Commentaries on Psalms from Qumran Cave 4
4Q174	The <i>Florilegium</i> , A Midrash on the Last days from Qumran Cave 4
IIQ Melch	The Heavenly Prince Melchizedek document from Qumran Cave 11
4QMMT	<i>Miqsat ma'ase ha-torah</i> , a letter-like text from Qumran cave 4

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Chapter 1

The State of the Question

A. Introduction

This chapter will introduce to the reader the main focus of the research, its aim, objectives, the method that guides it, the relationship the research has to other research, and its contribution to scholarship. The major focus of the chapter will be on pivotal secondary literature. The results of this investigation will clearly reveal to the reader that previous research on Matthean fulfilment quotations has not sufficiently addressed itself to the problem of the theological significance of these quotations in their gospel setting in light of their prophetic background. The results will also show that this failure is partly due to methodological considerations. In the subsequent chapters, the research will draw support from Jewish literature, patristic writings, and an original exegetical - theological investigation of the fulfilment quotations, to establish the thesis that the evangelist has used these quotations theologically in light of their prophetic setting.

1. Main focus of the Research

The main focus of the present inquiry is the theological significance of the fulfilment quotations in the Gospel according to Matthew seen in the light of Old Testament prophecy. Previous research on Matthean fulfilment quotations mainly centred on their literal background and formulation. The problem of their theological significance, and the role of prophecy in that regard, remains an unfilled gap within Matthean fulfilment quotations research. The present inquiry is a contribution toward the filling of this gap in Matthean scholarship. It is also a contribution toward the ongoing discussion on their origin and character. Therefore, the research problem of the thesis is that previous research on Matthean fulfilment quotations focused on literary techniques of the evangelist in his use of the Old Testament. Little effort has been made to link the evangelist's exegesis of the Old Testament and his theology in the light of the Old Testament context of his fulfilment quotations.

This study aims at addressing this shortfall by relating these quotations to their Old Testament context in an attempt to understand the theology of the evangelist. Hence, the thesis for my study is that the fulfilment quotations in the Gospel according to Matthew have a significant theological role, and that this theological significance is reflected in the way these Old Testament quotations are formulated and in the manner in which they are used by

will further lead to a statement on a provisional theory of the Synoptic Problem as a possible area for further research.

4. Research Methods

The research methods that are used in this research fall into two categories. The first category involves an investigation of all relevant literary sources both primary and secondary. This means that the research is literary-based. Insights drawn from these literary sources in many ways contribute to the shape and content of the dissertation. A selected list of these sources appears in the bibliography. The second category relates to the analytical method which governs the conceptual framework of the whole research. The research is guided by the grammatical-historical method, also referred to as an exegetical-literary approach.

5. The Research in Relation to other Research

The present research shares several aspects with previous research into the phenomenon of Matthean fulfilment quotations. The basic link is the common scholarly interest in the phenomenon. There is also a common theological interest with regard to their purpose in the gospel setting. Various suggestions have been offered. Some claim that they are didactic, others claim that they are apologetic. The present research maintains that they are primarily kerygmatic.

There is also a common scholarly interest in the use of critical conceptual tools which include form criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism and the grammatical-historical analytical method.

There is again a common use of terminology, especially the term "fulfilment quotations" and its variants, e.g. "formula quotations", "context quotations", "reflection quotations." The German equivalent of the term last mentioned is *reflexionszitate* and appears as early as 1889 in that year's edition of a commentary on the synoptic gospels by H.J. Holtzmann. In more recent years W. Rothfuchs has used the German term *Erfüllungszitate*, a German equivalent of the term "fulfilment quotations" adopted in the present study.¹ All these terms refer to the same phenomenon. Despite these links, however, the research remains and maintains a unique

¹ See Luz, *Matthew 1-7, A Continental Commentary*, p. 156, n.1; Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah, A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke*, AB, New York: Doubleday, 1993, p. 96, note.1.

the evangelist in his application to the Christ-event. The thesis further asserts that the evangelist is himself responsible for the formulation of these quotations and that they were designed to serve his theological purpose.

2. Aim of Research

The overall aim for this research is to offer a theological contribution to the field of New Testament theology in general and Matthean theology in particular. As I surveyed the various literature on this subject in preparation for the research, I was again and again left with the impression that, of the three synoptic gospels, Matthean theology is the least developed. I came across several works on the theology of Luke and the theology of Mark but very few works on Matthean theology. Even these as far as I can remember, see the evangelist as theologising the Marcan gospel! Further reading indicated that the critical methods of form, source, and redaction criticism contributed to this state of affairs. It, therefore, became an aim of this research to investigate Matthean theology using fulfilment quotations as a route and grammatical-historical method as a conceptual tool, paying special attention to the role of prophecy in the process. It was felt that a slightly different approach might yield fruitful results that may enrich and complement other scholarly efforts on the subject.

3. Objectives of Research

In view of the foregoing aim of the research, the study has three main objectives. First, it was intended to test my assumption that the fulfilment quotations have a significant function in defining the theology of the evangelist, and, if so, to document these theological implications as a contribution to the knowledge that is already available on Matthean theology.

Secondly, the research was intended to test my assumption that the fulfilment quotations come from the evangelist himself and, if so, examine the nature of that origin and its implications to the theology of the evangelist.

Thirdly, the research was intended to contribute to current debate on Matthean authorship, not by way of offering a detailed theory on the Synoptic Problem, but by way of offering critical observations that may stimulate further research on this problem. This third objective is to be met not directly through any systematic development of an argument on Matthean authorship, but indirectly by drawing some critical observations implicated by the main results of the research. These critical observations drawn from the main results of the research

contribution toward a better understanding of the phenomenon and its role in Matthean theology.

6. Contribution of the Research

As the reader will see, there are several areas to which the research offers a remarkable contribution. The research provides further insights on the theological significance of the Matthean fulfilment quotations. The research also offers a new perspective on the role of prophecy in the evangelist's theological reconstruction. It sees the evangelist using these quotations theologically in the light of their prophetic context. The research also offers some valuable insights on the evangelist's freedom and independence as a writer as he brings to bear upon his theological reconstruction the raw materials of gospel tradition and prophecy. His remarkable success in this points to an early date for his gospel. This further suggests parallel development of the synoptic tradition whether Mark was written a little earlier or not.

7. Literature review

This study is based on primary sources from ancient Judaism and early Christianity and on an original exegetical-theological analysis of fulfilment quotations. Various literary sources have been used in the process of this analysis. However, secondary literature which has a pivotal bearing on the thesis has been discussed. This include the works of Krister Stendahl, Robert, H. Gundry, Francis W. Beare, Ulrich Luz, Raymond E. Brown, Willoughby C. Allen and Charles H. Dodd. The results of the discussion in this Chapter shows much more clearly the gap that exists in Matthean fulfilment quotations research. This study seeks to contribute toward the filling of this gap in Matthean scholarship

8. Outline of the Thesis

The work is divided into four chapters. In this chapter, I have discussed the nature of the problem and indicated the scope of the study. I have also discussed in more detail the rationale for my choice of the grammatical-historical method as the analytical tool for this research. A philosophical rationale for the structure of the thesis is also stated. The thesis discusses the Person of the Messiah before it discusses his redemptive mission. This is in line with Christian philosophical understanding of the concept of *persona* over against ancient and modern philosophical traditions which see *persona* essentially as a project, or product, of

individual and social construction. The main thrust of the present chapter is a discussion of the secondary literature whose bearing on the subject is pivotal. The results clearly reveal the hiatus that exists in Matthean fulfilment quotations research.

Chapter 2 is based on primary sources. *The Mishnah*, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, early patristic writings and Old and New Testament apocryphal literature are investigated in more detail to see how they use quotations. The results establish the thesis that biblical quotations are used theologically in religious literature of ancient Judaism and early Christianity and these form a literary background to the work of the evangelist. It is then concluded that the evangelist used the fulfilment quotations in a similar way. The old age and the pre-Christian character of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and some of the traditions incorporated into the *Mishnah*, support an early date for the Matthean gospel.

Chapter 3 discusses the origin and character of the fulfilment quotations in the infancy narrative. It also offers an exegetical-theological analysis of these fulfilment quotations, taking into account their double settings of Old and New Testaments. The results show that they are formulated by the evangelist himself and that they provide him with a theological background understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 offers an exegetical-theological analysis of the fulfilment quotations that are in the ministry and passion narratives. The results show that the fulfilment quotations in these sections of the gospel are also formulated by the evangelist and that they also offer him a theological background understanding of the redemptive mission of Jesus Messiah. The conclusion to the whole research brings together the main results of the research and draws from them some implications on Matthean scholarship. As a whole, the research supports the thesis that the evangelist uses fulfilment quotations theologically in light of their prophetic contexts.

9. Conclusion

The research reaches quite stimulating, if not provocative, conclusions. It offers critical remarks on the role of prophecy in the evangelist's theology, and on his freedom and independence as a writer in the formation of fulfilment quotations and in the reconstruction of his theology. It also draws implications with regard to the questions of Matthean authorship and the Synoptic problem. Above all, the conclusions support the thesis that the evangelist applies his fulfilment quotations to the Christ-event theologically with full regard to their prophetic contexts.

B. The Problem

There are fulfilment quotations in the Gospel of Matthew. These are a series of quotations drawn from the Old Testament prophets and the Psalter and introduced by a special formula, namely, "in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ... through the prophet saying" (*hina plērōthē to rēthen ... dia tou prophetou legontos*)². These quotations are essentially a Matthean phenomenon. They are also technically known as "formula quotations". But for the purpose of this study I will refer to them as "fulfilment quotations" because this phrase focuses on their function while the former is merely suggestive of their stereotype introductory phrase.

Previous research on fulfilment quotations focused on literary techniques of the evangelist in his use of the Old Testament. Little attempt was made to link the evangelist's exegesis of the Old Testament and his theology in the light of the Old Testament context of his fulfilment quotations. This study is aimed at addressing this shortfall by relating these quotations to their Old Testament context in an attempt to understand the theology of the evangelist. It has also been suggested by some scholars that the evangelist drew these quotations from such sources as the Testimonia, the Gospel of Mark or the Source Q and that the changes he made to them were so insignificant to justify any theological role in his gospel. Others have attributed them to the evangelist's imaginative creation patterned on Old Testament phraseology as part of the evangelist's midrashic approach to Old Testament interpretation. These suggestions will be critically discussed later in the present chapter. In this study I will argue that these quotations come from the evangelist himself, that he either draws them directly from the Old Testament itself or he has sufficient knowledge of their Old Testament contexts to enable him to use these quotations theologically, and that he is responsible for their mixed text-form.³

Hence, the thesis for my study is that the fulfilment quotations in the Gospel according to Matthew have a significant theological role. It is my contention that this theological

² There is some variety within the wording of the stereotype introductory phrase itself as it applies to the various Old Testament fulfilment quotations. The introductory phrase *hina plērōthē to rēthen* is found at 1:22; 2:15; 4:14; 12:17 and 21:4. The introductory phrase *hopōs plērōthē to rēthen* is found at 2:23; 8:17 and 13:35. The one at 2:17 and 27:9 is necessitated by the context. The introductory phrases at 3:3 and 13:14 are quite different. 3:3 has *hotos gar estin ho rētheis*, and 13:14 *kai anaplēroutai*. These substantially depart from the rest and cannot be treated as proper introductory phrases to fulfilment quotations. The text in 26:56 is unreliable. Therefore, the quotations at 3:3; 13:14 and 26:56 fall outside the scope of the present inquiry.

³ They are usually a combination of LXX and Hebrew texts with a substantial input from the evangelist himself: "They show deviations from all Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic types of texts known to us, while at the same time they intermingle influences from these." See Krister Standahl, *The School of St. Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament*, Second Edition, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968, p. 97. Cf. Francis W. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew, a Commentary*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981, p. 71.

significance is reflected in the way these Old Testament quotations are formulated and in the manner in which they are used by the evangelist. They are mixed in their formulation and tend to be integrated in their usage by the evangelist so that they serve their intended theological purpose. The widely accepted fulfilment quotations are : Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5 and 27:9-10. The following quotations are debatable because imperfections in their introductory formula create uncertainty⁴ as to whether these should be classified as fulfilment quotations: Matt 2:5-6; 3:3; 13:14-15, and 26:56. Because the present study is primarily an inquiry into the significance of these fulfilment quotations to the theology of the evangelist, I have limited the study to the widely accepted fulfilment quotations. Only the fulfilment quotation at 2:6, among the debatable ones, has been included in this study, because in my opinion its peculiarity can be satisfactorily accounted for by a consideration of the context.

These fulfilment quotations broadly fall into two categories: those found in the infancy narrative and those found in the ministry and passion narrative of the gospel. They are similar in terms of style and theological significance. However, their concentration in the infancy narrative (Matthew 1-2) suggests a deliberate effort on the part of the evangelist to introduce the person of Jesus while the rest of fulfilment quotations scattered in the rest of the gospel appear to emphasise the redemptive work of Jesus Messiah. In the infancy narrative the person of Jesus Messiah is defined by the fulfilment quotations by making reference to his divinity which is implied in his virgin birth and his divine call from Egypt (Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 25) and to his Messianic status as Son of David (Matt 2:15, 17, 23). In the fulfilment quotations found in the rest of the gospel emphasis falls on the saving work of Jesus Messiah which includes his preaching ministry especially in Galilee (Matt 4:14-16), his healing ministry (Matt 8:17; 12:17-21), his teaching ministry (13:35), his kingship (Matt 21:4-5) and his passion (Matt 27:9-10).

The shift in emphasis from person in the infancy narrative to work in the rest of the gospel cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by reference to psychological development. Rather, it is a theological shift for Matthew's primary concern is theological. Matthew writes to Jewish Christians to show them that Jesus is the Messiah right from his birth and that he did not become a Messiah only after performing his redemptive work. The divine authority of Jesus' Messiahship is particularly emphasised by this evangelist.⁵

⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah, A Commentary on the Infancy Narrations in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, p. 98. Cf. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7, A Continental Commentary*, pp. 156-59. Also note 6 above.

C. Methodological Considerations

Most Matthean studies at the beginning of last century employed form-critical approach. Probably the greatest contribution of form criticism to critical scholarship is its attempt to classify literary forms in the Bible. It has been observed that "The only abiding interpretative value of form criticism is its classification of the Gospel material into various 'forms'."⁶

However, it is an indispensable help in any sound exegesis: "Since an appreciation of form is necessary for the understanding of any literature, form criticism will remain a basic tool for exegesis of the Gospels."⁷

By the middle of the last century, after the Second World War, redaction criticism came to the front. Probably the most significant contribution of redaction criticism is its focus on the writers as creative authors and theologians who shaped the tradition in accordance with their own theological perspective.⁸ With due respect to the positive contribution these approaches have made to critical scholarship in Gospel studies it is important to note that they are limited in certain respects. By assuming that the evangelists read back into the teaching of Jesus what they saw was needed in their own situation, form criticism goes beyond a study of forms and overlooks the fact that topics of the Gospels are not the topics that occupied the early church.⁹ Also, by assuming that the tradition was transmitted in isolated units, without any connected

⁵ This aspect of Jesus' Messiahship is thoroughly discussed by Robert H. Gundry in his *Matthew, A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, especially pp. 58, 137-80.

⁶ Scot McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, p. 78.

⁷ Stephen H. Travis, "Form Criticism," in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation, Essays on Principles and Methods*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 1985, p. 162. For further positive evaluation of form criticism, see McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 78-9. Cf. Travis, "Form Criticism," pp. 161-62; Robert H. Stein, *Synoptic Problem, An Introduction*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, pp. 139-57, 217-88; Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971, p. 18; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, London: Tyndale, 1970, p. 148. For an original and thorough treatment of the whole subject as it relates to the synoptic gospels, see Martin Dibelius' book *From Traditions to Gospel*, Cambridge and London: James Clarke, 1971. Also Rudolf Bultmann's, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1972, for its systematic application to the synoptic tradition.

⁸ For a positive evaluation of redaction criticism see, McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 92-3; Stephen S. Smalley, "Redaction Criticism," in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 188-91; Stein, *The Synoptic Problem*, pp. 139-57. For a brief discussion on the limitations of the historical-critical method which basically includes source, form and redaction criticism, see Terence J. Keegan, *Interpreting the Bible, A popular Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, New York: Paulist, 1985, pp. 30-2.

⁹ Leon Morris, *Luke. An Introduction and Commentary*, Second Edition, TNTC, Leicester: InterVarsity press, 1988, p. 33. Francis W. Beare's book, *The Gospel According to Matthew, A Commentary*, is an excellent example of a work based on the results of form criticism. He has systematically attempted to bring forward into the setting of the so-called Matthean community almost all references to Jesus' teaching and ministry.

narrative and basing its critical judgment on individual phrases, clauses or statements; form criticism blurs the creative role of the evangelist¹⁰ and the significance of the immediate textual context is lost. In form-critical approach each independent unit of tradition (a phrase, a clause, a statement, sometimes a paragraph) is considered to belong to a different 'situation in life' (*Sitz im Leben*) which is often perceived to be different from the textual context in which the unit is found. Attempts are then made to isolate each independent unit from the textual context and associate each of them with other units from other parts of the tradition believed to belong to the same 'situation in life'. The framework of the life of Jesus is considered to be destroyed and the evangelists who wrote the Gospels are viewed as having been confronted with a series of unconnected units¹¹ which they put together "like beads on a string".

¹⁰ That the evangelists do not have a significant creative role in the Gospel tradition is one of the fundamental pillars of form criticism. Martin Dibelius, one of the pioneer scholars to apply this discipline to the Synoptic tradition, has emphasized this point very strongly: "There is a theory that the history of literature is the history of its various forms. This ... has ... special significance when applied to materials where the author's personality is of little importance. Many anonymous persons take part in handing down popular traditions. They act, however, not merely as vehicles, but also as creative forces by introducing changes or additions without any single person having a 'literary' intent. In such cases the personal peculiarities of the composer or narrator have little significance; much greater importance attaches to the form in which the tradition is cast by practical necessities, by usage, or by origin. The development goes on steadily and independently subject all the time to certain definite rules, for no creative mind has worked upon the material and impressed it with his own personality... the literary understanding of the synoptics begin with the recognition that they are collections of material. The composers are only to the smallest extent authors. They are principally collectors, vehicles of tradition, editors... Before all else their labour consist in handing down, grouping and working over the material which has come to them... Owing to a philological and theological tradition we ourselves have become accustomed to ascribe to the authors and their prejudices a large responsibility for the tradition as a whole, just as if we were dealing with Belles Letters. This error is ancient." Clearly, here, Dibelius rejects any attempt to attribute creativeness to the evangelists. He, however, attributes any creativeness there is to the early Christian communities in which the tradition arose, i.e. his "many anonymous persons [who] take part in handing down popular traditions" and who act "not merely as vehicles, but also as creative forces." See Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, pp. 1, 2, 3.

¹¹ The form – critical assumption that individual units of tradition were passed on in an unconnected form has been vigorously challenged from the beginning, especially by C.H. Dodd who argued that there were different types of materials in the Gospels, namely independent units, larger complexes, and a basic outline of the life of Jesus. He maintained that the latter aspect can be glimpsed in the Marcan summaries (1:14-15, 21-22, 39; 3:7b-19; 4:33-34; 6:7, 12-13, 30) as well as in the early sermons recorded in Acts (2:14-39; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 5:30-32; 10:37-41; 13:17-41). See C.H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," *Expository Times*, 43, (1932), pp. 396-400. Cf. McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 78. For a survey of the early scholarly evaluation and use of form criticism, see Edgar V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969, pp. 38-56.

This task of form criticism appears to be an arbitrary one and violates the textual context in which the tradition has come down to us¹². The assumption that the tradition was transmitted as isolated units overlooks the rabbinic teaching practice of the first century Palestine whereby rabbis cast their teaching into forms suitable for memorization and insisted that their pupils learn it by heart. Contemporary research in Jewish pedagogical practice and the nature of oral transmission in the Jewish milieu either in Palestine or in the Diaspora at the time of the New Testament has shown that the oral transmission of the Gospel tradition is generally reliable:

My chief objection to the form-critical scholars ... is that their work is not sufficiently historical. They do not show sufficient energy in anchoring the question of the origin of the Gospel tradition within the framework of the question how holy, authoritative tradition was transmitted in the Jewish milieu of Palestine and elsewhere at the time of the New Testament... During the first four centuries of our era the oral Torah tradition of the Jewish rabbis grew enormously. And it was still being handed down orally. If one wonders how it was possible for such a huge body of text material to be preserved and passed on orally, one must consider the rabbis' pedagogical methods and the technique employed in oral transmission.¹³

Gerhardson then discusses aspects of oral instruction which aided preservation of the tradition that was being passed on by facilitating memorization and understanding of that tradition. These include memorization, the teaching pattern of "text and commentary", use of precise and concise didactic expressions, poetic devices, repetition, "recitation" and taking written notes.¹⁴ Gerhardson then concludes his discussion of these instructional techniques by pointing out the difficulty of the assumption that the early church did not have any interest in the historical Jesus in the light of the unique authority of Jesus over against the Jewish tradition where many rabbis are referred to while focus and authority remains on and in the Torah:

If one thinks about it [i.e. the unique authority of Jesus], it becomes extremely difficult to imagine that there ever was a time when Jesus' followers were not interested in preserving his teachings and in committing his deeds to memory. And if we orient ourselves historically, and remind ourselves how students in the Jewish milieu hung on the words of their teachers and attentively followed their activities in order to learn how to live properly, it then becomes difficult to believe that Jesus' disciples could have been

¹² George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984, p. 4 observes that form-criticism is primarily concerned with the search for the sources out of which the text is constructed and "at its worst seems blind to the finished product."

¹³ Birger Gerhardson, *The Origins of the Gospels Tradition*, London: SCM, 1979, pp. 8, 19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-48.

less concerned to hear their master, to observe his way of doing things, and to store up all of this in their memories.¹⁵

Gerhardson's observation here is all the more significant when it is remembered that one of the fundamental presuppositions of form criticism is that eye witnesses did not play any significant role in the oral transmission of the Gospel tradition.¹⁶ Other scholars have made similar observations. Stein remarks that "One of the greatest failures of the early form critics was that they did not see the central role that the eye witness must have played in the oral transmission of the Gospel traditions. It may be that the heavy sociological emphasis on the early Christian 'community' was not hospitable to this."¹⁷

Commenting on the same form-critical assumption, Vincent Taylor says, quite ironically, "if the form-critics are right, the disciples must have translated to heaven immediately after the resurrection."¹⁸ Edward Nielsen makes the following comment:

As to the problem of reliability of oral tradition, it must be strongly emphasised that one would be much mistaken in asserting that the oral tradition was subject to no control. Especially in those cases where tradition is flourishing i.e. where there are many traditionalists of the same text, the individual traditionalist has a very small chance of carrying through a corrupt recension. His guild brothers, but first of all his listeners, have been of immeasurable importance in upholding teachers who were to examine the scholars in the canonical texts (cf. late Judaism, Pharisaism, Islam), private members of the tribe who heard the exploits of their tribe celebrated in the odes of their tribal poets (as the Bedouin do to this day) or those taking part in the annual national and religious festivals (e.g. Israel).¹⁹

And Wolfgang Schadewaldt relates an incident from an early Christian community which shows how strictly the audience exerted control over the tradition by immediately pointing out if something was presented in a different form:

We have a similar example from the early Christian communities ... A sermon was preached on the story of the paralysed man who was let down through the roof on a bed or a couch. Jesus healed him and said, "Take up your bed and walk" (Mark 2:4-9). Instead of using the word *krabbatos* for bed or couch, the preacher chose a more refined

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁶ Stein, *The Synoptic Problem, An Introduction*, p. 183.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Vincent Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, London: Macmillan, 1935, p. 41.

¹⁹ Edward Nielsen, *Oral Tradition, A Modern Problem in Old Testament Introduction*, SBT 11, London: SCM, 1954, p. 37.

one (*skimpous*). One of his congregation immediately called out, "Are you better than the one who said *krabbatos*?"²⁰

It has also been observed that the text *Miqsat ma'ase ha-torah* (4QMMT), probably a letter by the Teacher of Righteousness, shows how important it was for the Qumran community to preserve the teachings of its founder. In this light, it is difficult to see why the first generation Christians should not have preserved in writing the traditions about Jesus until twenty years at the earliest following his death and resurrection as form-criticism presupposes²¹.

Thus, the form-critical presupposition that the tradition was transmitted as isolated units falls out of favour in light of the findings of contemporary research in rabbinic teaching methods and the ancient Jewish milieu. The poetic form of much of Jesus' "teaching is probably a reflection of a mnemonic device in Jesus' teaching methodology.

It is partly these limitations which influenced the shift from form to redaction criticism. Gundry, especially, in his work gives as reason for adopting redaction – critical approach the form – critical assumptions. He observes that in this approach the gospels are a little more than a totality of isolated units of tradition, and that the evangelists are no more than compilers and editors of a series of unconnected incidents and sayings. These assumptions, he observes, do not reflect an openness to the creativity of the evangelists: "By choosing to make whole passages rather than individual sentences our standard of judgment, we get a higher number of insertions and a lower number of occurrences in unparalleled material. This choice reflects an openness to Matthean creativity as opposed to form critics assigning unparalleled sentences to earlier traditions of a piecemeal sort."²²

But redaction criticism too is limited in that its "attempt to distinguish sharply between tradition and redaction, and limit the exegetical significance only to the latter stage is not difficult and arbitrary but undercuts basic canonical function within the gospel."²³

Further, there is an element of scepticism inherent in both form and redaction critical approaches. "Whereas the form critics hid Jesus behind the community, the redaction critics have hidden him behind the authors. In other words, the Gospels can now [under redaction criticism] be approached with the assumption that we cannot see Jesus as he was, but only as

²⁰ Wolfgang Schadewaldt, "The Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition," in Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, London: SCM, 1985, p. 109, quoted in Sozomen I, 11, *Patrologia Graeca* LXVII Col. 889. For a full discussion of oral transmission and its bearing on the reliability of the Gospel tradition, see Stein, *The Synoptic Problem, An Introduction*, pp. 187-216; Gerhardson, *The Origins of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 19-24; Schadewaldt, "The Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition", pp. 90-113. For a convenient summary of other weaknesses of form criticism, see McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 76-78.

²¹ Otto Betz and Rainer Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran and the Vatican*, London: SCM, 1994, pp. 153, 155.

²² Gundry, *Matthew, A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, p. 4.

²³ Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon, An Introduction*, London: SCM, 1984, p. 70.

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²² Gundry, *Matthew, A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, p. 4.

²³ Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon, An Introduction*, London: SCM, 1984, p. 70.

Matthew or Mark or Luke or John saw him."²⁴ But this kind of scepticism is not necessary since it is possible to see the evangelists as theologians, and still at the same time as men with great respect for history. For instance, while the gospel of John is probably the most theological of the four the many parallels it shares with the Dead Sea Scrolls in its teaching with reference to John the Baptist, as research on these scrolls has shown, indicate that the Fourth Gospel could be regarded as a valuable historical source.²⁵ The same is true with the other evangelists. If the evangelists had great respect for history, then we do not need to suppose that what we have in oral tradition is Jesus as the early church saw him and that we have no means at all of knowing what the historical Jesus really was like.²⁶

The approach, therefore, taken in this study is exegetical and literary. It is the grammatical – historical approach²⁷ in which the meanings of words will be investigated in the light of their historical contexts. I will investigate the literary formulation of these quotations and compare them to their Old Testament counterparts. Both Old and New Testament contexts of these quotations will be investigated in order to determine their theological significance in Matthean usage. The biblical text in the form that it has come down to us in the original languages will be assumed to be genuine, except where there is textual evidence to the contrary. Theological implications will be drawn not only from specifically Matthean additions or omissions or any other changes made in the quoted text as is often the case in redaction criticism but from the whole text- form,²⁸ these inclusive, as it has come down to us. In addition, the unit of study, especially in the Old Testament context will not be limited to

²⁴ Morris, *Luke, An introduction and Commentary*, p. 32.

²⁵ For similarities between the life and teaching of John the Baptist as presented in the Gospel and the life and teaching of the Qumran Community for instance on opposition to temple worship, baptisms and sacred meals replacing temple worship and feasts of Jewish calendar, see Oscar Cullman, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginning of Christianity," in Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, pp. 22, 28-9. Cf. W.H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," Stendahl (ed.) *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, pp. 32-52; Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, New Scrolls and New Interpretations with Translations of Important Recent Discoveries*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1958, pp. 57-62. For general similarities between the Qumran community and the earliest Christian Church, see Sherman E. Johnson, "The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts," in Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, pp. 129-40. Cf. Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls with Translations by the Author*, New York: The Viking Press, 1961, pp. 111-132.

²⁶ These are basic assumptions of both form and redaction critical methods.

²⁷ Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics, Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981, pp. 75-230, has thoroughly discussed this analytical approach.

²⁸ In a similar vein, Smalley also observes that "the use of the Christian tradition as it stands without editorial shaping, may be just as much an indication of the evangelist's theological outlook. In such a case we must assume that the tradition expressed his intention and understanding so clearly that alteration was unnecessary." See Smalley, "Redaction Criticism," p. 188. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *Luke*,

words, phrases, clauses or statements conceived as independent units as is often the case with form criticism, but will be extended to the whole passage from which a citation is drawn. The underlying presupposition to this approach is the assumption that the evangelist had access to the scriptures of his day (just as Paul was, II Timothy 4:13), or at least he had a thorough knowledge of them, including the immediate contexts of the citations he draws, in addition to whatever sources he had at his disposal.

I must stress, here, that the exegetical and literary (grammatical – historical) approach is fundamentally neither more nor less critical towards the biblical tradition than either form-critical method or redaction-critical method. For all of these, as methodologies to biblical interpretation, are equally concerned with the task of correctly placing the separate biblical texts into their most likely historical contexts. Thus the intentions are basically the same. However, the methods remain different for each critic first comes to a conscious conclusion regarding the relative merit of the presuppositions underlying the critical method of his choice. One of the assured results of the research in New Testament use of the Old Testament is the understanding that the approach of New Testament writers to biblical interpretation is generally “grammatical – historical plus.”²⁹ “The ‘plus’ consists in their claim to find specific references to the Christ – event in scriptures where a non-Christian could naturally have a different understanding. It is this ‘plus’ which makes their approach specifically Christian.”³⁰

If this conclusion with regard to the New Testament writers interpretive approach to the Old Testament is correct, then it follows that the grammatical – historical (exegetical-literary) approach offers us one of the reliable approaches to a proper understanding of the evangelist's theological grasp of his Old Testament as it bears on the Christ-event. With exegetical-literary method we draw closer to the evangelist's mind for he saw his scriptures as a historical record

Historian and Theologian, Exeter: Paternoster, 1970, p. 19; N. Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* London: SPCK, 1970, p. 40.

²⁹ Dan G. McCartney, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," in Harvie M. Conn (ed.), *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, a Challenge, a Debate*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, p. 102. For New Testament writers' historical view of Scriptures, see E. Earle, Ellis, "How the New Uses the Old," in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 209-12. Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament, An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, Second Edition, London: SCM & Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990, pp. 85-6; Gerhard von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament," in Claus Westermann (ed.), *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, Richmond: John Knox, 1963, pp. 18-39; John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation*, Leicester: Apollos, 1990, pp. 97-102; R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament, His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission*, London: Tyndale, 1971, pp. 38-80. In all these works, New Testament writers' typological view of the Old Testament is underlined. And by definition, typology presupposes historical events viewed as recorded in the Old Testament and finding their ultimate fulfilment in the Christ-event to which they are brought to bear in order to explain its theological significance. See France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, pp. 38-9.

and applied it to the Christ-event from that perspective. It is this approach that will guide the present research³¹. However, while adopting the grammatical-historical approach as an analytical tool, the other approaches, as mentioned above, will be consulted.

The methodological procedure of defining a person before his work is quite perplexing to both ancient and modern philosophy. Man as a finite being is said to be:

Marked by a 'to be not yet', by a dynamic coming to be ... constantly becoming more itself...man ... is a person in potentiality rather than enjoying the actualised state of being a person. By means of a free project man has to try to become more and more a person. The statement that man 'is' a person does not refer to an established condition but a mandate, a task to be performed... it is man's task to make himself a person through his deeds, our consideration of the person will have to pay attention to the specific features of human activity.³²

It has also been philosophically argued that:

Both in Greek and Latin culture, up to and including Seneca, the common meaning of the word 'persons'...was that of disguising ...Until the advent of Christianity, there did not exist, either in Greek or in Latin, a word to express the concept of person, because in pagan culture such a concept did not exist; these cultures did not recognise the absolute values of the individuals as such, and made their absolute value depend essentially on class rank, wealth and race.³³

The situation has not changed much in contemporary philosophy, as Mondin further observes: "Many people no longer want the word 'person' to intend the uniqueness, unrepeatability, absolute value, and sacredness of the individual, but wish to assign to this word a merely sociological meaning. Man is not 'man in himself, independently of that which others do' to render him as such."³⁴

These philosophical comments indicate that man becomes a person only when he himself and society at large make him such. In line with this philosophical position, it is logical to see a definition of person before his work as a philosophical contradiction.

³⁰ Jonathan Nkhoma, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," an unpublished MA Module 3, University of Malawi, November 1999, p. 23.

³¹ Probably the major weakness of this analytical approach is that it does not address the current hermeneutical concern with what a particular text means "to me". See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward An Exegetical Theology, Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981, pp. 88-9. It is, of course, not the intention of the present study to inquire into what these fulfilment quotations mean to us today. The study, rather, seeks to inquire into what they meant to the evangelist and how they contributed to his theological understanding of the Christ-event. Within this limit, this analytical method appears to be quite satisfactory.

³² Martin G. Plattel, *Social Philosophy*, DSPS 18, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1965, p. 39

³³ Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology, Man: an Impossible Project?* Rome: Urbaniana University, 1985, p. 243.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

However, it has been noted that the definition of the concept of person in terms of his/her uniqueness, concreteness and dignity "is a truth carried, affirmed, and diffused by Christianity... a conquest of Christian thought."³⁵ This means that in Christian philosophy, man is a person because he/she is a human reality, and not because he is a psychological or social construction.

Because Christian philosophy acknowledges the presence of inherent, dignity and nobility in man, a description of a person prior to and independent of his work does not appear to be contradictory. In fact, it becomes a logical procedure. The present study presupposes this Christian philosophical thought with regard to the concept of person, and structurally proceeds to define the person of the messiah before his redemptive work, as the evangelist himself does.

D. Literature Review

A review of the literature available to me on Matthew's use of the Old Testament with reference to the fulfilment quotations indicates that although much scholarly work has been done on the literary techniques of the evangelist's use of the Old Testament³⁶, little effort has been made to link his exegesis of the Old Testament and his theology in the light of the Old Testament context of his fulfilment quotations. So far, in my limited research, I have not come across any scholar who has given sufficient attention to the theology of the evangelist in light of the Old Testament contexts of the texts that are quoted. Scholars will be categorized according to the schools of thought in terms of which aspect of the historical – critical method or other has guided their research, e.g. form, source or redaction criticism, midrashim or grammatical-historical method. It is, however, important to remember that these aspects are often interrelated.

1. Krister Stendahl

Krister Stendahl wrote his *The School of St Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament* at a time when form criticism was still influential. By definition form criticism was an attempt to reach back to the pre-literary forms or genres of the gospel tradition and did not consider the Old Testament as direct source for the evangelists. Form criticism viewed words, phrases, clauses, statements etc, of the tradition as independent units with an oral existence-whether

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 244 - 45.

³⁶ In this regard Krister Standahl's, *The School of St Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, and Robert H. Gundry's *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel*, Leiden: Brill, 1967 remain unsurpassed.

they reflected an Old Testament text or not. As a son of his time, Stendahl did not consider it plausible that Matthew's fulfilment quotations could have a direct theological relationship to their Old Testament contexts as the evangelist brings these over in an attempt to define the Christ-event³⁷. In addition, Stendahl's greatest concern in this work was to study the literary techniques employed by the Matthean "school" in their use of the Old Testament in light of the "pesher" method of biblical interpretation found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the Manual of Discipline (IQS) from Qumran then newly discovered.³⁸

In his book Stendahl compares the texts of Matthew's fulfilment quotations with the Masoretic Text (MT), the Septuagint (LXX) and other Greek and Syriac versions. From this comparative study he finds that in contrast to Old Testament citations in the gospels, fulfilment quotations are peculiar to Matthew, follow no single textual traditions, but rather represent a selective targumising process in which interpretation is woven into the text itself; that renderings are not a result of paraphrasing or looseness but have their origin in a scholarly detailed study and interpretation of the texts themselves; and that the Matthean type of midrashic interpretation closely resembled the midrash pesher of the Qumran community. To prove this Stendahl engages into a detailed study of some of the exegetical procedures employed at Qumran. In this examination he finds several variants of the MT after comparing these divergent readings in the Dead Sea Scrolls Habakkuk commentary – with other versions. Then he classifies these variants according to the degree of change they bring into the text, i.e., either a mere alteration of a number or a suffix or a more substantial change³⁹. To account for these divergent readings, Stendahl comes to this conclusion, "The peculiar way in which DSH coincides both with those readings differing from MT and with the MT's own makes it inadequate to say DSH's Hebrew text was the one supported by the said texts ... We must rather presume that DSH was conscious of various possibilities, tried them out and allowed them enrich its interpretation of the prophets' message which in all its forms was fulfilled in and through the teacher of righteousness."⁴⁰

In his study of the Matthean quotations Stendahl finds a similar phenomenon, that is, divergent readings which he accounts for by suggesting that they arose from a "school" who selected from various text traditions. At times the "school" created *ad hoc* readings which best expressed the meaning of a text as they understood it. Thus Stendahl's concern in this

³⁷ A similar phenomenon is observed by W.D. Davies in H. Marriott's treatment of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5-7. Davies notices that Marriott's pre-occupation with source-critical analysis of the Sermon contributes to his unsatisfactory exegetical theological analysis of it. According to Davies, Marriott devotes 140 pages out of 274 to source and literary problems. See W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, Cambridge: University Press, 1963, reprint 1966, pp. 1-2, and note 1 on p. 2.

³⁸ Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, especially pp. 183 - 206

³⁹ *Ibid.*, especially pp. 39-142

⁴⁰ Krister Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, p. 190.

book was mainly to see how the distinctive hermeneutical principles and methods of "pesher" interpretation affects the text form of the scriptural passage. He does not relate the theological significance of the fulfilment quotations he studies in the light of their Old Testament context. He is not concerned with the evangelist's theological exposition of these quotations in this study. Stendahl leaves his study at the level of literary parallelism between Qumran commentaries on the scriptural texts and Matthew's scriptural comments in the course of the narrative concerning the advent of Jesus Messiah.

In his later work,⁴¹ Stendahl reiterates his views on the evangelist's use of the Old Testament. Here Stendahl parts ways with form critics by insisting that it would be a mistake to see the evangelist "as a mere redactor who brings together material from different and sometimes conflicting sources as best he can"⁴² because the evangelist has played a formative role when handling the tradition and because he works within the context of the life of a church whose needs he intends to serve.⁴³ Here, Stendahl sides himself with redaction critics. In terms of sources for the evangelist Stendahl only mentions specifically Mark and Q (common tradition this evangelist shares with Luke). The rest is attributed to the creativity of the Matthean church and the formative role of the evangelist as he works on the earlier sources interpretively although Stendahl claims not to have offered any specific theory on the evangelist's sources:

With such confidence in the creative forces of the Matthean church and in the possibilities of analysing and grasping in what manner and for what reasons Matthew presents his materials as he does, the following commentary tries to present Matthew without any specific theory about his sources...

The gospel grew out of a 'school' led by a converted rabbi ... where Jewish methods of teaching and studying were applied to the new cause. From this 'school' originated also the eleven 'formula quotations'... In these quotations Matthew applies rules for interpretation similar to those used at Qumran...⁴⁴

On the "eleven formula quotations", Stendahl further comments:

A study of these suggests that they are the product of Matthean study of scripture applied to Marcan or other material available to Matthew and consequently are neither testimonia, nor quotations chosen by Matthew around which a story was built up.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Krister Stendahl, "Matthew", Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London: Routledge, 1962.

⁴² Stendahl, "Matthew", p. 769.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 769-70.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Thus, Stendahl does not consider the Old Testament as a direct source of the fulfilment quotations that the evangelist employs. He even suggests that the evangelist did not have any role in the choice of these quotations. This, then, implies that according to Stendahl, the evangelist could not be in a position to relate these quotations theologically to their Old Testament contexts in a direct manner. Neither is the Old Testament his direct source nor are the fulfilment quotations his choice.

2. Robert H. Gundry

Like Stendahl before him, Robert H. Gundry's study of the Matthean fulfilment quotations in his *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel* leaves them at the level of literary analysis. Gundry enters into a critical dialogue with Stendahl's approach to the subject. He particularly stresses Stendahl's neglect of other more formal quotations and the numerous Old Testament allusions which, Gundry argues, must be taken together in a responsible analysis of Matthew's method. In this study, Gundry observes that the mixed text-form, i.e., use of independent and free translations of Hebrew in place of or together with Septuagint, noted by Stendahl, was not limited to the fulfilment quotations but was also found throughout the gospel except where Matthew draws formal quotations from Mark whose text-form was predominantly Septuagintal.⁴⁶

Gundry concludes his study with the observation that Matthew's use of the Old Testament text was a result of deliberate and responsible study of Scriptures in the trilingual setting of first century AD Palestine. At certain times various textual traditions that were in existence could be used, and at others independent translations from the Hebrew could be made.⁴⁷ Gundry also observes that the hermeneutical principles of interpretation used by the evangelist are neither arbitrary nor atomizing. Rather, they are a part of a new hermeneutical tradition that arises from the conviction that in Jesus is the fulfilment of all the messianic promises.

According to Gundry, Stendahl, in his *The School of St Matthew*, is methodologically guilty for limiting his study to the fulfilment quotations and on the basis of that study draw provocative conclusions as he did. However, Gundry's own methodological weakness consists in his choosing an almost limitless number of quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament in the gospel of Matthew as a basis for a study which equally leads him to conclusions that are as provocative as those of Stendahl. Some of the "allusions" to the Old Testament he appeals to in support of the argumentative structure that support his conclusions are of a doubtful significance. Their status as genuine allusions is questionable as they may as

⁴⁶ Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel*, pp. 9-150, but especially pp. 89-104.

well be mere linguistic assimilations to Old Testament phraseology without any conscious or intended reference to it. Even if the allusions are assumed to be genuine, it still remains difficult, whenever an allusion differs from the LXX wording, to know whether a variant textual tradition of the Old Testament lies behind it, or whether it is simply an inexact recollection. It is obvious, therefore, that Gundry's appeal to allusions of this nature weakens his argument. The fulfilment quotations still provide a sufficient basis for the study of the theology of the evangelist. This is not to claim that it is the *only* way to understand the evangelist's theology, nor is it here claimed that it is the *best* way. Rather, it is here maintained that this is one *crucial* way for the proper understanding of the evangelist's theology.

Just as Stendahl, Gundry's work does not address the theological role of the fulfilment quotations, let alone their theological relationship to the Old Testament context. He is content to leave his investigation at the literary level.

In his later work, *Matthew, A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, Gundry is much more explicit with regard to his views on the sources and the evangelist's approach used in the preparation of his gospel. Gundry accepts the view that Matthew's method of writing is "midrash" and the proposal that therefore much of his material is unhistorical. The idea of "midrash" was brought into Matthean studies explicitly by M.D. Goulder in his *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*.⁴⁸ Goulder argued that the Gospel of Matthew was an expansion of the gospel of Mark intended for lectionary use and that the evangelist's only source was the gospel of Mark. He also argued that all other material was drawn not from any other existing sources but from the evangelist's own fertile and free imagination that was inspired by his own knowledge of the Old Testament. Thus, for Goulder, whatever was non-Markan had its origin in the evangelist's creative mind. The role of the Old Testament is clearly relegated to the background. The real source, apart from the gospel of Mark is the evangelist's own creativity.

In terms of sources, Gundry allows for the gospel of Mark as the main source but does not attribute to creativity the status of 'source' in a wholesale manner. He argues that Matthew drew much of his other material, including that of chapters one and two, from an expanded Q source:

The comparison undertaken here will show that the peculiarities of Matthew derive almost wholly from his own revision of and additions to Mark and the materials shared only with Luke For Matthew in other words, the need to attempt form – critical extrapolation back to oral tradition reduces nearly to the vanishing point. ...Both Matthew and Luke used Mark and non-Markan tradition in common. The shared non-Markan

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-74

⁴⁸ M.D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, London: SPCK, 1974.

tradition included not only the material usually designated Q, but also the nativity story and some of the materials usually regarded as peculiar to Matthew (M) and Luke (L). Q included more than is usually thought, in other words, but at times Matthew redacted it so freely that his drawing on Q has gone unrecognised and separate traditions have wrongly been posited.⁴⁹

Gundry views the material that the evangelist draws from these "earlier" sources as more or less historical. However, he sees the evangelist's own contribution as unhistorical. He often finds this unhistorical material in the evangelist's "embellishments" of existing traditions rather than in wholesale creation of stories as Goulder earlier proposed: "Even language that seems historical at first ... may, on close inspection, look unhistorical ... If, then Matthew writes that Jesus said or did something Jesus did not say or do in the way described ... we have to say that Matthew did not write entirely reportorial history ... Comparison with midrashic and haggadic literature of his era suggest he did not intend to do so."⁵⁰

Gundry claims that the practice of mixing history and non-history as he holds the evangelist to have done was a normal and a regular form of communication. He argues that the evangelist's original readers would, therefore, have no difficulty in recognizing his method and would not have thought of interpreting historically his "midrashic" contribution:

A mixture of history and non-history should not put us off, then. If each can convey truth separately, there is no presumptive reason to think they cannot convey truth together, provided their mixture was a recognized and accepted mode of communication. Ancient midrash and haggadah show that it was so... History mixed with non-history is still an accepted mode of communication and that unhistorical embellishment can carry its own kind of truth alongside historical truth⁵¹

Gundry leaves one with the impression that the evangelist's use of midrash, in his attempt to bring out the significance of the tradition has in effect rendered the whole of his gospel so unhistorical even as to threaten the historical base of the Christian faith:

Classifying elements of Matthew as midrash and haggadah narrow the historical base of the Christian faithThe freedom with which an author treats materials available to him and the measurement of this freedom by the literary conventions of the time must enter our determinations of his intent. The first gospel repeatedly offers data leading to the conclusion that to make certain didactic and hortatory points Matthew edited historical traditions in unhistorical ways and in accord with midrashic and haggadic practices to which he and his first readers were accustomed. Because he intended not only to pass on historical information but also to elaborate on its significance by embellishing it, the judgment "unhistorical" concerning this or that element in his gospel ought not carry

⁴⁹ Gundry, *Matthew, A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, pp. 2, 4-5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 629.

negative overtones In Matthew we have a document that does not match even a selective report of Jesus' words and deeds. Comparison with the other gospels, especially with Mark and Luke, and examination of Matthew's style and theology show that he materially altered and embellished historical traditions and that he did so deliberately and often.... Matthew's intent was to tell the story of Jesus with alterations and embellishments suited to the needs of the church and the world at the time the gospel was written.⁵²

For Gundry, the Old Testament is not one of the main sources consulted by the evangelist:

There are differences between the Gospel of Matthew and midrash and haggadah in ancient Jewish literature. For one, those who produced midrash and haggadah were embroidering the Old Testament. Matthew was not. Or was he? In a way we may regard his gospel as a wholesale embroidering of the Old Testament with the story of Jesus. Nevertheless Mark and the further tradition shared with Luke remain Matthew's primary sources. But he treated these sources, which, like the Old Testament, were written and venerated, in much the same way the Old Testament was treated by those who produced midrash and haggadah.⁵³

Thus, for Gundry, the evangelist gets all his materials from the Gospel of Mark, the enlarged Q-source and the imaginative embellishments of his own creation. Wherever the evangelist would be expected to be using the Old Testament, Gundry's explanation is almost always that the evangelist is assimilating the tradition to Old Testament models or that "throughout his gospel he subtly conforms phraseology to the Old Testament."⁵⁴ Even Old Testament quotations are almost always taken from the tradition, not the Old Testament itself.⁵⁵ Indeed, Gundry claims that the evangelist's desire for "parallelism and conformity to the Old Testament offer the most likely reason for his revisions."⁵⁶

In this work, it is clear that Gundry makes too much of what he sees as the evangelist's "midrash". It is important here to note that the term 'midrash' is itself difficult to define and scholars do not always mean the same thing when they use it. In Jewish writings, however, it

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 630-31.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 637-39.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵⁵ Gundry's comment on Matt 1:21 is illustrative here: "The Davidic Kingship of Jesus therefore implies that 'he will save his people' as indicated in the personal name... For 'Jesus' Greek form of the Hebrew name 'Joshua' means 'Yahweh is salvation'... To draw out the meaning, Matthew quotes, Ps. 130:8... but replaces the psalmist's 'will redeem' with 'will save'... for a closer link with the meaning of 'Jesus'... 'His people' replaces 'Israel'... 'from their sins' replaces 'from all his iniquities' ('lawlessness' in the LXX). These replacements betray Matthew's source, viz., the tradition behind Luke 1:77; 'to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins'... As often, Matthew has assimilated the tradition to Old Testament phraseology in order to show fulfilment." See *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

became a technical term, for a literary composition in a form of an extended "commentary" on a continuous Old Testament text. In this sense it is difficult to see how the gospel could be a midrash when it is not a 'commentary' on any continuous text of the Old Testament unless, probably, it is seen as a commentary on the gospel of Mark. It is also questionable whether the practice of explaining historical accounts with imaginative details under the inspiration of the Old Testament was as widespread as he suggests in the New Testament times. It is even more questionable whether such was indeed a dominant approach to scriptural and historical data. Even if such were the case in non-Christian Jewish practice, it simply does not follow that the evangelist would consider it appropriate for his task. Further, it is difficult to see how "fulfilment" of scriptures would be said to have taken place in the absence of a solid historical occurrence in which that fulfilment is seen as taking place. It is again difficult to see why delight in tracing scriptural connections be in itself incompatible with an interest to relate historical Jesus.⁵⁷

Thus, Gundry in this book does not view the evangelist as in any significant way using the Old Testament. Even the quotations that he uses come to him through other means but especially through the Gospel tradition he uses as a source. This implies that for Gundry the evangelist does not use the Old Testament quotations theologically by consciously relating them to their Old Testament context. Consequently he does not pay sufficient attention to the theological role of fulfilment quotations. Both Stendahl and Gundry have applied redaction critical method in their task.

3. Francis W. Beare

Francis W. Beare in his *The Gospel According to Matthew, A Commentary*, has approached his Matthean study primarily from form-critical perspective and understands the evangelist's work as midrashic designed in a form of a manual of instruction with a highly developed

⁵⁷ France, *Matthew*, pp. 24-6. By definition Midrash and Haggadah as interpretive methods refer to the process of adding creative embellishments to a received tradition, "embroidering history with unhistorical elements." These creative stories, it is held, often derive not from a 'historically based tradition,' but from a "scripturally inspired imagination." Gundry, however, takes the view that the use of Midrash by the evangelist results primarily in a mixture of history and non-history in this Gospel. Practically, however, it is difficult to see any history since "in Matthew we have a document that does not match even a selective report of Jesus' words and deeds," *Matthew, A Commentary* (p. 639). For a thorough discussion of the concept of Midrash, see Nkhoma, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," an unpublished MA Module 3, pp. 6-11. Cf. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 557-62; J. Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretations*, Leicester: Apollos, 1990, pp. 146-63; E. Earle Ellis, "How the New Uses the Old," in I. Howard Marshall (ed), *New Testament Interpretation*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 1970, pp. 203-6; Gundry, *Matthew. A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, pp. 623-40.

Christology. Beare suggests that the main source for the evangelist is the gospel of Mark while the rest is legendary:⁵⁸ "For the story of the ministry of Jesus against which the teaching is presented Matthew is almost wholly dependent on the narrative of Mark. The few additional anecdotes which he offers are without exception legendary."⁵⁹

For Beare, just like Stendahl and Gundry who are discussed above, the evangelist has employed the method of midrash:

[Matthew] has the scribe's unshakeable conviction of the divine authority of the scriptures, and he employs the methods of the schools in applying phrases – with no regard for their context or for the meaning which they had for the original writer and his readers – to persons and situations of his own age. For him, this means that he applies them to the person of Jesus and to events of his earthly life. He introduces materials of a midrashic nature.⁶⁰

Governing Beare's interpretation in this book is the form-critical presupposition that the evangelist has read back into the teaching of Jesus what he saw was needed in his own community, and systematically interprets the whole gospel from the perspective that it is anachronistic,⁶¹ and vigorously attempts to re-allocate all the gospel material into the Matthean community in which it was originally developed. This leads him to a "stylistic" understanding of almost all the personalities recorded by the evangelist in this gospel so that they effectively become members of the Matthean community itself:

The narrative framework of this gospel is not an essentially biographical and historical nature. The writer is primarily concerned with the life and faith of the church of his own time, with the responsibilities laid upon it ... His interest in the past is dominated by its bearing upon the present The whole story is seen in a double perspective. The anecdotes which make it up are formally presented as incidents in a life lived seventy years earlier, but they are at the same time images of the Jesus who lives and speaks to

⁵⁸ Legends as a form of the Gospel traditional material refers to "religious narratives of a saintly man in whose works and fate interest is taken." See M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, London and Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971 p. 104. For a thorough discussion of this form of the gospel tradition, see *Ibid.*, pp. 104-32.

⁵⁹ Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew, a Commentary*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶¹ For a critical discussion of the tendency to view the gospel tradition anachronistically, i.e., looking at the gospel tradition as a mere transposition of a religious tradition developed in the Matthean, Marcan, Lucan or Johannine communities to meet their own needs from the setting of these communities back to the earthly ministry of Jesus by the evangelists, see D.A. Carson, "Christological Ambiguities in the gospel of Matthew," Harold H. Rowdon (ed.), *Christ the Lord, Studies in Christology presented to Donald Guthrie*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1982, p. 98. With a few exceptions most studies on the gospel of Matthew presuppose that since the evangelist wrote from the perspective of faith and that many decades after the events narrated, he must reflect a theology contemporaneous

the disciples and the crowds of Matthew's own time. Details of place and time are of no real interest. They are given, for the most part in vague terms; and in an order which has little to do with succession in time And the words and the deeds are alike presented not simply or primarily as records of the past but as instruction for the present, for Jesus still teaches with authority and still acts with healing power in his church. The double perspective in which Jesus is presented is extended to all others who appear in the narrative. The people with whom Jesus has to do are, at once the hearers – followers, interested crowds, enemies, - whom he encountered during his earthly life and are at the same time figures of the people with whom Matthew has to do – the church, the people to whom it proclaims its message, and its opponents. The disciples are under one aspect the immediate followers of the man of Nazareth and at the same time they are “stylised” as figures of the Christian believers of Matthew's church; there is little interest in them as individuals The opponents of Jesus – scribes and Pharisees in particular – are not to be seen as historical persons in their individual characters, though of course Jesus was questioned and criticised by scribes and Pharisees. But in Matthew they are much more types or figures of the Jewish rabbis and synagogue authorities with whom Matthew was in conflict in his own day.⁶²

As a midrashic writer, the evangelist is not preparing “a record for the archives.”⁶³ He does not aim at giving exact information but rather to provide practical guidance to members of his Christian community and their leaders. Therefore: “Some of his scenes are artificially constructed settings for sayings of Jesus and are to be regarded rather as a sketch of typical circumstances under which a saying may have been uttered than as a plain account of how and when and where the words came to be spoken.”⁶⁴ However, this does not imply that the whole story is simply a creation of his fertile imagination:

There is a nucleus, not inconsiderable, of recollections of the apostles and other hearers of Jesus and spectators of his actions. But these recollections were not committed to writing, except in fragmentary fashion, for some decades, after his resurrection; and they were subject to all the hazards that attend communications. Much was lost, for stories were passed along and words were repeated, only as they were felt to be relevant to the situation and needs of new audiences and changing times. Much was added, both in story and in saying, by unwitting transference from stories and sayings of other persons, and by the imaginative reconstructions of Christian teachers.⁶⁵

with his own *Sitz im Leben*. Inevitably, it is presupposed that the gospel of Matthew is studded with Christological anachronisms.

⁶² Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew, a Commentary*, pp. 13-14.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 14

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

To put it simply, Beare is, here, saying that the tradition as we have it is a community construction built on the original tradition which is now lost to us and is beyond recovery. He only reiterates the basic assumption of critical scholarship which in principle sees no continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.⁶⁶

Beare does not only suggest that "the notion that the tradition was somehow 'guarded' by the apostles is altogether untenable,"⁶⁷ but along with Wellhausen and Bultmann, rejects the historicity of Jesus' Twelve disciples who later became pillars of the Apostolic community. Beare finds the arguments of G. Klein and W. Schmithals, who are themselves more radical in their rejection, more "weighty". In commenting on R.P. Meye's book, *Jesus and the Twelve, Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel* who writes in favour of their historicity, Beare makes the following comment:

He discusses Klein's argument but is not acquainted with the weighty treatise of Schmithals. He arrives at the hazardous conclusion that "the New Testament and Marcan, picture of the Twelve as the company of Jesus is not at all open to doubt." But doubts are in fact justified; the arguments of Klein and Schmithals are not to be so lightly dismissed. As Schimthals rightly puts it, "today less than ever can one speak of assured results of the investigation of the Christian apostolate."⁶⁸

With the office of the Twelve Apostles abolished, Beare reiterates the form-critical assumption that the tradition circulated in the form of small independent units and that it was the task of evangelists or of compilers of earlier sources to assemble these units into larger complexes. In this process: "Words which Jesus had spoken to opponents could be adapted and treated as addressed to the disciples (and through them to the church). From time to time the store of sayings kept in memory came to be supplemented by new sayings shaped by

⁶⁶ Much has been written on this topic in response to the debate ensured in the wake of the Jesus research. Without entering into the whole debate it is significant here to note that the results have not been very satisfactory. A classical work on this quest is Albert Schweitzer's, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London: A & C Black, 1910. For a critical assessment, see James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, SBT No. 25, London: SCM, 1959, pp. 26-47, especially, p. 29; Guthrie Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960, pp. 13-26. For an attempt to reconcile the quest and the *Kerygma* (i.e. that the *Kerygma* contained something corresponding to a life of Jesus), see C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development*, New York: Harper & Row, 1964, pp. 17-56, especially pp. 47-52. Gerhardsson has argued for the continuity between Jesus' earthly ministry and the Easter faith stressing that "Jesus already appears with an overwhelming authority in his earthly ministry... [and that this picture] proceeds from this situation to the situation after Easter." See Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions*, pp. 51-65, especially p. 53. Cf. N.T. Wright, *Who was Jesus?*, London: SPCK, 1992, pp. 1-103 for a critical response to the recent developments in this debate including a brief historical survey of the whole question.

⁶⁷ Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew, a Commentary*, p. 22.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

teachers of the church, in part at least by prophets speaking 'in the Spirit', which were regarded as words spoken by the risen Jesus."⁶⁹

Thus, the community creates the sayings of Jesus while the evangelists only gather them into a connected narrative.

On the "cycle of infancy legends 2:1-23," Beare suggests that they are modelled on the story of Moses and feels that they are simply unhistorical, and that, according to him, does not diminish their significance. He further suggests that the fulfilment quotations are drawn from Matthew's collection of Old Testament oracles.

Hence in his present work, Beare, like those discussed above, does not consider the Old Testament as a direct source for the evangelist. Even his quotations are from a collection of the Old Testament oracles, not the Old Testament itself. The availability of the Marcan gospel and the midrashic method of interpretation the evangelist is said to apply, do not require any direct relationship between the evangelists and the Old Testament as such. Even if the evangelist had used the Old Testament as a source for his quotations, they would still not be understood in light of their Old Testament contexts since the evangelist "employs the methods of the schools in applying phrases with no regard to their context." Consequently, the question of any theological use of the fulfilment quotations by the evangelist in the light of their Old Testament context simply does not arise in Beare's work.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30. But this diminutive view over the role of Jesus' disciples in the upholding of the tradition and the creative role of the church in the production of dominic sayings was never universally accepted since its inception. As early as 1937, T.W. Manson could make the following observations: "The teaching was given by Jesus and passed on by word of mouth from those who first heard it. And at this time the number of such people must have been very great. In the second quarter of the first century there must have been literally thousands of people in Judea and Galilee who had at one time or another seen Jesus, and could tell some story about him or repeat some saying of His. The majority of these people would only have fragments of the whole story; but the tradition is made up by the piecing together of fragments. Some of these eye-witnesses must have become Christians and members of the Palestinian Church, and so their stories and sayings would find their way into the common stock of the community's story of its founder... The largest part of the tradition must however, be credited to the disciples. They were most constantly with Jesus during the ministry. They heard what he said when He spoke to the multitude or debated with Scribes and Pharisees, and they heard much besides that He taught them privately. They, more than anyone else, were in a position to know His mind on many points, and to pass on their information to their fellow Christians ... in the first decades of the life of the original Palestinian community the tradition concerning the teaching of Jesus rested on a broader basis than we commonly imagine. We tend to think of it as being in the hands of a few distinguished persons who were leaders of the church, and to forget the common people who had heard Jesus gladly and who also had memories. When this is realized we can see that the Church's task in meeting the problems with the Jewish authorities was not that of creating words of Jesus applicable to these situations, but rather that of selecting what was relevant from the available mass of reminiscences." See T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, London: SCM, 1949, pp. 12-3. Cf. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, London: Macmillan, 1935, p. 145.

4. Ulrich Luz

Ulrich Luz in his work, *Matthew 1-7. A Continental Commentary*, categorically denies the possibility of any theological significance to the fulfilment quotations in the Matthean gospel due to his conviction that the evangelist simply lifts these quotations from their sources and does not redact them in any significant manner. For Luz, as for the other scholars discussed above, the evangelists main source is the gospel of Mark. He suggests that Matthew 12-28 is “an altered and enlarged new formulation of Mark 2:12 – 4:34; 6:1 – 16:8.”⁷⁰ He accepts the two-source hypothesis quite unreservedly: “To question this hypothesis is to refute a large part of the post 1945 redaction – critical research in the synoptics, a truly daring undertaking which seems to me to be neither necessary nor possible.”⁷¹ However, he acknowledges the difficulty of explaining the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark, which he admits, “are numerous and in many places not even ‘minor’”.⁷² He rejects the “M” source which, according to Streeter, was a written document⁷³ and, instead, he suggests the use of oral tradition and argues that linguistic and compositional peculiarities support this view:⁷⁴ “The infancy narratives Matt:1:18-2:23 were formulated in writing for the first time by the evangelist himself, on the basis of oral traditions. Even for the fulfilment quotations a written source is not to be assumed.”⁷⁵ Unlike the writers discussed earlier who attributed so much to the evangelist’s creative mind, Luz observes that the evangelist is faithful to his sources both literary and theologically. He sticks to his sources:

The evangelist was not a “free” author but willingly let himself be influenced to a large extent by his main source, Mark ... Many vocables of Matthew’s preferred vocabulary are not new creations of the evangelist but were suggested by his sources the evangelist even theologically continues to a large extent thoughts of his two main sources. Matthew is the disciple or, better, the heir of his theological fathers, Mark and Q.⁷⁶

On the fulfilment quotations, he reaches the following conclusion:

The activity of these scribes becomes evident in the background of the gospel of Matthew ... the “school” which is evident behind the fulfilment quotations is, as I believe, not identical with the evangelist. The evangelist who is influenced by the LXX, is hardly himself responsible for their wording. Since most of the fulfilment quotations

⁷⁰ Luz, *Matthew 1-7, A Continental Commentary*, p. 42.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 46.

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 48.

⁷³ B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, London: Macmillan, 1924, pp. 150, 232, 249-61.

⁷⁴ Luz, *Matthew 1-7, A Continental Commentary*, p. 48, especially note 67.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.

belong together with those traditions in which they are found today and since Matthew is not their author, it is to be assumed that in his community many traditions, especially also oral traditions of the uniquely Matthean material, were seen by the scribes in the light of the Bible. Behind Matthew the work of the scribes becomes visible which were an influence on him.⁷⁷

Thus, for Luz, the fulfilment quotations are merely a received tradition from his sources, in this case an oral tradition current in the scribal "school" of the Matthean community.

The fact that the fulfilment quotations are a received tradition and the manner in which the evangelist handles it, as Luz understands them,⁷⁸ have a far-reaching effect on his further conclusions:

It seems to me that one should not assume that the contribution of the evangelist Matthew to the wording of the formula quotations is higher than to the wording of the remaining quotations... The result of this investigation into the wording of the quotations for the understanding of the theology is minimal... we see the evangelist as a conservative tradent and interpreter who is obliged to the tradition. He treated the wording of the quotations available to him with the same care as he treated the text of the gospel of Mark or of Q.⁷⁹

Thus, since Luz sees the evangelist as receiving the fulfilment quotations from tradition and then adopting them into his gospel without making any significant changes to them, the logical conclusion is that they have, almost certainly, no theological role. From this position, it is not far fetched to reach its corollary conclusion, namely that any theology that the evangelist reflects has its origin in his sources. From Luz's perspective, therefore, the evangelist cannot be considered to have used the Old Testament in any serious way, and whatever theology he may reflect cannot be said to have developed in the light of the Old Testament contexts of the quotations he draws.

5. *Raymond E. Brown*

Raymond E. Brown, however, in his *The Birth of the Messiah* acknowledges the theological significance of the fulfilment quotations: "What they indicate are areas of theological

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁷⁸ "The Old Testament quotations from Mark and Q show that the evangelist Matthew changes very little in them. Thus, he quoted the Bible according to Mark or Q. At most, a slight assimilation to the LXX wording can sometimes be observed. All this does not fit the picture of a scribe who would deliberately have produced *only* in his formula quotations a new form of the text which was familiar to him in different versions. The procedure of Matthew with the quotations from Mark and Q, in my opinion, speaks for the view that the formula quotations come from pre-Matthean Christian tradition," *Ibid.* p. 160. Emphasis by Luz.

significance ... which might otherwise be overlooked ... highlighting the theological character of the events narrated – events that Matthew has chosen because they are related to the expectations of Israel, and because they fulfil prophecy, as he understands it.”⁸⁰

Like many other scholars, Brown approaches his study from the presupposition that Matthew draws upon Mark’s gospel.⁸¹ He sees the interpretative approach of the evangelist to his sources as midrashic. This again has far reaching consequences on his conclusions since “midrash” implies a mixture of history and non-history at best, or simply non-history. Commenting on the infancy narratives (i.e., the first two chapters of this gospel in which alone there are five fulfilment quotations), Brown says: “Relative sobriety of the canonical infancy narratives when compared to non-canonical ones has been used as argument for their historicity. But is this a difference of kind (history vs. function) or a difference of degree? One might argue that both canonical and non-canonical narratives result from attempts of Christian imagination to fill in the Messiah’s origins, and that in the case of the apocryphal narratives the imagination had a freer and further exercise.”⁸² For Brown, the midrashic approach to scriptural interpretation accounts satisfactorily for the miraculous events in the infancy narrative of this gospel: “Some of these events which are quite implausible as history, have now been understood as rewritings of OT scenes and themes.”⁸³ Thus, Herod’s search for the life of the infant Jesus and the Bethlehem baby massacre becomes a reapplication of the story of the Egyptian wicked Pharaoh who wanted to kill the infant Moses and the massacre of male children that followed. Similarly, Joseph’s dream story becomes a mere reproduction of the story of the Patriarch Joseph and his dreams, both of whom found security in Egypt. The story of Zechariah and Elizabeth is likened to that of Abraham and Sarah.

Commenting further on an outline which supposes the evangelist’s preservation of his intention in the two-fold divisions of the infancy narratives, i.e., chapters one and two, Brown reaffirms the evangelist’s midrashic practice:

This situation reflects the history of the composition of Matthew’s infancy narrative. In my judgment, Matthew has incorporated into the final narrative several different kinds of raw materials: lists of names of patriarchs and kings, and a messianic family tree; an annunciation of the messiah’s birth *patterned* on OT annunciation’s of birth; a birth story involving Joseph and the child Jesus, *patterned* on the patriarch Joseph and the legends

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁸⁰ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 48.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 33, note 21.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

surrounding the birth of Moses; a magi-and-star story *patterned* on the magus Balaam who came from the East and saw the Davidic star that would rise from Jacob.⁸⁴

It is important to note that according to Brown, much if not all of the infancy narratives are products of the evangelist's creative imagination triggered off not by the historical events surrounding the birth of Jesus but the evangelist's knowledge of Old Testament miraculous child-birth stories. As creative stories patterned on Old Testament ones they are simply unhistorical. Indeed, Brown concludes that his own: "Previous investigation with all its "hard-nosed" probing of historicity ... discovered that probabilities were more often against historicity than for it."⁸⁵ It is, of course, difficult to see how the Old Testament can be fulfilled in a birth story that is no more than a mere imaginative creation of the writer. By definition, the concept of scriptural fulfilment cannot be divorced from historical events or realities.⁸⁶ It requires an acrobatic imagination to see any meaningful fulfilment of the Old Testament in these fictitious stories as Brown holds them to be.

Since Mark is the major source of this evangelist and since his imagination plays an essential role in the creation of the infancy narratives and the miraculous stories, any serious study of the Old Testament with a view to understand the context of his Old Testament fulfilment quotations in order to relate them theologically to the Christ-event cannot be expected. Such a serious application of the Old Testament to the Christ-event could only be meaningful if the evangelist believed that he had factual information concerning the birth of Jesus Messiah. It is obviously much easier to engage into some creative imagination than it is to engage into a serious scriptural study and historical reflection in an attempt to discern the theological relationship of the two. If the evangelist did the first it is very unlikely that he practised the second. Therefore, it can be said that Brown does not see the evangelist as using the fulfilment quotations in the light of their Old Testament contexts and then apply them theologically to the Christ-event, although he sees the evangelist as assimilating his creative stories to Old Testament phraseology.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52 .Emphasis mine.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁶ R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, London: SCM, 1971, p. 83: "To claim a prediction is fulfilled is not simply to affirm a discernible correspondence, but to assert that the Old Testament passages concerned... pointed forward to that which has occurred."

⁸⁷ Although Brown acknowledges the theological significance of the fulfilment quotations, he does not develop the idea further because he is concerned first and foremost with the infancy narratives as a whole. Neither is the limited development he offers along the lines I have indicated. He disregards the role of the Old Testament context of these quotations in the evangelist's theological reflections. However, he provides valuable background information to the study of the fulfilment quotations in the infancy narrative. See *Ibid.* pp. 96-104, 143-53, 184-88, 219-25.

6. Willoughby C. Allen

Willoughby C. Allen, in his *Gospel According to St. Matthew*⁸⁸, also does not see the evangelist as applying the fulfilment quotations to Jesus Messiah in the light of their Old Testament contexts. In Allen's day the widely held scholarly opinion over the manner of the authorship of the gospels was that the evangelists functioned as mere compilers or editors of a received tradition. In this perspective it is not quite easy to see the evangelists as theologians who responsibly apply the divine promises recorded in the Old Testament to the Christ-event. Moreover, it was a time when form criticism was now applied to New Testament research and one of the assured results of that research was that the gospel tradition circulated in independent units. Form critical studies were just beginning to dominate New Testament research over against source criticism whose most assured result had been the establishment of Marcan priority. Both source and form criticism did not provide a suitable scholarly environment for the conception that the evangelists could apply the Old Testament to the Christ-event theologically since both of these critical approaches saw the evangelists as mere compilers or editors of received tradition.

Allen avoids critical questions: "Considerations as to the historical character of the incidents which the gospel records, have for the most part been carefully avoided, and no attempt has been made to discuss the question whether the teaching here put into the mouth of Christ was a matter of fact taught by him."⁸⁹ He accepts the priority of Mark⁹⁰ but rejects the use of a common written source apart from Mark as an explanation for the Matthew – Luke agreements against Mark.⁹¹ He further suggests that the matter common to Matthew and Luke comes "not from written sources, but from oral traditions or from independent written sources."⁹² He finds the common written source theory (we now call Q) unsatisfactory since it fails to account for the variations in order, context and language.⁹³

On the fulfilment quotations, he suggests that they are quite earlier in their date,⁹⁴ and that those in the infancy narratives together with the one at 27:9 appear to be an integral part of the narrative while those in the infancy narratives appear to be insertions into or appended to a Marcan text by the evangelist.⁹⁵ "It seems therefore probable that the eleven quotations

⁸⁸ Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, ICC, Third Edition, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. xlvi - xlviii.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. lx.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. lx - lxii.

introduced by a formula ... were already current when the editor compiled his work in a Greek form. They may come from a collection of Old Testament passages regarded as prophecies of events in the life of the messiah."⁹⁶ Thus Allen sees the evangelist as a compiler of received tradition. The fulfilment quotations are part of this received tradition. Obviously, the evangelist does not play any significant theological role in this picture. We can therefore conclude that Allen does not see the evangelist as making a theological use of these quotations in the light of their Old Testament contexts in their application to the Christ-event.

7. Charles H. Dodd

The first major study to attempt a serious consideration of the Old Testament quotations in the light of their Old Testament setting was undertaken by Charles H. Dodd in his *According to Scriptures*.⁹⁷ The study, however, received a remarkably cool reception from critics.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Dodd's study is quite impressive. After a systematic analysis of Old Testament texts quoted in the New Testament, he successfully establishes that the unit of reference for these quotations is wider than the words actually quoted and that the citation by different New Testament writers of adjacent or contiguous passages within a single context indicates a common pre-canonical tradition.⁹⁹

He further examines the contexts from which the fifteen attested quotations come in an attempt to define the probable extent of the context which for their (New Testament Writers) purpose was treated as a unit. He then concludes that certain sections of the Old Testament scriptures, especially from Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets and the Psalms were considered as "wholes" and that particular verses or sentences were quoted from them as "pointers" to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves, independently of their Old Testament context.¹⁰⁰

While Dodd has shown us the necessity of relating New Testament quotations to their Old Testament contexts, he does not specifically discuss Matthean fulfilment quotations. He is concerned with those quotations commonly used by New Testament writers in their attempt to

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. lxii.

⁹⁷ Charles H. Dodd, *According to Scriptures*, London: Nisbet, 1952, and New York: Scribner, 1953.

⁹⁸ W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew*, AB, New York: Doubleday, 1971, p.lxi.

⁹⁹ The Old Testament texts cited by New Testament writers which Dodd analyses for this purpose are Ps. 2:7; 8:4-6; 110:1 (LXX 109:1); 118 (LXX 117):22-23; Isa 6:9-10; 28:16; 40:3-5; 53:1; Gen. 12:3; Jer. 31 (LXX 38): 31-34; Joel 2:28-32; Zech 9:9; Hab. 2:3-4; Isa 61:1-2 and Deut 18:15, 19. See Dodd, *According to Scriptures*, pp. 30 - 58. Dodd finds the clearest example for illustrating that the position of scripture in the writer's mind is not necessarily restricted to the amount quoted in Acts 2:17-21 where Joel 2:28-32 is cited. The Joel quotation ends at Acts 2:2 in the middle of verse 32 (in Joel) while the latter part of verse 32 is quoted later at Acts 2:39. See *Ibid.*, p. 47, especially note 21.

¹⁰⁰ Dodd, *According to Scriptures*, pp. 61-110, 126.

interpret the Christ-event, although the evangelist Matthew shares in the usage of these common traditions even in his fulfilment quotations (e.g. Jer 31:15 = LXX 38:15 in Matt 2:18, a quote which is in the same context as Jer 31:31-34 quoted partly in Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25 and almost fully in Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17. Also Zech 9:9, in Matt. 21:4-5).

E. Conclusion

Although the number of works surveyed in this chapter is limited, this review has sufficiently revealed that contemporary scholarship available to me has not addressed adequately the link between the evangelist's exegesis of the Old Testament and his theology in the light of the Old Testament context of his fulfilment quotations. In this regard, a hiatus still remains in the field of Matthean fulfilment quotations research. This literary survey has shown that Matthean scholarship has primarily concerned itself with the literal techniques applied by the evangelist in his use of Old Testament material (K. Stendahl, R.H. Gundry). Further, the approaches taken by most scholars have not yielded much fruitful results with regard to the theological relationship between the fulfilment quotations that the evangelist applies to the Christ-event and their Old Testament contexts because the presuppositions governing their methodological procedures rule out, *a priori*, any possibility of direct use of the Old Testament by the evangelist. Form-critical and midrashic approaches (F.W. Beare, R.E. Brown) do not, by definition, allow for any direct and meaningful use of the Old Testament as a source. Also the multiplicity of sources supposedly used by the evangelist, for instance the sources, Mark, Q, (K. Stendahl, R.H. Gundry, F.W. Beare, U. Luz, R.E. Brown, W. Allen) and the manner in which these sources were supposedly used, for instance, simply copying (Luz) or simply compiling the received tradition (Allen) militate against the possibility that the evangelist may have used the Old Testament itself as one of his sources.

But Dodd has broken new ground by successfully establishing the principle that New Testament writers theologically used Old Testament quotations by applying them to the Christ-event in the light of their Old Testament context. By making reference to Old Testament context, Dodd logically presupposes, to some extent, direct use of Old Testament books or portions in which the quoted texts are originally found, or at least some thorough knowledge of these contexts that would enable a theological application of some text from them to the Christ-event. Such a view of New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament is almost unattainable if one begins with the approaches whose presuppositions require that the evangelist be denied any meaningful access to the Old Testament, the only authoritative scriptural corpus for both Jews and Christians at the time.

However, Dodd's main interest was on quotations commonly used by the New Testament writers in their efforts to define the *kerygma*. It is at this very point that Dodd fails to address

Matthean fulfilment quotations as they do not fall within the range of his academic interest. Matthean fulfilment quotations are not a part of those quotations that are commonly used by New Testament writers, and as such, Dodd does not sufficiently address the question as to how the evangelist uses these fulfilment quotations in the light of their Old Testament contexts. Hence, the hiatus still remains. And it is toward the filling of this gap that the present study is undertaken. But it is by proceeding along the direction that Dodd has indicated that we can probably come to a balanced understanding of Matthean theology, especially in terms of his Christological outlook. It is my contention that, contrary to the tendency to reject any possibility of direct and meaningful use of the Old Testament by the evangelist in modern Matthean scholarship, the evangelist Matthew, like other Jewish and Christian writers of his age, used biblical quotations theologically in an attempt to articulate and interpret certain theological teachings that were relevant to their contemporary society with respect to the Old Testament contexts of the quoted texts. In the case of Christian writers, the subject for their theological articulation and interpretation was the Christ-event. The next task here is, therefore, to investigate whether the claim that biblical quotations were generally used theologically could be substantiated by the evidence from late Judaism and early Christianity.

Chapter 2

The Role of Quotations in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, it has been shown that previous research on Matthean fulfilment quotations largely focused on literal; techniques in its study of Matthean usage of the Old Testament. It has been clearly revealed that the theological significance of the fulfilment quotations in light of their prophetic context has not been sufficiently addressed. The chapter has also shown that the failure to address the theological aspect of the quotations in view of their prophetic light is partly due to methodological considerations. The chapter has, however, concluded at an optimistic note, showing that a quotation in the New Testament points to an Old Testament context in which it first appears. This was then noted as a profitable guide to a fruitful theological investigation of the fulfilment quotations.

In the present chapter, I have investigated the use of biblical quotations in Jewish religious literature and patristic writings in order to see whether these writings used biblical quotations theologically. The results reveal that, with a few exceptions, these writings use biblical quotations theologically, and that this provides a literary background to Matthean usage of fulfilment quotations.

The theological use of biblical quotations is a phenomenon well attested by ancient Jewish religious literature. A study of biblical quotations (including, in some cases, quotations from apocryphal books) in the *Mishnah*, the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the patristic writings and the Old and New Testament apocryphal books shows that quotations are used to support certain doctrinal teachings. These theological teachings cover a wide spectrum of issues ranging from practical issues of daily life in the *Mishnah* to the highly abstract questions of a philosophical nature in the patristic writings. Almost in every case an attempt is made to support a particular theological teaching with a biblical quotation. Such theological use of biblical quotations is widely used in the literature that has a strong legal element, as it is the case with the *Mishnah*, or a strong apologetic element as it is the case with the *Dead Sea Scrolls* and the patristic writings. In general, the apocryphal writings of the Old and New Testament do not share these two characteristics very strongly. They are of course not completely missing.

There is, however, another way in which biblical quotations are used. For lack of a proper term, I will simply refer to this type of usage as a *literary use* of biblical quotations as over against the theological use of biblical quotations, which is the subject of this chapter. This usage applies to cases where the quotations are not used directly to support a specific

theological teaching or practice but rather are used to bring a particular narrative to a literary completion. Such quotations can further be divided into two forms. First, they can take the form of direct quotations. This form is greatly used in New Testament apocryphal writings where it is used, usually, to complete a literal sense of a narrative or a dialogue. Secondly, they can take the form of linguistic or historical allusions. This usage is particularly prominent in Old Testament apocryphal writings. One significant feature of both forms of *literary use* of quotations is that the writer is usually not conscious of using any quotations at all. They appear to arise simply from the writer's familiarity with the biblical traditions he quotes although direct use might have been made. Examples of the literary usage of biblical quotations will be provided as specific cases arise. However, the major concern here is to show that wherever the writer is conscious of using a biblical quotation, it is almost always the case that such a quotation is used theologically.

In this chapter the theological use of biblical quotations in the ancient Jewish milieu and early Christianity will be demonstrated by looking at such usage in the *Mishnah*, the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the patristic writings and the apocryphal traditions.

A. The Mishnah

The *Mishnah* is a deposit of Jewish religious and cultural practice that cuts across four centuries ranging from the earlier half of the second century BC to the end of the second century AD.¹ This suggests that the *Mishnah* has a substantial amount of pre-Christian traditional material. The similarities it shares with our evangelist in the use of quotations, therefore, point to an early date for the composition of his gospel. Its chief purpose is to provide a theological interpretation of the Mosaic Law so that the Law continues to have relevance on contemporary Jewish society as ages pass by². Since the Law is alone the principal doctrine of Jewish religion,³ its interpretation constitutes more than a mere legal enterprise. It is a theological process in which almost every legal decision is validated by Scriptural authority. This is a theological use of biblical quotations and is manifest throughout the *Mishnah*. For our purpose, it is sufficient to look at how biblical quotations are employed to support various rabbinical doctrines in some of the tractates. Even here I do not pretend to be exhaustive. The examples cited are, however, sufficient to show the theological role of biblical quotations in the *Mishnah*.

¹ Herbert, Danby, *The Mishnah*, London: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. xiii

² *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

1. *Berakoth (Benedictions)*

In Ber 1:3 the schools of Shammai and Hillel develop a teaching on the appropriate body posture when one is reciting the Shema based on Deut 6:7. By emphasizing different phrases in that verse, the two schools develop different teachings on the subject. The school of Shammai teaches that in the evening all worshipers should recline but in the morning they should stand up "for it is written, 'And when thou liest down and when thou rises up.'" On the other hand, the School of Hillel teaches that they may recite it everyone in his own way "for it is written, 'And when thou walkest by the way.'" In Ber 1:5, the quotation from Deut 16:3 provides a theological explanation as to why the "going-forth from Egypt" is almost always rehearsed at night. In Ber 7:3, the quotation from Ps 68:26, "By congregations bless ye the Lord", provides the theological basis for the liturgical practice of varying the benediction formula according to the number of the people who have gathered for worship. In Ber 9:5, the quotation from Deut 6:5 provides the theological basis for the teaching that man is obliged to bless God regardless of the circumstances in which he finds himself.

A series of quotations are further used to suggest a rabbinic doctrine concerning greetings which is apparently contradictory to another teaching regarding the Holy Name:

And it was ordained that a man should salute his fellow with the use of the Name of God; for it is written, "and, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, the Lord be with you. And they answered, the Lord bless thee" (Ruth 2:4). And it is written: "the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (Judg 6:12). And it is written, "And despise not thy mother when she is old" (Prov 23:22). And it is written, "it is time to work for the Lord: they have made void thy law" (Ps 119: 126). R. Nathan says: they have made void thy law because it was a time to work for the Lord.⁴

The traditional Law prohibits any vain use of the Name of God (Yahweh) (Exod 20:7).⁵ It is, however, theologically argued here by the use of these quotations that the prohibition on the mentioning of the Holy Name may be suspended in times of need or emergency in order even to serve Him better. In such cases the Law could be served better by breaking it. This is especially supported by the quotation from the Psalms, which R. Nathan accordingly interprets.⁶

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ By the later period of the Second Temple the personal name of god, YHWH, had become "unspeakably holy and therefore unsuitable for use in public reading, although it continued to be used privately". See G. Jones Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. V, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986, p. 500.

⁶ George F. Moore, *Judaism in the First centuries of the Christian Era*, vol. 1., New York: Schocken, 1971, p. 259 for the view that Ps 119:126 is frequently cited as a theological basis for the liberty of suspending laws in the Pentateuch on rabbinic authority when circumstances demand it.

2. *Peah (Gleanings)*

On the one hand, this tractate concerns itself with the biblical laws that allow the poor to glean in the fields (Lev 19:9; 23:22; Deut 24: 19-21), and also with the “poor man’s tithe” (Deut 14:28) which takes the place of Second Tithe⁷ in the third and sixth years of the seven-year circle. On the other hand, in *Peah* 8:9, the quotation, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is”, from Jer 17:7 is employed as a theological basis for the view that those who forgo the privilege of a poorman’s tithe even when they qualify for it become blessed of God. God provides them with resources so that they are able not only to support themselves but also to support others out of their own wealth before they die in old age. To die in old age is itself a special kind of blessing. The quotations from Prov 1:27, “But he that searcheth after mischief it shall come unto him”, and from Exod 23:8, “And thou shalt take no gift, for a gift blindeth them that have sight” are used as a theological basis for the teaching on the curses and misfortunes that befall, even in this life, those who obtain the poor man’s tithe through false pretence and those who pervert the course of justice. These become poor, ill health and are not blessed with a long life.

3. *Terumoth (Heave – Offerings)*

Terumah is the portion (between sixtieth and fortieth) that must be given to the priests from the produce of the harvest. Non-priests would not start eating their produce until the Terumah has been set aside (Num 18:8, Deut. 18:4) and only those of a priestly status would eat it (Lev 22:10). Terumah is highly susceptible to uncleanness and as such there are elaborate instructions on how to go about it. In *Ter* 6:6, a single biblical quotation is used as a theological basis for two different teachings concerning its restitution. On the one hand, from the text, “And he shall give unto the priest the holy thing”, in Lev 22:14, R. Eliezar rules that restitution may be made from one kind instead of from another kind provided it is from a better instead of from a worse kind. On the other hand, R. Akiba rules that restitution could be made only from the like kind. For Eliezar, whatever is holy is suitable while for Akiba, it must be the same kind of holy thing that had been eaten.⁸

4. *Maasar Shenii (Second Tithe)*

In this tractate at 5:10-13 there is an avowal, which was made at the time of the afternoon offering on the last Festival day. It consists of word for word quotation of Deut 26:13-15. It

⁷ For a brief definition of “Second Tithe”, see Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 73, Note 6. For a thorough treatment, see the tractate, “Maaser Shenii” which is wholly devoted to that subject in *Ibid.*, pp. 73-82.

⁸ The Terumah is one of the most significant themes in *The Mishnah*. There are almost six hundred references to it in *The Mishnah*. The right to eat of it is a mark of priestly status. See *Ibid.*, p.797.

could only be cited by one who has fulfilled the sacrificial demands stipulated in vv 13-14 and upon that fulfilment of the sacrificial law is based the prayer for the land blessing recorded in v.15 which every eligible worshipper recites. Here, a biblical quotation has not only a liturgical function but also a far-reaching theological implication over the land promise made to Abraham and his descendants as constituting a type of the totality of the blessings of God that are in store for his people. The exclusive nature of these divine promises is reflected in the fact that only Israelites and bastards could make the avowal, but not proselytes and freed slaves who had no share in the land (Maaser Sheni 5:14)

5. *Hallah (Dough-Offering)*

In Hallah 4:10, after a citation of rejected dough-offerings from Be-ittur, Alexandria and Zeboim, all of which are outside the land of Israel the quotation, “And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labours which thou sowest in the field”, from Exod 23:16 is used to support the view that dough-offerings should only come from the first fruits grown by Israelites within the land of Israel.

6. *Bikkurim (First-Fruits)*

In Bikk 1:2, the quotation, “the first fruits of thy land” from Exod 23:19 is used as a theological basis for the view that the first-fruits offering must come only from fruits grown on each one’s land, not from leased or hired land (Deut 26:1-2), and that only those who offer such fruits are eligible to recite the avowal (Deut 26:13-15). In Bikk 1:1, there is an outline of categories of people whose first-fruits do not qualify for such offering specifically because the growth of their fruits is not “wholly from thy land”.⁹ In Bikk 1:9, the quotation “The first of the first fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the home of the Lord thy God” from the same Exod 23:19, provides the basis for the view that the worshipper is responsible for his first –fruit offerings until they are presented at the Temple. Should they become unclean at anytime before that moment, the worshipper remains obliged to making a restitution for them.

7. *Shabbath (the Sabbath)*

In this tractate at 6:4, the quotation from Isa 2:4, “And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning –hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

⁹ “Bikkurim” 1:2, in Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 93.

neither shall they learn war any more” is used in support of the view that to go out¹⁰ with any weapon of war like a sword, a bow, a shield, a club or a spear on the Sabbath day is a reproach. In the Old Testament context this verse refers to the eschatological hope for Israel when all Israelites including those among the nations would come to Zion and be used as a divine instrument for bringing world peace bringing an end to disputes among the nations. This would render military weapons obsolete and necessitate their adaptation to non-violent usage¹¹. Thus in the context of the Old Testament the verse is understood theologically as a reference to the eschatological role of Israel among the nations and its implications on world affairs. In the context of rabbinic theology, the verse is used in no less a theological way. The difference is rather in their concern. While the Old Testament context concerns itself with the eschatological hope of Israel, the rabbinic context concerns itself with the Sabbath and the maintenance of its holiness. This concern is more existential and practical but in no way less theological for keeping the Sabbath holy is a matter of theological concern. In rabbinic theology the Sabbath is a heavenly gift that, in a special way, expresses God’s infinite love and mercy which are bestowed upon his children as a foretaste of the blessings that await the righteous in the world to come.¹²

At Shabb 9:1 the quotation from Isa 30:22 is used to define the manner in which an idol conveys uncleanness, namely, by carrying, “like a menstruant thing”.¹³ At Shabb 9:2 the quotation from Prov 30:19 is used to support the rabbinic view that a ship, like the sea, is incapable of contracting uncleanness.

8. *Pesachim* (Feast of Passover)

The mention of the words “assembly”, “congregation” and “Israel” in Exod. 12:6 quoted at Pes 5:5 is used as the theological basis for the tradition that the passover offerings be slaughtered in three groups. At Pes 10:5 it is taught that any worshipper at the Passover who does not mention the three things in the verses he recites has failed to fulfil his passover obligation. The three things are passover, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. In these three aspects the whole salvific drama of the original passover is recapitulated and re-enacted in the

¹⁰ The phrase “going out” is a technical term based on Exod 16:29, “Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day”. It also refers to “carrying a burden” from one place to another (Jer 17:22). For types of “going out”, see ‘Sabbath 1:1’, in Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 100. Cf. *Ibid.* note 2.

¹¹ R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, NCBC, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans and London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980, pp. 40-2. For the view that the text is eschatological not in the sense of an end to world and human history but in the sense of a fundamental change in earthly conditions whether within or outside history, see Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12, a commentary*, London: SCM, 1972, p. 29.

¹² Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, New York: Schocken, 1961, pp. 153-54. Cf. A. Cohen, *Everyman’s Talmud*, London: J.M. Dent and New York: E.P. Dutton, 1949, pp. 155-56.

present worshipper so that its efficacy is applied to him. Further, Exod 13:8, "And thou shall tell thy son in that day saying, it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt", is quoted as a theological basis for the teaching that the Passover experience must be relived in every generation, that is, that every Jew must personally participate in the passover experience, and thus appropriate for himself the redemption it affords to God's people, a redemption which in turn becomes a springboard for praises and thanksgiving to God.

9. *Yoma (The Day of Atonement)*

At Yoma 8:9 the writer of this tractate cites Ezek 36:25, "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean", and Jer 17:3, "O Lord, the hope of Israel", as the theological basis for the doctrine of atonement, that God cleanses his people from sin.

10. *Rosh ha-shanah (Feast of the New Year)*

The writer of this tractate at 3:8 uses the quotations from Exod 17:1 which refers to Moses' raising of hands during Israel's war with Amalek, and Num 21:8 which refers to the fiery serpent which was to be a means for healing to those who after being bitten by snakes looked at it for a healing. This is the basis for the doctrine that Israel can be healed or blessed, or prevails, only when she trusts in the Lord, keeping their hearts in subjection to him.

11. *Taanith (Days of Fasting)*

During the Feast of Tabernacles which usually takes place in the latter half of the month of October, a time when the first rain usually falls in Israel, rain is considered as a sign of divine displeasure because it renders it impossible to observe the command to stay in booths.¹⁴ At Taan 1:7 the writer uses the quotation, "Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call unto the Lord that he send thunder and rain, and ye shall know and see that great is your wickedness which ye have wrought in the sight of God to ask for yourselves a king", from I Sam 12:17. The quotation is applied to support the view that drought (i.e., lack of rain between the months of October and April) and late rain (i.e., rain in the month of May, which is otherwise a harvest time) indicate divine displeasure upon Israel, which consequently signifies to the nation a call for repentance. At Taan. 2:1, quotations from Jonah 3:10 and Joel 2:13, set in a liturgical

¹³ See Lev 15:19-33. Cf Kelim 1:3, in Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 604.

¹⁴ Rosh Ha-Shanah 1:2; Tannith 1:1; Sukkah 2:9. Also Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 175, note 7.

context, are used as the theological basis for the appeal for moral uprightness over against the mere ritual of fasting:

How did they order the matter on the last seven days of fasting? They used to bring out the Ark into the open space in the town and put wood—ashes on the Ark and on the heads of the President and the Father of the court, and every one took of the ashes and put them on his head. The eldest among them uttered before them words of admonition: Brethren, it is not written of the men of Nineveh that “God saw their sack cloth and their fasting”, but “and God saw their works that they turned from their evil way” (Jonah 3:10); and in his protest the Prophet says, “Rend your heart and not your garments” (Joel 2:13).¹⁵

12. *Moed Katan* (Mid-Festival Days)

The use of the quotation, “He hath swallowed up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people shall be taken away from off all the whole earth, for the Lord hath spoken it”, from Isa 25:8 indicates that rabbinic theology shared the Old Testament eschatological hope of Israel.¹⁶ Set in the context of a funeral ceremony during or at certain appointed feasts like the Feast of Dedication, the quotation is used as a definition of the eschatological hope of Israel when Yahweh will bring an end to the years of suffering and sorrow, inaugurating a period of salvation for Israel and the nations.

13. *Sotah* (The Suspected Adulteress)

One of the major teachings in this tractate is the view that the measure a man metes with shall be measured to him also whether it is for the better or for the worse. Samson and Absalom are cited as those who meted out a poor measure while Miriam, Joseph and Moses are cited as those who meted out a better measure. At that point the writer adduces Deut 34:6, “And he buried him in the valley”, and Isa 58:8, “and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall gather thee in death” to support the rabbinic view that the righteous are as great as Moses for just as Moses was buried by the Lord the righteous are gathered by the Lord’s glory in their death.¹⁷

At Sotah 9:15, the quotation, “For the son dishonoured the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter –in-law against her mother-in-law: a man’s enemies are the men of his own house”, from Micah 7:6 is used as a theological springboard for a discussion

¹⁵ Taanith 2:1, in Danby, *The Mishnah*, p.195.

¹⁶ See my discussion of Isa 2:4 under the tractate “Shabbath” above.

¹⁷ Sotah 1:7-9.

on the eschatological signs which are to herald the coming of the Messiah at the end of the time of exile.¹⁸

14. *Sanhedrin (The Sanhedrin)*

At San 10:1, there is the quotation, “thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands that I may be glorified”, from Isa 60:21. It is used to support the view that all Israelites shall be saved except those who reject the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, those who deny that the Law is from heaven, those who read heretical books, those who are superstitious and those who are licentious and sceptical.¹⁹

At San 10:3, several quotations are used to support the view that some generations have no share in the world to come. Gen 6:3 is quoted as the theological basis for the view that the generation of the flood has no share in the world to come. Gen 11:8 is similarly applied to the generation of the dispersion; Gen 13:13 is applied to the people of Sodom; Num 14:37 to the Spies, Num 14:35 to the wilderness generation, and Deut.29:28 to the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. But R. Akiba finds a theological basis for the salvation of the wilderness generation in a quotation from Ps 50:5, “Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”

15. *Eduyoth (Testimonies)*

At Eduy 8;7, the quotation, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet... and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers,” from Mal 4:5-6 provides the theological basis for the teaching that Elijah will not come to change the law but to bring an end to injustice and introduce peace into the world as a prelude to the Messianic age.

16. *Aboth (The Fathers)*

At Aboth 3:2 there are quotations which are used to support the rabbinic view of the Divine Presence, namely, that wherever the Law is being meditated the Lord's presence is guaranteed, whether the meditation is done individually or in a group, while where the Law is not meditated, the *Shekinah* does not rest. The quotation, “nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” from Ps 1:1, is the basis for the postulation that where the Law is not meditated, the

¹⁸ For a discussion of the footprints of the Messiah, see Sotah 9:15, in Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 306.

Lord absents himself, while the quotation, "Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name", from Mal 3:16 supports the view that where two people meditate the Law the *Shekinah* presents himself. The quotation, "Let him sit alone and keep silence, because he hath laid it upon him", from Lam 3:28 is then used to support the view that the Lord is present even to an individual who meditates upon the Law.

At Aboth 3:6 the writer provides the theological basis for the view that the *Shekinah* is also present in a congregation of any size (a congregation has a minimum of ten people²⁰). The quotation, "God standeth in the congregation of God", from Ps 82:1 supports the view that the Lord is present even in the minimum - size congregation. But further quotations support the view that the Lord presents himself even to congregations with less than ten people. Amos 9:6 supports the view that the Lord is present even among five worshippers; Ps 82:1, "he judgeth among the judges", supports Divine Presence among three worshippers; Mal 3:16 supports the Presence among two worshippers as indicated above; and the quotation, "In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee", from Exod. 20:24 argues for the Presence to a single worshipper.

At Aboth 3:7, the quotation, "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee", from I Chron 29:14 is cited by R. Eleazar b. Judah of Barlotha to support the view that people must give to God what is his own since the people themselves and whatever they have belong to him.

The writer uses some quotations at 6:8 which serve as a theological springboard for the discussion of the "Seven qualities" which in rabbinic theology are "reckoned as comely to the righteous".²¹ The quotations are drawn from Prov 16:31; 20:29; 14:24; 17:6 and Isa 24:23. The blessings of the righteous include strength, riches, honour, wisdom, long life and children.

At Aboth 6:9, the writer applies quotations from Ps 119:72; Prov 6:22 and Haggai 2:8 to support the rabbinic view that the Law is better and superior and more lasting than worldly riches, and that the Law protects and guides the righteous even after death.

At Aboth 6:10, the writer applies quotations in order to define, in accordance with rabbinic theology, the five possessions which the Lord took to himself. These holy possessions are: the Law (Prov 8:22); heaven and earth (Isa 66:1; Ps. 104 :24); Abraham (Gen 14:19); Israel (Exod 14:16; Ps 16:3), and the Temple (Exod 15:17; Ps 78:54).

Also at Aboth 6:11, the writer has used quotations to support the view that all things were created for God's glory. The quotations from Isa 43:7 and Exod 15:18 have been cited to

¹⁹ Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 397 and notes 4 and 5.

²⁰ The number is based on Num 14:27. See Sanhedrin 1:6.

serve this purpose. And the quotation, "It pleased the Lord for his righteousness sake to magnify the Law and make it honourable", from Isa 42:21 has provided a theological basis for the rabbinic multiplication of the Law for Israel.

This analytical study of the use of biblical quotations in the *Mishnah* has revealed that biblical quotations have been consciously cited, with full scriptural authority,²² in order to support rabbinic theological views on different aspects of religious interest. These quotations are almost always introduced by some introductory formula, for instance, "It is written", "And it says", "It says", "The prophet says", " Rabbi ... says, but the sages say". Such formulas indicate that the quoted texts are not mere historical or linguistic allusions, but that they are consciously and carefully quoted to serve a specific theological purpose. This is a theological use of biblical quotations and serves as one possible background to Matthew's theological use of his fulfilment quotations.

B. The Dead Sea Scrolls

While the legal element characterizes the rabbinic theology reflected in the *Mishnah*, the apologetic element pervades all the Dead Sea Scrolls, an element shared with the New Testament writings. As it is with the *Mishnah*, it is often the case in the Dead Sea Scrolls that where a writer consciously and clearly cites a biblical quotation, a theological use of it can often be attested. The sectarian nature of the Dead Sea Scrolls helps to bring this phenomenon into sharp relief. Since the earliest Christian movement could from the point of view of official Judaism, be viewed as a sectary, similar use of biblical quotations could be expected from the New Testament writers. That the Dead Sea Scroll writers were conscious of using certain biblical quotations, and hence in many cases putting them to a theological use, is attested by the various introductory formulas with which they introduce such quotations. The most common introductory formulas are "It is written", and "interpreted this concerns", or its variant: "interpreted this means". Other introductory formulas include, "as God ordained by the hand of the Prophet.. .. saying", "as he spoke by the hand of .. saying", "which is written", "and concerning the saying", "for this is what he said", "and as for that which he said", etc.

²¹ Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 460.

²² For the view that Jewish scholars ascribed full scriptural authority of the basic Old Testament text regardless of the variants they might have introduced themselves into that text to better account for their own theological views, see Matthew Black, "The theological appropriation of the Old Testament by the New Testament", *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 39, No1 (1986), pp. 3, 10-2.

It is generally taken that the Dead Sea Scrolls and the community that used them are pre-Christian in their origin and dating.²³ This pre-Christian character of the scrolls would further suggest that the similarities they share with the evangelist Matthew in the theological use of quotations²⁴ point to an early date for the origin of his gospel.

1. *The Community Rule (IQS)*

*The Doctrine of "Second Degree" Separation*²⁵

The Community Rule does not only teach that members of the covenant community turn away from sin but also teaches that covenant members disassociate themselves from all sinful people, which practically referred to all non-members of the covenant community. In support of the teaching on "second degree" holiness, the writer of this scroll quotes Exod 23:7, "Keep away from the man in whose nostrils is breath, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"²⁶

The Doctrine of the Council of the Community.

²³ For a brief discussion on the historical development of the Qumran Community, see Nkhoma, "The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran Literature)", pp.1-2. Also, Black, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins", *Theological Collections II*, pp. 97-8; Albright and Mann, "Qumran and the Essenes", *Theological Collections II*, pp. 16-20; Kurt Schubert, *The Dead Sea Community, Its Origins and Teachings*, Westport: Greenwood, 1959, p. 25; Gaalyah Cornfeld, *Archaeology of the Bible*, London: Adams and Charles Black, 1977, p. 258; A. Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York: The New American Library, 1956, pp. 25-42, especially p. 42 for the pre-Christian origin and character of the Scrolls and their community.

²⁴ Similarities in literary techniques in the use of Old Testament quotations between the evangelist and the Dead Sea Scrolls was a major focus in previous Matthean quotations research, especially as carried out by Stendahl as I have argued in Chapter 1. For a discussion on the hermeneutical principles practiced by the Qumran Community in their interpretation of Scripture, See F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, London: Tyndale, 1960, especially pp. 8-17, 75-88. For a more recent discussion on the similarities between the Qumran Scrolls and the New Testament in general, see James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 163-84. For the opposing view that these similarities do not go very far and that the evangelist must be seen as commenting on the Marcan Gospel rather than the prophetic writings, see A.R.C. Leaney *et al.* (eds.), *A Guide to the Scrolls, Nottingham Studies on the Qumran Discoveries*, London: SCM, 1958, p. 95.

²⁵ The term 'second degree separation', is used by Klaus Fiedler to describe the Christian groups or movements that actively and formally endeavour not only to keep away from any known sin but also to keep away from any known sinners or any corporate institution that deals with such sinners. Fiedler further suggests that in terms of the history of Christian missions this attitude goes back to John Nelson Darby. See Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions*, Oxford: Regnum and Lynx, 1994, p. 22 and note 20, also pp. 119-20.

²⁶ G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Third Edition; London: Penguin, 1987, pp. 67-8, cf. p. 86-7.

Sinaiticus, the Aquila translation and Targumic tradition.⁹⁵ In line 2 Matthew agrees with the MT in understanding the grammatical relationship of the nouns involved. In Hebrew there are three nouns of which the last two are jointed by a construct so that one of them is better translated as an adjective. This aspect is lacking in the LXX. Also Matthew agrees with the MT in considering the nouns as nominative appositives to the “voice” of the first line, while the LXX shifts them into a negative construction. Matthew also appears to have reversed the order of the Hebrew nouns, preserved in the first two nouns of the LXX. In line 3 *huiois* of the LXX is closer to *banim* of the MT than Matthew’s *tekna*, although the latter is used elsewhere in the Gospel to translate the Hebrew *ben* (son). If Matthew is responsible for the Greek of Jeremiah, it is surprising that he chose the plural of *teknon* (child) rather than the plural of *pais* (boy) or else *paides* which could include both male and female. This probably could be explained if it is assumed that the evangelist adapts certain quotations to his context, while with others he retains the standard Greek way of rendering Hebrew.⁹⁶ In line 4, the evangelist’s, “She would not be consoled” is identical with LXX A and both are close to MT’s “refusing to be consoled” while LXX B diverges significantly with its “would not cease”. Also in the repetition of “sons”, LXX B agrees with the MT: while the evangelist and LXX A omit it. However, this divergence is only apparent than real since it appears that the original Hebrew did not have the second reference to “sons”. This could therefore be an interpolation in the MT text.⁹⁷ In line 5, the ambiguous reading of the MT is not followed by any known Greek translation. It has again been suggested that this could be an interpolation in a more original Hebrew. Probably, the original Hebrew read “her son” (singular) in line 3 so that “he is no more” in line 5 could be understandable.⁹⁸

In summary, it is clear that the evangelist’s quotation is closer to the MT than LXX B and its similarities to LXX A are easily understood when it is realized that LXX A itself resembles the MT. Probably the few differences between the evangelist and the MT can be accounted for if the evangelist’s Greek rendered a better text than is now presented in the MT.

b *The Historical Context of Jeremiah 31:15 (LXX 38:15)*

Jeremiah lived in the second half of the 7th Century BC when Assyria was on the verge of collapse and Babylon was rising to an international superpower status. At the same time Judah was declining and would soon fall. The focus of his message is the vision of a new

⁹⁵ See the Critical Apparatus in *Septuaginta*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979 on Jer 31:15, 38:15 in *Septuaginta*.

⁹⁶ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 222 for a thorough discussion of this textual problem.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

people in a new age that lie beyond the imminent catastrophe. He was called to the prophetic ministry in 627 BC. Coming from Anathoth near Ramah, the traditional sight for the tomb of Rachel, the prophet figuratively visualizes Rachel watching the defeated Jews and Israelites as they are gathered at Ramah by the Babylonian conquerors in readiness for a long march into a gloomy exile in 586 BC, an experience that Jeremiah personally shared in 588 BC. Rachel breaks down at the sight of the helpless defeated exiles and weeps for her dying children.⁹⁹

Both Ramah and Rachel could represent both Israel and Judah. Ramah was located on the border between Israel and Judah (I Kgs 15:17; II Chron 16:1), five miles north of Jerusalem. And, as I have indicated, this is the traditional sight for the tomb of Rachel¹⁰⁰ and is the place where the exiles gathered for their march into exile. Similarly Rachel could represent both kingdoms. She bore Joseph who was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. And Israel was known as Ephraim simultaneously, hence she could represent her “son”. Also she was the mother of Benjamin whose descendants, and those of Judah, formed the southern Kingdom of Judah. Thus she could also represent Judah.

c *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

The focus of Jeremiah’s message was the blessing that would come in the future after the present catastrophe. This is a cause for rejoicing. For there is comfort for both Israel and Judah (Jer 31:27, 31), that is the entire remnant (31:7). Yahweh has loved his people with an everlasting love (31:3). Therefore, he who is scattering them will also gather them (31:10). Hence, Rachel should not weep any longer (31:16) because Ephraim is Yahweh’s dear child (31:20) and Yahweh will make a new covenant with his people (31:31).¹⁰¹ The remnant will return so that through it Yahweh will cause “a righteous Branch to spring forth for David” who will administer, “justice and righteousness in the land” (33:15). The prophet here obviously refers to the Messianic age.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁹⁹ John Paterson, “Jeremiah”, in Black and Rowley (eds.), *Peaker's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 537, Cf. Anderson, *The Living World*, p. 419.

¹⁰⁰ Possibly, the late tradition that Rachel’s tomb is at Bethlehem (Gen 35:16-20; 48:7) influenced the evangelist’s choice of Bethlehem. However, since the text locates Rachel’s weeping at Ramah, an earlier traditional site, this is probably unlikely. See France, *Matthew*, p. 87. Cf. Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament, the Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, Princeton: Princeton University press, 1969, pp. 24, 25.

¹⁰¹ For a through discussion of the nature and character of the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah’s prophecy including the relational tension of some of its aspects, see O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980, pp. 271-300.

¹⁰² Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 185.

Thus, in the prophetic context of Jeremiah 31 the evangelist sees the ideas of both suffering and healing presented side by side. The idea of the Exodus and of the grace that Israel enjoyed in the betrothal times of the desert wanderings is not far removed from the substance of this fulfilment quotation. The testing which inevitably follows God's initiatives also brings suffering in which both the innocent and the guilty share. The whole of this chapter focuses on the hope of return that is held out to Israel by God's promise: those who survive the sword will receive grace and enjoy eternal love in the wilderness. Thus the suffering is not only a temporally experience, but also an inevitable prelude to their entering into the realities of the blessings of God. There is also a reference to God's shepherding of his scattered people. To Ephraim in the north and to Judah in the south, the promise of healing and restoration is held out. God's planting and building will follow his sifting and judgment (Jer 30:28). Once this sifting and judgment are over, God will establish a New Covenant with his people Israel.¹⁰³

In all this, the evangelist sees the principle of God's out-workings through disaster and blessing, death and life.¹⁰⁴ The temporary suffering of the exiles, which is a cause for Rachel's weeping in the context of the book of Jeremiah, is only a prelude to a greater blessing. Yahweh will not abandon his people, but will make a New Covenant with them and cause a righteous branch from David to administer justice and righteousness. Therefore, Rachel should mourn no longer for her children will return. Beyond the present catastrophe there is hope for joy. Similarly, the evangelist sees in the deaths of Bethlehem infants, as the prophet saw in the suffering of the exiles before him, a temporary prelude to Messianic blessings. For Jesus, like the remnant of the prophetic vision, will be preserved and will usher in the blessings of the Messianic age. This points to the theme of Jesus' humiliation and suffering before he was raised to glory in the resurrection, one of the central themes in the Gospel. Thus, rather than cry with sorrow because of the present suffering, the people of the Messiah must rejoice for their salvation will soon come, and now is.

It is again difficult here to see how the evangelist would apply this fulfilment quotation to the person of Jesus the way he does without taking into serious consideration of the Old Testament prophetic context. His use of the fulfilment quotation here further indicates that the evangelist defines the person of Jesus Messiah in light of its Old Testament prophetic context.

¹⁰³ That the concept of new covenant was very important to New Testament writers is reflected in the many references to it, for instance Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19 – the longer text; 1 Cor 11:25 and Heb 12:24.

¹⁰⁴ France, *Matthew*, p. 87.

5. *The Fulfilment Quotation in Matt 2:23*

Matt	He will be called a Nazorean (<i>Nazōraios klēthēsetai</i>).
LXX	(Isa. 4:3) They will be called holy (<i>hagioi klēthēsontai</i>)
MT	(Isa 4:3) He will be called holy (<i>qādôsh</i>).
LXX B.	(Judges 16:17) I am a holy one (<i>hagios</i>) of God.
LXX A.	(Judges 16:17) I am a Nazirite (<i>Naziraios</i>) of God.
MT	(Judges 16:17) I have been a Nazirite (<i>Nazîr</i>) of God.

a. *Critical Observations*

Brown has called this quotation “the most difficult formula in the gospel.”¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Allen thinks it is “still unexplained difficulty”.¹⁰⁶ Albright, while admitting that there is no clear Old Testament source from which the evangelist might have derived this fulfilment quotation, he suggests that Jer 31:6 might be a possible source. In this text, not only do the consonants *nsr* appear but also its meaning in both the MT and the LXX was either lost or obscured. It also provides, according to Albright, the necessary context against which the incidents of vs. 19-23 can be understood.¹⁰⁷ While Albright’s theory remains a possibility, it does not appear to be probable. The fact that he bases his theory on the obscurity of the text weakens his argument. It is based on a prophetic text “where a form of the Hebrew Consonants *nsr* appeared, but where also the meaning had been *lost* or *obscured* both in the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT) and in the Greek of LXX”.¹⁰⁸ This is highly conjectural. However, it has been suggested that the term “Nazorean” that the evangelist has applied to Jesus is nevertheless appropriate not only because Jesus stayed in Nazareth but also because the word appears to allude to the word *netser*, a branch of the house of David, and it also appears to allude to the word *Nazir*, the consecrated or holy one.

Brown is of the opinion that the evangelist has *Nazir* more in mind and is citing two definite passages: Isa 4:3, “He who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy”, and Judg 16:17, “I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb.” Although he admits that the relationship between these texts and the evangelist’s version is a complicated one, he further argues that the word *Nazir* also means both *hagios* (holy one) and *Naziraios* (Consecrated one) in Greek. He finds added support to his position in that during his ministry, Jesus was also known as “the Holy One” (a title only found in Judg 16:17 with

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁶ Allen, *Matthew*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. 20-22.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21, Emphasis on “lost”, “obscured” is mine.

reference to Samson), and the fact that the book of Judges was part of the former prophets in the Jewish Bible. The association of *Hagios Theou* (holy one of God) title with *Naziraios*, in turn, Brown argues, echo *Nazoraios* (that is Nazareth). The association would also remind the evangelist another passage, Isa 11:1, which refers to a shoot from the stump of Jesse, *netser*, a branch that would grow from his roots, that is a Messianic branch of David.¹⁰⁹

Without doubt, Brown's theory is quite a genius in character. But the evidence he adduces and the procedure he follows appears to be rather shaky. There is no etymological connection between the word *netser* and Nazareth. Also the context connects Nazarene with Nazareth and not any special consecration.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Jesus was never a Nazirite in the sense that this Old Testament reference implies.¹¹¹ Besides all this, it is quite unsafe to build such a towering theory on the basis of a single occurrence of a term throughout the whole of the Old Testament where the term is applied to an individual person, in this case, Samson. Every other reference is plural and general.¹¹²

Other explanations are also not fully satisfactory. While many see allusions to both *netser* (Isa 11:1) and *Nazir* (Judg 16:17), some see Isa 11:1 as a more plausible reference.¹¹³ Others are of the opinion that the evangelist has employed a complicated word-play at this point.¹¹⁴ Since the evangelist does not appear to have quoted any specific passages, we may conclude with Hendriksen that the fulfilment is not, however, of one particular passage but the prophets in general.¹¹⁵ This means that we cannot completely reject any of the proposed texts. Equally, we cannot endorse any of them with complete certainty¹¹⁶ although, in the words of Allen, some would be "more plausible" than others.

b. *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

The fulfilment quotation in Matt 2:23 has given us a special difficulty because we have not found any convincing claim as to its specific source, although passages such as Isa 4:3; 11:1;

¹⁰⁹ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 227.

¹¹⁰ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, pp. 189, 190.

¹¹¹ France, *Matthew*, p. 88.

¹¹² John Metcalfe, *The Messiah, the Apostolic Foundation of the Christian Church*, vol. 3. Penn: John Metcalfe, 1978, p. 39.

¹¹³ Allen shares this opinion: "Attempt to connect the word (Nazirine) with the Hebrew Nazir has little in its favour", See Allen, *Matthew*, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ Hare, *Matthew*, p. 17. Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, pp. 16-17. The wordplay is not obvious in Hebrew and is completely lacking in Greek. See France, *Matthew*, p. 88.

¹¹⁵ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 189.

¹¹⁶ It is for this reason that I have omitted a discussion on the historical context of any of the suggested texts. However, the fact that the evangelist would see in them a typological relationship to Jesus quite

Jer 31:1; Judg 13:5; 16:17 have been suggested by various scholars. However, what is significant for our purpose here is that to Matthew, the point is that the Nazareth residence, like every stage of the coming and work of Jesus, was directed by God and fulfilled His purpose and promise.¹¹⁷ By emphasizing Jesus' stay in Nazareth as fulfilment of Scripture, the evangelist stresses a line of thought which underlies the whole of this gospel, namely, that all stages of Jesus' life were a fulfilment of scripture. If the passages that have been appealed to as sources of this quotation are its real sources, then we would find at least three significant theological emphases in this quotation. First, the evangelist would be emphasizing the Davidic royalty of Jesus Messiah (*netser* – branch, Isa 4:3; 11:1). The second emphasis would be on his holiness which would partly account for his sinlessness (*nazir* – the consecrated one, Judg 13:5; 16:17), as he was indeed the Holy One of God. The third emphasis would be on his mission of proclaiming salvation to the world (Jer 31:6). If this is the case, then the fulfilment quotation defines the person of Jesus Messiah. Not only is he the long-awaited Messiah, but he is also the Holy One of God entrusted with the mission of proclaiming salvation to the world.

Although we cannot trace the real source of the quotation with complete certainty, it is clear that its application to the Christ event by the evangelist rests on his understanding of the Old Testament prophetic context of whatever texts he draws his quotation from. The very difficulty we have in locating the exact source of this quotation suggests that the evangelist had such a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament contexts of the texts he had in mind as to enable him draw synthetically their theological implication and apply them to the Christ-event in a manner that we cannot easily comprehend.

C. Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that New Testament writers witness to earlier textual recensions. That they make their own extensive translations is very unlikely. However, it is clear that they made necessary grammatical modifications to received textual traditions and selected variants from them that better served their theological purpose. This is not surprising at a time when the biblical text was still in a fluid state and existed in multiple textual traditions.

Although it is generally difficult to tell whether a citation is Matthean or pre-Matthean on the basis of wording, in the case of fulfilment quotations, the evidence largely suggests Matthean construction and modification. The evidence also shows that Matthew has added

naturally is clear. There is a typological correspondence between these prophecies and the person of Jesus.

these special quotations to the traditions he reports. It has also shown that Matthew is responsible for the mixed-text form of the fulfilment quotations. He is responsible for the choice of the text-form that now appears in these quotations.

The discussion has further demonstrated that the evangelist applied these Old Testament quotations to the Christ-event in full awareness of their Old Testament prophetic context in order to define the Person of the Messiah. He is defined in terms of his royalty implied in his Davidic Sonship. This at the same time implies his humanity, for he is a royal descendant of the Davidic dynasty. He is also defined as divine. He is the Son of God. This is implied in his virgin birth and the divine call from Egypt. Thus the Messiah is not only invested with human royalty but also transcends the human plane in his intimate relationship to God. As the Son of God, his redemptive mission transcends time and space in its effects and acquires cosmic dimensions and eschatological finality.

But the specific forms of this redemptive mission are left undefined. The primary focus at this stage in the narrative is on the Person of the Messiah. The nature and form of the redemptive activity that this messiah will undertake are yet to be defined by the fulfilment quotations which fall under the mission-passion section of his Gospel narrative. Hence, in the final chapter of this dissertation, I shall turn to these fulfilment quotations to see how they define the *work* of the Messiah.

¹¹⁷ Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel to St Matthew*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971, p. 62.

Chapter 4

Fulfilment Quotations in the Ministry and Passion narratives

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, it has been demonstrated that the fulfilment quotations in the nature and form they have come down to us are the work of the evangelist. It has also been demonstrated that the fulfilment quotations in the infancy narrative define the person of Jesus Messiah as both human and divine. He is the Son of David and at the same time the Son of God with a redemptive mission that transcends the limits of time and space. It has been, however, noted in that chapter that the fulfilment quotations in the infancy narrative leave the specific forms of this redemptive mission largely undefined. It is the fulfilment quotations that are found in the mission-passion section of the gospel that shed light on specific forms that the redemptive mission of the Messiah will take. The task before me in this chapter, therefore, is to show how these special Old Testament quotations in the mission-passion section of the gospel narrative contribute to the evangelist's understanding of the nature and forms that the Messiah's redemptive mission will take. It will also be argued, as it was the case in the previous chapter, that the Old Testament contexts of the fulfilment quotations provide the conceptual framework for the evangelist's understanding of the mission of the Messiah. It is in light of the conceptual categories that are found in the Old Testament contexts of those fulfilment quotations that the evangelist applies the specific texts he quotes, albeit in a modified manner, to the mission of Jesus Messiah. It will thus be demonstrated that the Old Testament background to these quotations is crucial for any proper assessment of the evangelist's understanding of the nature and role of the Messiah's redemptive mission. Critical scholarship has generally disregarded or even actively undermined the role of the Old Testament background in its search for an understanding of Matthean theology. It has largely attributed Matthean Christological understanding to the evangelist's supposed sources, especially the Gospel of Mark.¹

The fulfilment quotations to be examined in this chapter are Matt 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5 and 27:9-10. These are spread across the whole period from the beginning of Jesus public ministry in Galilee (4:14-16) to his condemnation by the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman Governor in Jerusalem (27:24). They focus on the theological significance of Galilee as the base for Jesus' ministry; on the theological implications of his healing ministry (8:17); on the theological implications of his humble attitude as an approach to his mission

¹ For example, see Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 9, who attributes Matthean Christology to the Gospel of Mark.

(12:17-21); on the theological significance of parables as a means for teaching divine truth (13:35); on the theological significance of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (21:4-5); and on the theological significance of the "Lordly price" for which he was betrayed (27:9-10). The underlining concept in the mind of the evangelist is that the prophetic word of God (i.e. the Old Testament) not only defines the nature of the person of the Messiah, but also defines the mission of that Messiah. Thus the whole life and ministry of the Messiah is not only set in eternity, but it is also revealed in time through the prophetic word. It is the fact that the life and work of Jesus fulfills the prophetic word that establishes him as the Chosen One of God, the Messiah. There were many who took God's word to Gentile – dominated areas; and there were many who healed and preached his word. There were many who attempted to rule with a humble heart; and there were many whose sacrificial attempts in their leadership career went unrecognized and unappreciated. One thing makes all these individuals different from the Matthean Messiah, namely, that their efforts, good or even Godly as they were, were not a direct fulfilment of his prophetic word in the sense that this Messiah is.

The idea of fulfilment is crucial to the understanding of the evangelist's Christology. It is for this reason that the evangelist finds fulfilment quotations an appropriate tool for expounding the redemptive meaning of Jesus' life and work in which he sees no less than the life and work of the Messiah as foretold in the prophetic word of God. This chapter attempts, as I have already indicated, to show how that prophetic word sheds light on the work of the Messiah with full regard to the Old Testament context of the prophetic word.

A. Exegetical – Theological Analysis of the Fulfilment Quotations in the Mission Narrative

This section continues the grammatical- historical analysis of the fulfilment quotations. The focus here is on those fulfilment quotations that are found in the missionary narrative of the Gospel according to Matthew. These are found at 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21 and 13:35. The introductory formula for the fulfilment quotations at 4:14 and 12:17 includes the words *hina plērōthē to rēthen*. The introductory formula at 8:17 and at 13:35 includes the words *hopōs plērōthē to rēthen*. The words *hina* and *hopōs* in this context are used as synonyms. Both mean "in order that", "so that" or "that" and are used as conjunction of purpose. Thus, the use of the one or the other does not lead to any substantial difference in meaning. In this section, it will be again argued that the way in which the evangelist applies these fulfilment quotations to the Christ-event reveal, his awareness of their Old Testament context, and that he applies

them to the Christ-event while taking full account of their Old Testament setting.² All the fulfilment quotations in the mission narrative define the work of Jesus Messiah, although the emphasis on the work of the Messiah in itself further defines his person. His extraordinary work of redemption as specifically defined by these fulfilment quotations follows as a corollary to his extraordinary personality as defined by the fulfilment quotations of the infancy narrative.

1. *The Fulfilment Quotation in Matt 4:14-16*

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,

Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles.

The people sitting in darkness

Have seen a great light

and upon those sitting in the land of the shadow of death

Light has dawned.

² Many critical scholars do not acknowledge the significant impact that the Old Testament background to specific fulfilment quotations would have on the mind of the evangelist as he wrote the Gospel. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 34, has the view that the evangelist whom he sees as an editor, "tears the words from their context, because he saw in them a prophecy of the fact that Christ went to Galilee to begin his ministry." In Allen's opinion, the geographical references in the fulfilment quotations at 4:14, for instance, have no relevance to the evangelist's application of that quotation to the Christ-event, especially to the fact that Jesus established his ministry in Galilee with Capernaum as its headquarters: "We need not inquire as to the exact signification of the geographical terms in the original", p. 34. Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series Vol. 1, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991, p. 73, sees the evangelist more preoccupied with the Gospel of Mark, one of his supposed sources so that the account of Jesus' move to Galilee is created out of the brief references to it at Mk 1:14a and 1:21 which he then saw as the fulfilment of Isa 8:23-9:1. The evangelist is basically portrayed as seriously considering the Marcan text. There is little reason to think that, in Harrington's view, the evangelist would apply the same seriousness in his consideration of the Old Testament context of his fulfilment quotation: "his use of Mark illustrates some of his editorial techniques: In the first pericope (i.e. 4:12 – 17) Matthew has shaped the account of Jesus movement from Nazareth to Capernaum from Mk 1:14a and 1:21, reinforced the idea of that movement as being in accord with God's will by the quotation from Isa 8:23-9:1, and shortened Mark 1:14b – 15 and brought it into line with the summary of John's preaching (i.e. Matt 3:2)". For the view that even the evangelist's basic theological ideas are derived from Mark, see Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 9.

a. *Textual Observations*

In the Hebrew original of Isa 9:1-2 (Heb 8:23-9-1) the first items, "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali" are separated from the three, "toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations". All of these five items are in an objective position. The first two items are objects of the verb "brought into contempt" or "degraded" (Hebrew *qal*). The other three items are objects of the verb "will glorify" or "will cause to be honoured" (from Hebrew *kaved*)

The evangelist has brought all the items into the position of nominative in apposition with "the people sitting in darkness", the predicate being "have seen a great light". The last two lines beginning with "And upon" (Greek *kai tois*) are in a parallelistic relationship to the preceding items. Here "light" is the subject, and "has dawned... and upon those sitting in the land of the shadow of death" is the predicate.

It has been argued that the evangelist was probably quoting a Greek version otherwise he would not have rendered the Hebrew word *derek* by the accusative *hodon* (Greek). It is said that if the evangelist were translating directly from the Hebrew, he would have rendered that word by the nominative *hodos* just as he has "the land of" (Hebrew. *Artsah*) rendered by the nominative "gē" (Greek), not the accusative "gēn" (Greek). It is then concluded that the accusative rendering *hodon* can only be the result of "careless copying from a version before him."³ However, to draw such a bold conclusion of source criticism out of this simple grammatical element does not seem quite convincing. It is one thing to say that the evangelist made a grammatical error here since *hodos* would be more appropriate as the phrase *hodon thalasses* has in his quotation taken a nominative position. It is, however, quite another thing to see this as sufficient evidence for the assumption that the evangelist was carelessly copying from a Greek version. Whether this was the case or not, it is clear that the present evidence does not offer any sufficiently conclusive proof. It is, however, sufficiently clear that the evangelist is not simply following a literal translation of the Hebrew text. The evangelist, in his own original way, has quite successfully reproduced Isaiah's thoughts. Essentially, Isaiah and Matthew are in agreement: light has dawned or shines brightly upon the people who were formerly in darkness.

When compared with the Septuagint, significant textual differences that rule out the possibility of literal reproduction of its text also appear. Where the evangelist has *gē Zaboulōn kai gē Nephtalim* (land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali), the Septuagint has *kōra Zaboulōn he gē Nephtalim*. The words *hodon thalassēs* are missing in Septuagint B, but they appear in Septuagint Aleph, c, a, A, Q and were found in Aquila and Theodotion. The

³ Allen, *Matthew*, p. 34.

evangelist is probably using a textual tradition which was either different from that of the Septuagint or was an early form of the Septuagintal tradition which contained these words. However, whether that tradition was in written form or not cannot be established with great certainty. The phrase *peran to Iordanou* also appears in the Septuagint, as does the phrase *Galilaia tōn ethnōn*. Where the evangelist has *ho laos ho kathēmenos en skotei*, Septuagint B has *poreuomenos* (those driven into darkness) following the Hebrew. But Septuagint A has *kathēmenos* (those sitting). The word *eiden* in the gospel also appears in Septuagint B as *idete*. Other Septuagintal variants are *eidete* and *eide*. Where the evangelist has *kai tois kathēmenois* (and those who are sitting), the Septuagint has *hoi katoikountes* (those who live). Where the evangelist has *en kōrā kai skiā thanatou* the Septuagint has the same, although Septuagint B omits *kai*. Where the evangelist has *fōs aneteilen* (light has risen), the Septuagint has *fōs lampsei* (light will shine).

These textual differences, between the text in the gospel and that of the Septuagintal traditions on the one hand, and the textual and syntactic differences between the text of the Hebrew original on the other hand, reveal that the evangelist developed the fulfilment quotation he employs more or less independently of these traditions. It will later be shown that the changes that the evangelist makes in the established textual traditions do serve his theological purposes.

b. *The Historical Context of Isa 9:1-2 (Hebrew 8:23 – 9:1)*

The poetic text in the background to the quoted portion presents a picture of doom and darkness. It portrays a people (Hebrew *hā'am*) who are probably Jews, but they could as well be Israelites (Ephraimites) or even foreigners, passing through the country hopelessly and distressed. In their plight, they curse both king and God from whom they cannot get any help. They are completely surrounded with impenetrable gloom (Isa 8:21-22). This is probably a reminiscence of the terrible destruction caused by the Assyrian invasion led by Tiglath-pileser in 734 and 733-32 BC (II Kgs 15:29; Isa 8:4). At that time, the Assyrians invaded the Northern Kingdom and, under the leadership of Tiglath-pileser III, converted the traditional districts of Zebulun and Naphtali into three separate Assyrian provinces.⁴ But the prophet sees a glorious future for the people of God who are currently enslaved by the Assyrians. In the oracle, the prophet sees a Davidic child-king who, in contrast with the faithless Ahaz, will

⁴ In 734 BC the coastal districts of the kingdom of Israel were converted into the Assyrian province of Du'ru, named after its capital, Dor. In 732 BC, in a second invasion, the north and the eastern areas that formed the plain of Jezreel and Galilee were turned into a province called Magidu, with Megiddo as its capital. The area across the Jordan became the province of Gal'azu. See Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*,

faithfully exercise his task of government. In the meantime, the child-king will live in a time of great suffering. Before he is old enough, the Assyrians will march through the land. Devastated, the land will turn into a wilderness (Isa 7:16-17; 8:8). Despite this, however, the presence of the Immanuel – child will, for those with eyes to see, be a sign, an assurance, that God is with his people, taking them through the fire of divine judgment to the dawn of a new day, the day of salvation. Meanwhile, the Immanuel child himself shares in the people's sufferings. But his very presence is a surety for the promised glorious future. Once the Assyrian rule is removed, the child Immanuel will ascend his Davidic throne and rule over the people as God's agent.⁵

The darkness which fell upon the people of Galilee cannot be limited, however, to this particular Assyrian invasion. For centuries the region of Galilee had been exposed to external military and political aggression more often than the Judean territory of southern Palestine. In addition, the Galilean region was more exposed to destructive moral and religious influences of a pagan environment. While a significant set of these elements was introduced through military campaigns,⁶ probably they were mainly introduced through peaceful means across the centuries. Through Galilee ran the international trade route, "the way of the sea". It ran from Damascus in Syria through Galilee down to the Mediterranean Sea at Acre. This brought the residents of Galilee into close contact with foreigners who travelled up and down that road for social-economic reasons.⁷

This prophetic oracle, like many other famous messianic oracles has become a subject for much scholarly debate. It has been argued that the Hebrew text in vv. 19-23 (English: vv. 19-9:1) was not originally a single piece, and that it is ambiguous with more than one corruption in its present form.⁸ Verses 21-22 are said to begin "in the middle of a distich."⁹ It has also been claimed that vv. 21-22 were added by a redactor.¹⁰ These verses provide a background picture to the oracle proper in 8:23 – 9:6 (9:1-7). They portray a people who, faced with the coalition of Syria and Ephraim, become hopeless and resort to consulting the spirits of the

A Commentary, OTL, London: SCM, 1972, p.126. Also R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, NCBC, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans and London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980, p. 104.

⁵ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, pp. 333 – 334.

⁶ The worst and most extensive of these campaigns was the deportation of over 27000 Israelites into Persia and subsequent repopulation of Israel by colonialists brought in from Babylonia, Elam and Syria. See Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 316. For a thorough discussion, see James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts, Relating to the Old Testament*, Third Edition, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 284-87, but especially p. 284.

⁷ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 243.

⁸ George Buchanan Gray, *The Book of Isaiah, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, ICC, Vol. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912, reprint 1975, p. 161.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p.102.

dead in a desperate search for an interpretation of the future. This indicates lack of faith in Yahweh and his prophetic word. For this reason, their distress will become greater and greater in accordance with Yahweh's word given through Isaiah's prophecies. Overtaken by hunger and suffering, they cursed their king and their God. They have no hope for redemption and will finally be dragged into slavery in a foreign land. Within this portion, the opening phrase in v.21, which is translated as "And they will pass through it..." in AKJV is problematic. First, where there is "they" in the English translation, the Hebrew has an indefinite "one" (Heb *we'ābar*). This provides a picture of one man in distress and suffering, not many. Secondly, the "it" of that phrase (*bāh*) is left indeterminate. Clements, understanding this "it" as reference to Jerusalem rather than the land in general, suggests that the picture here is a reminiscence of the events of 587 BC that led to the Babylonian exile. Taking the verses 21-22 as a second redactor's addition, he sees no reason for searching for an antecedent in the preceding text.¹¹ Most scholars, however, regard the "it" of that phrase as a reference to the land in general rather than to Jerusalem, and associate the events referred to in this context as those related to the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom and its subsequent annexation of the northern areas of the Israelite Kingdom.¹² The indefinite "one" of the Hebrew text may be satisfactorily accounted for as a poetic or prophetic reference to the suffering people of the Northern Kingdom.

Much scholarly contention has centered on 8:23 (9:1). Most scholars have treated this verse as a secondary explanatory note intended to provide a historical background for the hope that follows upon those who have experienced distress and suffering.¹³ Within this broader view of the redactionary nature of this verse, there are those who hold that the verse was added by Isaiah himself later, looking back to the events of 734 BC as he linked together the two oracles.¹⁴ There are also those who hold that while the verse might have been inserted at an early stage to illuminate 9:1-6 (9:2-7), it was not part of the original oracle. It is viewed as a Josianic rather than an Isaianic redaction.¹⁵ Others, however, see 8:23 (9:1) as forming a unity with 9:1-6 (9:2-7) which forms the oracle proper.¹⁶

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 103.

¹² For instance, see Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39, A Bible Commentary for Teaching*, Louisville: John Knox, 1993, pp. 82, 83; Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 122; Gray, *The Book of Isaiah*, p.161.

¹³ For instance, see Gray, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 161; Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p.105; Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp. 84, 85.

¹⁴ For instance, Gray, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 161 has the following comment: "If both (i.e. 8:21f and 9:1-6) are (the work of Isaiah), this note (i.e. 8:23/9:1) may have been added by him when he combined two poems of different periods."

¹⁵ Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 105 shares this view.

¹⁶ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 125, shares this view and gives credit to Alt for it: "Albrecht Alt is responsible for having demonstrated ... the fact, assumed by Matt 4:15f, that 9:1-7 forms a unity."

One difficulty in the understanding of this verse relates to how we should translate the Hebrew word *hikkîd*, rendered as “he will make glorious” (RSV). Throughout this oracle, including its background text, the tenses that are employed are perfects and imperfects with *waw* consecutive. These tenses are naturally used in a historical narrative. Verses 4 and 6 are the only exception from this practice. The Hebrew original for the phrase “he will make glorious” has a perfect tense which naturally implies a past action. The manner in which we understand this phrase determine the objects of the contrast implied in the text. Clements has attempted to understand this phrase as a reference to a past action. For him, the contrast is between the fate of Israel under Assyria, as a consequence of disunity between Ephraim and Judah, and the salvation which could come if the two were united under a single ruler:

Quite evidently the intention is to contrast the disastrous fate of Israel at the hands of Assyria, which came as a consequence of disunity between Ephraim and Judah (and) the salvation which could come if they were reunited under a single Davidic ruler.¹⁷

Thus Clements and those who share his view hold that both temporal references (“In the former time ... in the latter time”) refer to Assyrian supremacy. Accordingly, the phrase *wehā’aharôn hikkîd derek hayyām*, (“in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea”) is by them rendered “in the latter time he treated harshly the way of the sea”. The AKJV and the NKJV have followed this rendering. Seitz observes that Clements’ reading would be favoured by the clear sense of the imminent judgment that was to be visited upon the Northern Kingdom through the Assyrians (7:8b, 15; 8:4). Judah too was to be punished as a consequence of Ahaz’s disbelief (8:21-22).¹⁸

However, most scholars hold that the contrast is between the former and the latter periods and that the annexed territories are the referent in both cases. In this view, the contrast is thus not between the actual disastrous fate of divided Israel under the hand of Assyria and the conditional salvation that would have obtained for a united Israel, both of which were past as Clements suggests, but with yet another visitation of wrath looming in the imminent future. Rather, the verse speaks of an end to gloom and suffering for the one in anguish. God thoroughly judged the Northern Kingdom and handed it over to Israel’s enemies. Not only is their land and freedom taken, but also the people themselves are marched into captivity. Darkness usually implies captivity, whether within Israel in the sense of foreign oppression or outside Israel in an exilic context. But this is not all that God will do. For the sake of his own glory in the sight of nations, he will fulfil the promises and bring into reality a kingdom in which all Israel would be united and enjoy a lasting peace under a Davidic ruler. Hence, the

¹⁷ Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp. 104, 105.

¹⁸ Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 85.

first verse promises that God would reverse the fate of the separated districts of the Northern Kingdom¹⁹ and that this salvation will extend to Judah and beyond.

This interpretation of the temporal references is held by many. Gray comments that "the northern and north-eastern territory of Israel... will be compensated for its former distress by a corresponding glory."²⁰ Kaiser also speaks in terms of future glory for the once oppressed people, "The anger of God is not the end of all he has to do, but a transition to a new act of grace. For the sake of his glorification in the sight of the nations ... he will not abandon his people of the twelve tribes in the future. He ... will bring a new prosperity and freedom to the land which is oppressed at his command."²¹ Kaiser then continues to speak about the annexed territory of the Northern Kingdom, converted into Assyrian provinces at the time.²² The translators of the NIV and the RSV have also followed this future understanding of a clause in a perfect tense. It is important to note that even the evangelist understood the temporal references in a similar way. In line with this view, S. Mowinckel has made the observation that "Hebrew 'tenses' do not, like ours, express distinctions in time. Both the 'perfect' and the 'imperfect' in Hebrew can indicate events in the past, present, or future according to context."²³

Although some have placed the oracle in the post-exilic period, it is generally accepted that the oracle has features which make pre-exilic dating more appropriate, although historical precision is almost unattainable.²⁴ Therefore, we can safely assume that the oracle is pre-exilic along with many other scholars. The difficulty, however, is whether this oracle should be understood as historic referring to some particular birth (or accession) or whether it should be seen as prophetic and thus without any specific historical reference. Or indeed, whether it must be seen as part-prophetic and part-historical. It is possible to hold the last stated view since the tenses used in the oracle are suggestive of a historical event. At the same time the situation in vv. 1-3, 5, which does not appear to reflect any actual person, is suggestive of a

¹⁹ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 125.

²⁰ Gray, *The Book of Isaiah, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 161.

²¹ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 126.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1959, p. 108.

²⁴ Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 4. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 104, has also argued for the dismissal of the post-exilic dating. He argues that there is no hint in this prophecy to show that it concerned the restoration of Davidic monarchy, and that the language of royal birth and great international power that is to be achieved through the Davidic king does not accord with the hopes and expectations concerning the restoration of a Davidic kingship in the sixth and fifth century BC. Albrecht Alt dates the oracle between 732-722 and holds that it was intended as a prophecy of the expulsion of Assyrian forces and the restoration of a United Kingdom under a Davidic prince. Quoted in Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 334, n.19.

prophetic character of the oracle. Gray has correctly noted the difficulty that would arise from this view:

If this were actually so, the question would arise, how much is prophetic, how much historical? Has the great deliverance from foreign oppression actually taken place? Has some birth awaked the poet's hopes, but the actual present not yet fulfilled then by bringing the child born to the throne of David?²⁵

In my opinion, the part-historical and part-prophetic nature of the oracle remains a great probability, especially when it is remembered that some prophetic oracles followed certain prophetic-symbolic actions that were historically actualised.²⁶ However, scholars have usually subscribed either to the historical view or to the prophetic view. Among those who have adopted the historical position are S. Mowinckel who has seen in v. 6 the proclamation of the birth of a Davidic prince but thinks it is impossible to identify him.²⁷ J. Lindblom has also regarded v. 6 as the prophetic announcement of the physical birth of a royal child, Immanuel himself, whom he identifies with Hezekiah.²⁸ Albrecht Alt also holds the view that the prophet was prophesying an imminent liberation for the annexed territories of the Northern Kingdom and an imminent accession of a Davidic son who would fulfil the hope of the people.²⁹ Gerhard von Rad also holds the view that the prophecy of the people's liberation and the accession of a Davidic ruler would be imminently fulfilled:

We must not think that the prophets looked for the coming of an anointed sometime in a vague future. Isaiah clearly envisaged the enthronement in the immediate future, that is to say within the context of the Assyria crisis and its defeat.³⁰

More recently, Seitz has seen in this verse a proclamation for the birth of a royal, child Immanuel. He, however, identifies the child with Josiah rather than Hezekiah:

It is for these reasons of mundane historical accuracy (i.e. the fact that the accession of Hezekiah does not historically coincide with the defeat of Assyria and that the latter was neither affected nor threatened by Hezekiah's accession) that Josiah has been put forward

²⁵ Gray, *The Book of Isaiah, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 165.

²⁶ A good illustration of this practice are the actual births of Isaiah's sons and the subsequent prophetic names that were given to them. Jeremiah's symbolic actions of buying the field from Hinamel and his visit to the potter's house illustrate the same principle. See also H.H. Rowley, *Rediscovering the Old Testament*, London: Clark, 1947, p.106, for how the personal experience or events in the life of the prophet contributed to prophecy; J. Muilenburg, "Old Testament prophecy" in M. Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London: Routledge, 1962, reprint 1987, p. 481 for a brief discussion on prophetic – symbolic actions.

²⁷ For a thorough discussion, see S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, pp. 102-110, especially p. 109.

²⁸ J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962, p. 247.

²⁹ Quoted in Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12, A Commentary*, Second Edition, London: SCM, 1983, p. 204.

For Kaiser's critic of this view, see pp. 204-206.

³⁰ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, London: SCM, 1975, p. 171.

as a candidate who better fits the scenario of a possible Assyrian defeat If a link has been established intentionally between the "birth" of 9:6 and the promise of Immanuel at 7:14-16, then the effect is to focus the royal oracle on the birth rather than on the accession of Immanuel. The birth then portents great things.³¹

But the occurrence of such a provocative event should not necessarily mean that the prophecy finds its fulfilment in that event as these scholars appear to suggest. While the sign could be given in the present, its fulfilment would still lie in the distant future. And this appears to be the case here.

Among those who hold the view that the oracle must be seen as prophetic throughout are Gray who makes the following observation:

It is more probable that the poem is prophetic throughout in all its direct statements, the light has not yet actually shone, the people have not yet actually rejoiced, the child has not yet actually been born; all these things are past, not in reality, but only in the hopeful vision of the poet.³²

In a similar vein, Kaiser observes that:

The prophetic character as a whole is explicitly emphasized by the conclusion. Consequently, it is pointless to relate this prophecy to the birth of a prince or the enthronement of a Davidic king during Isaiah's lifetime .. For Isaiah, at his encounter with Ahaz, the ruling line of the royal house of Judah lay under judgment.³³

As I indicated earlier, to attempt to understand this oracle as strictly historical or strictly prophetic is probably to miss the point. It is quite probable that a particular event, either a birth or an accession to the throne acted as a springboard for the oracle so grand in its hopes and expectations as not to fit the description of any known king in the history of the Israelite monarchy.³⁴

Seitz has correctly observed that while the references to birth and the language of "child" "son" generally refers to the coronation of a new king in the spirit of Ps 2, the larger context of 7:1-9:7 to which this oracle belongs indicates an interest in the birth of the Immanuel child rather than his accession:

At 7:14-16 we hear of a similar provision of a name (Immanuel) and promises associated with it. The name reaches at 8:8 and 8:10 in visions of the future. But we hear nothing about the birth as such, as a concrete fulfilment of the word spoken to the prophet, which was to be a sign for the house of David. The royal oracle at 9:1-7 provides that concrete fulfilment: 'For a child has been born for us'. With us, for us (9:6), is Mighty God... The

³¹ Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 86.

³² Gray, *The Book of Isaiah, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p. 165.

³³ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 126.

³⁴ Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp. 85; Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 105.

promise of the son is fulfilled. The promises related to his maturation await their fulfilment, even as the oracle closes with a vision of his reign.³⁵

Of a particular interest to us in this oracle is v 5 (6), especially the names that are given to the royal child. The titles Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace³⁶ are given to the royal child once he is raised to the status of "Son" by the Father. The titles set out the programme of his reign. With the coming of this king, the history of mankind hitherto characterised by unrest, strife, suffering and devastation approaches its conclusion. His righteous reign will bring to the world an all-embracing and never-ending salvation. Each name defines an aspect of his mission or reign. The name Wonderful Counsellor refers to the totality of wisdom within the person of the king so that he will not need any advice from outside himself. It also means that his plans, which reach out to the whole world, will ultimately, attain their intended goal because his thoughts are under the guidance of the Spirit of God.³⁷ The name Mighty God stresses the fullness of his power. As the Son of God, this name describes the king as the legitimate representative of God on earth. The name of Everlasting Father focuses on the enduring, fatherly, beneficent and righteous rule that this king will establish. And the name Prince of Peace points to the fullness of salvation that he will bring about. For the Israelites, peace meant total harmony and not the mere absence of war, or the continuation of war in more subtle forms. Peace referred to that perfect condition in which all creatures recognise God and willingly submit to his reign.³⁸

c *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

Other scholars have not seen any relationship between the evangelist's application of this fulfilment quotation to the establishment of Christ's earthly mission in Galilee and the Old Testament historical context of this quotation. For instance, Beare holds the view that the reference to the tribal areas was "of no more than antiquarian interest."³⁹

³⁵ Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp. 86, 87.

³⁶ For the view that the imagery and ideology is Egyptian in its ultimate origin but that at this time it had already become an integral part of the royal ideology in Judah, see Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, pp. 107, 108. Also Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, pp. 128, 129.

³⁷ The Hebrew word for "counsel", (y's) includes both the decision and the power to carry that decision through. Thus, this king will not only make wise decisions but will also put them into operation and ensure that they remain effective.

³⁸ For a thorough discussion of the concept of peace in the biblical period, see Gerhard von Rad, "peace" and Forster, "Eirene" in Kittel Gerhard and Friedrich Gerhard (eds.), *Theology Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964, reprint 1993, pp. 400-21, especially 400-406.

³⁹ Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew, a Commentary*, p.115.

In the time of Isaiah, the tribes were still to be found in the areas of their ancient settlement, and the oracle which he delivers looks back to the recent Assyrian conquest; but this historical reference is entirely lost from view in Matt.⁴⁰

Meier thinks that the evangelist merely “plays loose with geography”. According to him, the evangelist has sandwiched the information concerning Jesus’ move to Capernaum between Mark 1:14a and 1:14b –15. He further suggests that the evangelist has created this information out of the Old Testament text turning “a minor point of geography” into “a major theological statement” in an attempt to assimilate the narrative to the citation.⁴¹

But this decided neglect of the Old Testament context is more apparent than real, intended to serve certain presuppositions. Even Beare rejects the relevance of the Old Testament context on one page⁴² only to confess the evangelist’s awareness of it on the next page:

It may well be that Matthew *has in mind the rest of the oracle*, which sees the hope of deliverance in an heir to the throne, who has just been born, or (more likely) in a king who has just ascended the throne⁴³

Then he quotes the verse: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and he will be called ‘Wonderful in counsel, divine in might a father forever, a beneficent prince’” (Isa 9:6). It is significant here to note that this verse is five verses down from the verse (Isa 9:1) that the evangelist has actually quoted.

While unanimity of opinion on the exact meaning of this oracle may not be expected,⁴⁴ a closer study of the Old Testament context and the manner in which the evangelist applies this fulfilment quotation reveals that he was not only aware of that context, but also that he used that context as a basis for his theological reflection on the significance of Jesus’ move to Galilee.

One way in which the evangelist’s independent reflection on the Old Testament context relates to Jesus’ move to Galilee is brought out through the mixed text-form of this quotation. The evangelist has significantly changed the syntactic form of the original Hebrew *parallelismus membrorum*. In the Hebrew original the first two items, “the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali” are objects of the verb “brought into contempt”. The last three “by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles” are objects of the verb “made glorious”, or literally “made heavy”. However, the evangelist has made all of these items

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ John P. Meier, *Matthew, New Testament Message, vol. 3, A Biblical- Theological Commentary*, Dublin: Veritas and Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1980, p.32.

⁴² Beare, *Matthew*, p.115.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.116. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁴ R.B.Y. Scott, “*The Book of Isaiah Chap 1-39, Introduction and Exegesis*”, George A. Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreters Bible*, Vol. V, Nashville: Abingdon, 1980, p. 230, observes that “The exegesis of the passage has been the occasion of a long debate, and there is even now no unanimity”.

nominatives in opposition with “the people sitting in darkness”. The predicate for all this is “have seen a great light”. Thus, in the Hebrew original, the focus is on Yahweh. It is Yahweh who brought divine judgment over Zebulun and Naphtali, and it is Yahweh who thereafter brought redemption on the regions “by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.” It can be noted here that the object of divine judgment is a smaller area. But Yahweh’s redemption will include regions that are outside Zebulun and Naphtali. It is usually understood that the region “by the way of the sea” was west of the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali and that it extended from north to south along the Mediterranean Sea. The region “beyond the Jordan” indicates the territory east of Jordan. It included the region of the Ten Cities (*Decapolis*). Perea in the New Testament times was part of this region. “Galilee of the Nations” was the northern-most part of what was traditionally called Naphtali, but became the Assyrian province of Megiddo in 732 BC. The glorification of the humiliated people shall be greater and far much wider than the divine judgment they initially experienced.

In the quotation as cited by the evangelist, the focus is no longer on Yahweh himself. The focus falls on the light itself and on those who experience it. The light is the Christ-event and the whole mission of redemption it ushered. Thus Christ, as Son of God, replaces and represents Yahweh. He is the agent of salvation. By his mission, he establishes the kingdom of God. Thus, by restructuring the parallelism of the original text, the evangelist is able to make a great Christological statement, namely that Jesus is the Messiah, the true representative of Yahweh who comes into the world to establish the kingdom of God on his behalf. The Kingdom of God begins to be realized in the ministry of Jesus. It can also be observed that by making all the places referred to in the quotation nominatives in apposition with “the people sitting in darkness”, and then provide all of them with the predicate “have seen a great light”, the evangelist points to the universality of the consequences of sin as well as to the universality of the kingdom of God that was to be established through the mission of the Messiah.

Some of the textual changes he brought into the fulfilment quotation also suggest certain lines of theological thought. Where the Septuagint B has *poreuomenos* (go, driven to) after the Heb. *mnudah* (driven, walk), the evangelist has *kathēmenos*. (sat). The Hebrew and the Septuagint texts portray a picture of a people moving into trouble. The suffering is just beginning. There was still room for repentance and the suffering would be averted. This fits well with the Isaianic text where this situation obtain. If Ahaz had repented, Assyria might not have come at the time she did. The evangelist replaces this word (walk to, driven) with another word that suggests a state of being settled, being complacent. He sees the Jews of his time not only moving toward a life of sin but also sees them quite settled and at home in sinful life. They are sitting in darkness. This suggests that they have reached a point at which a return to God on their own initiative is almost impossible. It is only God’s direct

intervention into the lives of men that would save the situation. Thus, the people that the evangelist sees are in a worse state than their Old Testament predecessors as portrayed by the original Old Testament texts. Another significant textual change involves the predicate to the word "light". Where the Hebrew has "has shone" (*ōr nāgah*) and the Septuagint "will shine" (*lampsei*), the evangelist has 'has risen, is rising or dawning' (*aneteilen*). In the Hebrew, the light is not yet *shining*. It is eschatological, although the sign of its coming, e.g., a prophetic action or some historical event, may have already been given. The shining of the light is only present in the prophetic vision. Its effect still remains a future prospect.⁴⁵ Accordingly, the Septuagint translation, or better interpretation, of this perfect verb takes a future tense: "will shine". Thus the Jews of the Diaspora also understand this prophetic word in the Hebrew original as actually referring to an eschatological act of redemption. The evangelist, however, in line with his Christological understanding of the Old Testament prophecy sees this divine act of redemption summed up in Christ and his mission. He sees the light of salvation not as a future prospect but as a present reality. Now is the day of salvation. With the coming of Christ and the inauguration of his mission in Galilee, the eschatological day of salvation is dawning. The sun of righteousness which is the presence of God in Jesus and his mission has risen or is rising. The work of establishing the kingdom of God is beginning, and all are invited to join. Thus behind the slight change in the wording and the tense lie a Christological reflection of the quoted prophetic text. It is difficult to see how the evangelist would make these syntactic and textual modifications in his biblical texts without a careful study of the Old Testament context of the quotation he draws and a thoughtful reflection of Christ and his mission.

Another way in which the evangelist's reflection on the Old Testament context relates to Galilee is indicated by his typological use of certain ideas or events. In light of the Old Testament context of Isa 8:23 (9:1), which the evangelist specifically quotes, the evangelist sees a typological relationship⁴⁶ between the promise of the birth of the Messiah which is the

⁴⁵ Gray, *The Book of Isaiah, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, p.165; Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, p. 125; Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 85.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of typological use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers, see Gerhard von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament", in Claus Westermann (ed.), *Essays on the Old Testament Hermeneutics*, Richmond: John Knox, 1963, pp. 18-39; Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century*, London: SCM, 1986, pp. 14-37, especially p.18 where he quotes a classical definition of typology found in C.T. Fritsch, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1947, p. 214. "A type is an institution, historical event or person, ordained by God, which effectively prefigures some truth connected with Christianity." R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament, His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission*, London: The Tyndale Press, 1971, p. 40 defines it as "The recognition of a correspondence between New and Old Testament events (persons, institutions, experiences) based on conviction of unchanging character of the principles of God's working and a consequent understanding and description of the New Testament model", also pp. 38-80 for a detailed discussion. Walther Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate method?" in Claus Westermann (ed.), *Essays on the Old Testament Hermeneutics*, p. 225, who defines *tupoi* as

subject of his oracle (8:19-9:7) and the coming of Jesus and his mission.⁴⁷ One of the theological concepts that the evangelist sees in Jesus is the fulfilment of the Immanuel principle. In the person of Jesus, God has come down to live among his people. This is the doctrine of incarnation. In the move of Jesus to Capernaum in Galilee, the evangelist sees the divine movement of God himself. Accordingly, he sees the establishment of Jesus' mission in Galilee as the establishment of God's kingdom according to scripture. But the presence of God, like true light, dispels all darkness. The presence of Jesus and his mission in all its shapes and forms are the means through which God will restore hope to his people. Thus, at the very outset of the mission narrative, the evangelist defines Jesus' mission in terms of an Old Testament quotation, which in its ideology, encompasses the whole range of Jesus' mission.⁴⁸ The idea of light is all – embracing. It will later be shown that the fulfilment quotations that follow define various spectra of this light all of which together contribute to the brightness that this light gives. In other words, the fulfilment quotations that will follow are employed to define aspects of Jesus' mission.

In the mission of Jesus, the evangelist sees the realization of the kingdom of God. As hinted earlier, the subject of the oracle from which the present fulfilment quotation is drawn is the birth of a royal child who was to establish a righteous, everlasting kingdom. In the Old Testament context, the reference is to the restoration of a united kingdom of Israel under a Davidic ruler. Yahweh would himself defeat the enemies of Israel. At the time these were the Assyrians who were oppressing the people. Once the enemies are defeated,⁴⁹ Yahweh would set upon the throne of David a ruler who would establish once more a united kingdom and

"persons, institutions and events of the Old Testament which are regarded as divinely established models or prerepresentations of corresponding realities in New Testament salvation history." Also Gerhard Friedrich (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VIII, Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1972, p. 252.

⁴⁷ For the view that the Immanuel prophecy at Isa 7:14 and the promise of the birth of a royal child at Isa. 9:6 refers to the same royal birth, see Seitz, *Matthew*, pp. 84, 86, 87. Both prophecies belong to the same complex of tradition that is closely knit. This tradition is placed at 7:1-9:7. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, pp. 183 – 184 observes that: "The disciples of Isaiah... had already taken the Immanuel prophecy to apply to the wonderful king of the future. By placing the promise about the royal child of David's line immediately after Isaiah's sayings in this period, they intended to bring out a connection between the two prophecies: in the birth of the royal child they saw the fulfilment of the Immanuel prophecy. Thus Immanuel is no longer merely a sign; and the emphasis is no longer on his birth, where Isaiah had laid it. He becomes the future king, who one day will come and reign in the restored kingdom". For the opposing view that the oracle of the royal birth has nothing to do with the birth of the Immanuel child of Isa 7:14, see Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, p. 107.

⁴⁸ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. LXV, "This short section (i.e. Matt 4:12-25) provides occasion for an OT statement of the meaning of the *ministry*, and is characterized by a quotation from a 'Messianic' context in Isaiah (9:1-2)" [emphasis mine].

lead it to prosperity through the administration of justice and righteousness in accordance with the Law.⁵⁰ The evangelist, again, sees in the mission of Jesus an ultimate fulfilment of the Davidic covenant.⁵¹

The establishment of Jesus' ministry in Galilee has yet another significance. It points to the universal character of his mission and his great concern for the lost. Robertson⁵² has described Galilee as "the territory of the vast hordes of various nationalities representing all the peoples of the world." Galilee in general and Capernaum in particular⁵³ provided a strategic link between Jesus' ministry and the international communities of armies, merchants, administrators who frequented this area as they passed through "the way of the sea", an international highway that passed through Galilee and across Capernaum connecting the centres of ancient civilization particularly, the civilizations of the Near East like Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Egypt and the western Greek and Roman civilizations. The word "Galilee" itself means "a circle". Galilee of the nations means a circle of the nations.

Thus the Gentile presence in Galilee is one of its most significant characteristics. "Jesus opened his public ministry by deliberately situating himself at Capernaum so he could reach out to touch all nations with his Gospel."⁵⁴ Capernaum was also strategic in the sense that from it most towns and villages of Galilee and the surrounding regions were accessible either by land or by the Sea of Galilee. It has been rightly argued that the future mission to the Gentiles is at this point merely hinted at since Jesus' ministry is restricted to Israel and that

⁴⁹ O. Palmer Robertson has noted that "a situation of rest from oppressing enemies anticipates appropriately the eschatological kingdom of peace." See his *The Christ of the Covenants*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980, p. 231.

⁵⁰ Scott, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39, Introduction and Exegesis", in Buttrick (ed), *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. V., pp. 232, 233 has rightly described the Jewish expectation of the Messiah: "At every coronation festival it stirred again in royal hearts. Is this he, the God – anointed one? Is this he, the Messiah? And though no prince of the house of David ever fulfilled the hope, and king after king brutally disillusioned the believing people, yet they went on hoping, praying, trusting; he will come; if not today, then some other day... It is true that if the Jews had cherished anything but a high spiritual ideal of the divine monarch, they might have hailed many a Messiah, for they had great and good kings. But in the very purity of their ideal they doomed themselves to disappointment, until in the fullness of time a king came, not with panoply and splendor but 'lowly, and riding upon an ass'."

⁵¹ Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, p. 229 regards this covenant as climactic within the Old Testament history of redemption: "In the Davidic covenant God's purposes to redeem a people to himself reach their climatic stage of realization so far as the Old Testament is concerned under David the kingdom arrives. God formally establishes the manner by which he shall rule among his people... not only has the kingdom come. The king has come". For a thorough discussion of Jesus as fulfiller of the new covenant from the perspective of covenant theology, see *Ibid.*, pp. 271-300.

⁵² O. Palmer Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible, A Biblical – Theological Guide*, Phillipsburg; Presbyterian and Reformed, 1996, p.33.

⁵³ *Ibid* pp. 35-36 observes that "Capernaum is more significant as a point of passage for countless peoples travelling between the continents".

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

the reference to Gentiles is only negative, emphasizing the lowly religious state of this region. The issue at hand is not the salvation of the Gentiles but the salvation of Jews living in this spiritually darkened land. It is upon these Jews that the light of salvation has now dawned.⁵⁵

But even if the view that the salvation mentioned is that of the Jews is accepted, the fact that the Gentiles have a place in that salvation cannot be categorically rejected. The Galilean ministry foreshadows the great Gentile mission that is to come. The residents of Galilee, whether Jew or non – Jew, were significantly influenced by Galilean subculture. This culture was characterized by its mixed form (it had Jewish and Gentile elements) and a loose religious life. There was great laxity in Galilee concerning the observance of the Law. From the days of the Assyrian occupation to the days of the New Testament, Galilee remained a humiliated and despised region within the Holy Land because of these factors.

The fact that this humiliated region is the object of the salvation prophesied by Isaiah and that Jesus moves into that region to fulfil that prophecy, reflects Jesus' interest to save not only the Jews but also the Gentiles who formed a significant portion of Galilean population. It is difficult, if not incomprehensible, to see why Jesus should start his mission in Galilee if his intention was to save Jews only. Even the prophetic oracle itself recognizes the presence of the Gentiles in this region and includes them among the beneficiaries of Yahweh's salvation. And there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Gentiles were included in the salvation that was realised in the mission of Jesus. For instance, in the post-resurrection period, Jesus gives a clear command to his disciples to convert Gentiles (Matt 28:19). There is nothing in the Gospel to show that this command expresses an exclusively post-resurrection interest. Indeed, some of the Gentiles were saved during his earthly ministry. By its very character, Galilee well symbolizes those who are spiritually weak or even lost. And the Gentiles are part of those who are lost in Galilee, and thus fall directly under the searching light of salvation that Jesus and his mission bear. Thus Galilee with all its experiences of suffering under various oppressive foreign reigns and spiritual weakness represents the Gentile world. Its choice as an object of redemption clearly demonstrates divine interest in saving the world through the redemptive mission that Jesus inaugurates there.⁵⁶ All this indicates the universal character of Jesus' mission.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Meier, *Matthew*, p. 33 holds this position. He generally does not attribute great theological significance to this geographical factor. He complains that the evangelist has made a great theological statement out of "a minor point of geography". See *Ibid* p. 32.

⁵⁶ Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible*, p. 36: "At this locale he could preach to all the peoples of the world – not simply to the Jews – about the world wide 'kingdom of heaven' that was near."

⁵⁷ Most scholars accept the significance of Galilee in relation to the universality of Jesus' mission. Here I can only mention Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 242; Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 71; Wolfgang Trilling,

To sum up the discussion on this fulfilment quotation, two theological functions that it has served in the context of the Gospel of Matthew need to be emphasized. First, the fulfilment quotation has defined the meaning of the mission of Jesus. The mission establishes the kingdom of God. Secondly, by drawing attention to Galilee, the character of that mission or kingdom is further defined. It restores peace to the broken-hearted and extends that peace to all humanity. The kingdom that is established through Jesus' mission is not only righteous and just but also universal. This latter aspect necessitates that the kingdom must grow by drawing into itself members from humanity. In this sense the significance of Galilee is in its foreshadowing the church as Robertson observes:

The gospel writer makes the point that Jesus deliberately launched his ministry by 'the way to the sea' in 'Galilee of the Gentiles' for the purpose of fulfilling prophecy... Throughout the ages, it had been God's plan to reach all the nations of the world with the saving Gospel of his son. This intent found fulfilment throughout Jesus ministry... After his resurrection, he delivered his Great Commission to his disciples in the region of Galilee of the Gentiles... From that point until today his Gospel has spread among all the nations of the world. In this sense, Galilee continues to have significance as a symbolic representation of the ongoing purposes of the Lord to minister his saving grace to all the peoples of the world.⁵⁸

In order to establish this kingdom of God, Jesus embarks on a ministry of teaching, preaching and healing which includes the forgiveness of sins. The evangelist employs the next three fulfilment quotations to show that even these strategic means for the vindication of the presence of the kingdom of God are divinely ordained and prophetically revealed as Messianic tools for the work of establishing the kingdom of God. In this way, the evangelist sees all the activities of Jesus as he carries out his ministry in fulfilment of the prophetic word. Jesus, as he carries out his mission does not do anything that is outside the revealed will of God.

It is doubtful that the evangelist could carefully apply the Old Testament quotation he draws from the prophetic section of the Torah without first giving an equally careful consideration of the Old Testament context which provide background to a proper understanding of the cited quotation.

2. *The Fulfilment Quotations in Matt 8:17*

Verse 16. When evening came, they brought to him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.

The Gospel according to St Matthew for Spiritual Reading, London: Sheed and Ward, 1969, pp.49, 50; Beare, *Matthew*, p. 49; Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible*, p. 36.

v17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses'.

a. *Textual Observation*

It is generally agreed that the evangelist has probably employed an independent translation of the Hebrew.⁵⁹ The Septuagint is, however, so different that the evangelist's rendering of the text can not be said to be based on it.⁶⁰ The Septuagint has "He bears our sins and was suffered on our account" (*Houtos tas hamartias hēmōn ferei kai peri hēmōn odunatai*). The Hebrew has "Surely, he has borne our sicknesses, and has carried our pains" (*'ākēn halāyēnū hū' nāsā' ūmake'obēnū sebālām*). The evangelist has "he took away our sicknesses [weaknesses] and carried our diseases" (*Autos tas astheneias hēmōn elaben kai tas nosous ebastasen*). Thus, where the Septuagint has "He bears our sins", the Hebrew original has "He has borne our sicknesses." The Septuagint text is probably a theological interpretation of the Hebrew, while the evangelist's version is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew. Hence, the central ideas in both the Hebrew and the evangelist's texts are the concepts of weaknesses and diseases. However, the evangelist has chosen the "colourless Greek verbs". *Lambanein* (to take away) and *bastadzein* (to carry) to represent the Hebrew original *nasa'* (has borne) and *sebālām* (carried) respectively. The use of these verbs by the evangelist gives us no hint whether the idea in his mind is that Christ took away and carried away diseases from those he healed or that he took upon himself and carried those diseases in his own person.⁶¹

This difficulty has led some scholars to conclude that the concept of vicarious suffering is missing in the gospel text. For instance, Meier thinks that "Matthew shifts the meaning from vicarious, sacrificial death ('he took our infirmities on himself and suffered them') to miraculous cure ('he took away our infirmities')." ⁶² Beare comments that: "In Matthew's application, there is no trace of this thought of vicarious suffering; Jesus does not 'take' or 'bear' the diseases of the people whom he cures by suffering from them in his own person – he takes them away, or bears them off, by his word of power." ⁶³ A closer examination of the gospel text, however, reveals that the concept of vicarious suffering is not lacking. Although

⁵⁸ Robertson, *Understanding the Land of the Bible*, p. 36.

⁵⁹ See Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 400; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 80; Meier, *Matthew*, p. 85; Beare, *Matthew*, p. 210.

⁶⁰ In a brief but penetrating article, Hilary B.P. Mijoga, "Some Notes on the Septuagint Translation of Isaiah 53," *ATJ*, Vol.19 no. 1, (1990), pp 85-90, observes that the LXX translation of Isaiah 53 is so coloured by theological considerations that the picture of the Servant it paints is substantially different from that of the MT. Among other things, he observes that the translator is persistently seeking to relieve God of the responsibility for the Servant's suffering. See especially, pp. 88-89.

⁶¹ Allen, *Matthew*, p. 80.

⁶² Meier, *Matthew*, p. 85.

Jesus delivers by the power of his word, this is done in the context of his mission as a Suffering Servant, who, according to the quoted Isaiah text, suffered on behalf of his people. It is because Jesus identifies himself with those who suffer through his great sympathy and compassion and through his suffering from the consequences of the sins of humanity throughout his ministry, passion and death that he delivers people from their burdens.⁶⁴

That the evangelist thought in terms of vicarious suffering becomes even clearer when one becomes aware that even the healing ministry itself was an integral part of Jesus' overall mission as the suffering Servant of God characterized by suffering, self – denial, and death. The use of a fulfilment quotation which recalls the mission of the Suffering Servant within the gospel context that presents the healing power of Jesus' word at this point serves a significant function. It ties Jesus' healing ministry to his passion and death. His healing miracles anticipate his passion.⁶⁵

b. *The Historical Context of Isa 53:4*

There are few other texts in the Old Testament which have caused great difficulties in the history of textual criticism as the fourth Servant Song in 52:13-53:12 has done. John Goldingay observes that "The chapter as a whole is a deep and mysterious one. It is one of the most difficult passages in the Old Testament to translate into English ... Many of the Hebrew words it uses are uncommon ones, the way the words fit together is often unclear."⁶⁶ Christopher R. North observes that "no passage in the OT, certainly none of comparable importance, presents more problems than this".⁶⁷ And U.E. Simon notes that "the history of its exegesis is one of great and lasting controversy."⁶⁸ Despite this difficulty, however, it is clear that the passage speaks of a Servant of Yahweh *par-excellence*. He would bring Israel back to Yahweh and he would also be a light to nations. Other nations would know Yahweh through him. It is the redemptive task of this Servant that is described in Isa 52:1-13 – 53:12. The historical context of the oracle is the latter period of the Babylonian exile, along with the so-called Second Isaiah, i.e., Isaiah 40-55. The whole of Second Isaiah reflects a historical setting in which Assyrian advance is no longer on the scene. Instead, Babylonia is the world

⁶³ Beare, *Matthew*, p. 212.

⁶⁴ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 400; Trilling, *Matthew*, p. 151.

⁶⁵ Harrington, *Matthew*, pp. 115, 117; Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 400; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 80.

⁶⁶ John Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant, A Study in Jeremiah and Isaiah 40-55*, Exeter: Paternoster, 1984, p.139.

⁶⁷ Christopher R. North, *The Second Isaiah, introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL – LV*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1964, p. 226.

⁶⁸ U.E. Simon, *A Theology of Salvation: A Commentary on Isaiah 40 – 55*, London: SPCK, 1953, p.198.

power. The cities of Judah and the Jerusalem Temple lie in desolation and the people are already in Babylonian exile.⁶⁹ While the major theme of Second Isaiah is restoration⁷⁰ of Israel to Yahweh, the major focus falls on "the revelation (Second Isaiah) makes of the nature and purpose of God in his immanence in Israel as the Servant of the Universe."⁷¹

The oracle in 52:13-53:12, from which the evangelist draws a fulfilment quotation, portrays the Servant of Yahweh who through suffering and death atones for Yahweh's people Israel and the nations.⁷²

Structurally, the oracle consists of a report by a group of people (53:1-11a) set within the framework of divine proclamation (52:13-15 and 53:11b-12). Both the report and the proclamation tell of the Servant's humiliation and exaltation. In the first part of the proclamation, God proclaims the success of the Servant in his redemptive mission: "Behold, my Servant shall prosper, He shall be exalted, lifted up, and very high" (52:13). This is a reference to the exaltation of the Servant. Thus the Servant will receive "a share in the dignity of Yahweh himself."⁷³ The Servant is in this verse described in divine terms. The language of "shall be exalted", "lifted up" is normally used of Yahweh himself in the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms. Note the use of "high and lifted up" in Isaiah 6:1; 57:15.⁷⁴ The Servant will be successful both in the execution of his mission and in the resultant effect of that mission. This is the force of the Hebrew word *yaskil* which in English is generally rendered "shall deal prudently."⁷⁵ In the same part of the proclamation, v. 14 adds that the way to exaltation is

⁶⁹ George A.F. Knight, *Servant Theology, A Commentary on The Book of Isaiah 40-55*, International Theological Commentary, Edinburgh: Handsel and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, p. 1. For a more detailed discussion of the historical background to Second Isaiah, see Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, pp. 468-474.

⁷⁰ Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, p. 75; Douglas R. Jones, "Isaiah II and III" in M. Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Bible Commentary on the Bible*, London: Routledge, 1962, reprint 1987, p. 517.

⁷¹ Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 5.

⁷² For a more detailed discussion of the textual problems involved in this section, see North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 226-46. For the fluidity in Jewish interpretation of this oracle in an attempt to belittle its Messianic import, see Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, pp. 198, 199: "Jewish interpretation has changed as much as Christian; in the Targum of Jonathan it is the Servant Messiah who prospers, in the Talmud of Jerusalem Rabbi Aquiba takes the place of the suffering hero. In the Babylonian Talmud Moses, and in the Zohar the Shekinah, are mysteriously introduced for purposes of identification... Later Yepheth Ben Ali believes that blood of many nations will be shed to bring victory. Ibn Ezra is content to state that whatever else may be said of the extremely difficult passage it must not be allowed to support 'our opponents' who claim that it refers to their god."

⁷³ Jones, "Isaiah II and III," p. 527.

⁷⁴ For a similar view, see Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 166; North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 243-35; Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, p. 151.

⁷⁵ The Hebrew word *yaskil* denotes both the action and its result. A prudent action results in prosperity. See Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, London: SCM, 1969, p. 258. Also North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 234.

through humiliation. The servant shall experience severe suffering which will disfigure his appearance, cutting him off from fellow human beings.⁷⁶

Verse 15 describes the effect of the exaltation of the humiliated Servant. Many nations and kings will be so astonished at this turn of affairs that they will startle⁷⁷ and be speechless. They will “shut their mouth” in great astonishment.⁷⁸ This is because the Servant’s exaltation is “something unheard of.” It is something unprecedented. It never was that a man so disfigured and despised in God’s and men’s eyes could be given such a divine approval and exaltation. The thing reported was absolutely unique. God had traditionally revealed his power and glory through the mighty acts of his word. But now for the first time in the history of redemption, God reveals his power and glory in the suffering and weakness of his Servant,⁷⁹ a principle later observed by Paul in II Cor 12:19. Thus God’s work which consists in the exaltation of the Servant is to be stupendous that people in far distant places (nations) and in high circles (kings) will hear it with great astonishment. Westermann,⁸⁰ here thinks that the Prophet Isaiah has in mind the widespread publicity given to the work but not of Gentile spheres outside Israel. But the language of the song suggests some measure of universalism as North correctly observes:

We expect the efficacy of the Servant’s work to be confessed by all who were included within the scope of his mission, i.e. the Gentiles (xlii. 1-4, xlix. 1-6), otherwise they are left at the end as mere spectators, with nothing to say. The shutting of the kings’ mouths need not mean the dropping of the curtain for them. Their dumb astonishment - if that is what the words are meant to convey - might be temporary, to be followed by voluble speech. If it is argued that the heathen could not possibly give expression to thoughts so

⁷⁶ In the world of the Old Testament, the sense of community was very strong. Man could only exist when a positive relationship with society was maintained. To be denied participation in communal life was quite unbearable for anyone. Knight, *Servant Theology*, p.170, observes that “For OT man, even more than us, communal life was a *sine qua non*.. No man at any period can develop to be truly human unless he lives in society; in fact a man goes mad if he is completely shunned by his kind. (Second Isaiah) therefore puts his finger on the point of the greatest sacrifice of all which the perfect Servant has to make. He is to be utterly lonely.”

⁷⁷ The Hebrew word *yazzeḥ* was formerly rendered “sprinkle” in English. But this rendering is now generally abandoned in favour of “startle”, i.e. “to leap in joyful surprise.” To understand the verb *yazzeḥ* as meaning “sprinkle” does not suit the present context. The word “sprinkle” is a cultic word and therefore inappropriate at this point. See Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 259; Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 166. For objections to this rendering, see North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 228 where three are listed: that it imports into the Hebrew a new element and gives it an emotional content that is lacking in the Arabic original; that it makes “many nations” an object of the verb instead of a subject; and that it gives no progression of thought.

⁷⁸ Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 166 observes that “When Easterners ‘shut their mouth’ under the influence of a powerful emotion, they show by their compressed lips and by drawing back the corners of their mouth that they are reacting with astonishment to a situation that has taken them unawares.”

⁷⁹ Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, pp. 201-203. Also Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 260.

deep that they have no parallel in the OT, the same is equally true of the Jews. The interpretation of the Servant's sufferings must be the Prophet's, moved by the Holy Spirit. As such it is, in the universal setting of the passage, as appropriately voiced by Gentiles as by Jews.⁸¹

The report which runs from 53:1-11a develops the themes of humiliation and exaltation of the Servant of Yahweh. The first part of the report is found in 53:1-9. 53:1 is the beginning of a report by a group of people. For the group, the Servant event is something they have heard and have to pass on to others. In this introduction to the report proper, the element of the unheard of and unbelievable event is carried on, and the verse sets the keynote for the whole passage, the note of astonishment. The report proper begins at 53:2. The first part of the report which runs from v. 2 to v. 9 tells of the humiliation of the Servant. The Servant leads a life of suffering right from his birth to his death, or more properly, to his grave. The prophet describes the suffering of the Servant in the language of the Psalms of lament. He grows up like a root or a shoot "out of dry ground", i.e. without strength, and has "no form or comeliness." And there was "no beauty" in him (vv 2-3). Thus weak and feeble as he is, the Servant seemed insignificant in the eyes of people. They consequently pay no regard to him. The Hebrew word *to'ar* which is rendered "form" or "beauty" is in the Old Testament associated with blessings (e.g. Joseph, Gen 39:6; David, I Sam 16:18). The Servant was without blessing as far as other people saw.

Beauty in the Old Testament is also something that comes and is experienced along with what happens to him. Not only was the Servant without beauty, i.e. blessings, but he was also humiliated by sickness or pain. The result was that he was despised. In the language of the Psalms of lamentation in the Book of Psalms, sickness or pain is always associated with being despised and rejected. This means that the language used here is traditional and refers to suffering in general terms. This makes it unnecessary to think of specific forms of suffering, for instance, leprosy as many have suggested.⁸² Verse 3 emphasizes that the Servant's suffering isolated him in the community and that he was held in loathing and was despised.

Verses. 4-5 consists of a confession which interrupts the report. This is a confession of men who have changed their mind with regard to the suffering of the Servant. Verse 4b provides an explanation for the contempt and rejection that the Servant experienced. The Servant was smitten by God. It should be remembered here that this attitude was just as devote and orthodox in the ancient world. However, the men who are making the confession now view his suffering from a different perspective. The Suffering Servant bears the sin of others and

⁸⁰ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 259.

⁸¹ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 236.

⁸² Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p.261; Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 171; Jones, 'Isaiah II and III,' p. 527; North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 238.

the punishment that would result from them. The passive form of the verbs, "he was wounded" and "he was bruised" would, on the surface, appear to suggest that the role of the Servant in his suffering is a passive one. The Servant appears to be a helpless receiver of the affliction imposed upon him. However the emphatic use⁸³ of the Hebrew pronoun "hû'" i.e. "he", in this oracle points to the fact that the Servant is not passively accepting his suffering. Rather, the Servant is actually and voluntarily accepting the suffering that is brought upon him. It is this voluntary aspect which makes his suffering vicarious⁸⁴, intended to effect God's will that all men should possess the full covenant life and have all their diseases healed.

Although the idea of substitution in its various forms was already present in ancient Israel and the surrounding regions, the new thing in the present case was that the power to be a substitution and to atone was found in an ordinary and weak person, disfigured by suffering and held in contempt and abhorrence. It was those who make the confession who had strayed in sin, whereas the Suffering Servant took upon himself those sins and their punishment in order to procure healing and peace for them.

The report interrupted by the confession, now continues in verse 7. This verse begins the second part of the report and continues the idea of humiliation by describing the nature of the suffering that the Servant goes through. Verse 2 has already suggested that the suffering of the Servant is a life-long experience through the phrase "He grew up ... like a root out of dry ground".⁸⁵ Verse 4 has spoken of his suffering in terms of an illness, although the Hebrew word *holi* in v. 3 would refer to suffering in general.⁸⁶ But here in v. 7, the reference is to suffering at the hands of others. The Hebrew word *nagas* refers to physical violence, a meaning also reflected in Jer 11:19 and Ps 38:14. The metaphors used in v. 7b suggests the context of the court of law. Although the meaning of the first two parts of v. 8 is uncertain, it is clear that they refer to a violent action by others against the Servant in a similar context. Thus the suffering of the Servant is described in traditional terms of disease and persecution as it is the case with the Psalms of lament.

The suffering of the Servant extends to the manner of his death. Although the text in vv. 8-9 is not clear whether the Servant died of a disgraceful illness or by physical violence or formal condemnation and execution, both aspects of suffering appear as found in the Psalms

⁸³ Knight, *Servant Theology*, pp. 171-72, Also Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, p. 145; North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 238.

⁸⁴ Mijoga, "Some Notes on the Septuagint Translation of Isaiah 53," p. 88, observes that the vicarious suffering of the Servant is opposed to the popular principle outlined in Prov 17:15. Probably this explains why vicarious suffering was not a popular Messianic concept in New Testament times.

⁸⁵ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 261.

⁸⁶ For the view that while *holi* denotes sickness or disease, it could also refer to a sickness caused by violence, see North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 242.

of lament. It is illness. And at the same time, it is persecution. These basic traditional modes of suffering indicate that the prophet portrays the Suffering Servant as a typical Sufferer.⁸⁷

The speedy death of the Servant forms a logical end to a life of perpetual suffering.⁸⁸ Such a speedy and violent death is anticipated right from the beginning of the Servant's life. In this respect, the suffering and the death of the servant constitute one single thing. Just as his suffering is vicarious, his death is also vicarious. He suffers a death, not because of his own guilt, as earlier supposed by those who confess, but because of the sins of those who now report that death.

Verse 9 reveals that the Servant's suffering did not end with his death. It extended to his burial. The servant is even denied proper burial. He is buried along with rebellious people.⁸⁹

Knight commenting on the phrase "his grace" observes that:

Whatever the individual words mean, however, the main idea of the phrase is apparent.

The Servant now accepts violence – and this word pictures rude excess and vicious spleen – so that he is brought down both to death and then to burial thereafter.⁹⁰

In his burial, the status of the Servant as a social outcast was reinforced and deepened. He was denied the honour of being buried with his ancestors, instead, he was buried in a common grave. Goldingay observes that:

For an Old Testament Jew, to die was to join your ancestors. He joined them physically in the family tomb. To be deprived of that last privilege is the final indignity, the final sadness and loss... So what one actually saw in this man was a rather pathetic, underprivileged, unimpressive person; one who was disfigured by suffering and pain in such a way that he was shunned by men in general; one who was then assumed to be a marked transgressor and was treated as such, so that eventually he paid the ultimate penalty and was denied even family burial.⁹¹

⁸⁷ For some discussion of the textual problems involved in these verses, see North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 230, 231.

⁸⁸ The suffering of the Servant differs from the traditional forms of suffering in that it covers the entire span of his life. In the psalms of lament, suffering is a mere incident in a life of an otherwise healthy man. See Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 261.

⁸⁹ The terms "wicked" and "rich" may refer to the same category of people. North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 231 quotes Nyberg as insisting that the terms are synonymous. North further observes that the Targum, in referring to the rich mentions the "rich in possessions they have obtained by violence." Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 175, observes that: "In ancient times, however, it could be taken for granted that if a man unaccountably grew rich, then he must be wicked, that is to say he gained his wealth by bribery and corruption. Such an idea may be suggested here in that the Hebrew word for 'rich' is merely 'wicked' written backwards." Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 217, thinks that "rich" is the original word which was later changed to "evil-doer" and that the reverse is impossible.

⁹⁰ Knight, *Servant Theology*, pp. 175, 176.

⁹¹ Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, pp. 143, 144.

Simon has correctly observed the implication of the disgraceful burial that was accorded to the Servant:

At first the murderers dispose of the corpse secretly by hurling it into a common grave; then they light upon the fiendish idea of burying him with the 'rich', in the tomb of some hated and prosperous family, implying thereby that the 'Eved was never a friend of the people but a traitor to the common folk.⁹²

From v 10, the report develops the aspect of the exaltation of the servant. The verse begins with a *waw* adversative which frequently marks a turning point in the Psalms of lament: "Yet Yahweh took pleasure in him." Westermann has noted two things that are indicated here. First, this turning point reveals that in spite of all appearance that the Servant assumed, God sided all along with him. Secondly, it shows that after the Servant's death God gave his siding with him a practical effect. He revived and healed his Servant.⁹³

Some scholars have seen a reference to the resurrection of the Servant. Mowinckel has suggested that the restoration of the Servant here, is a reference to his resurrection from death.⁹⁴ Knight also associates the idea of the Servant's exaltation with the idea of resurrection: "But at once we find this word (i.e. *yitselah*, from *tsalah*, to prosper) whose meaning we are examining is linked with the idea of the resurrection mentioned at Dan 12:2... 'Those who are wise' shall inherit the resurrection because... they shall 'turn many to righteousness.'"⁹⁵ However, it is important to bear in mind that the text makes no attempt to make this precise. The conceptual language that is used here in vv. 10b-11a, to indicate the consequences of God's act of restoring the Servant, is traditional and would not suit the new thing here. Rather, the text understands the Servant as having full life in the Old Testament sense. He will have a long life and see his descendants. He will enjoy full happiness and total satisfaction.⁹⁶

Verses 11b-12 consists of a conclusion of the divine proclamation in continuation to 52:13-15. In the introductory proclamation of 52:13-15, the song proclaimed the astonishment of many at the fact that after humiliation the Servant would be exalted. Here, the proclamation expresses God's vindication of the Servant previously condemned in shame. God declares him righteous, rehabilitates him and restores his honour. Verse 12 sets out the meaning of the Servant's work. "He bore the sins of many." The verse takes the Servant's suffering and his death together and views them as a single act or process and attaches to it a single meaning, namely, that his work is in its totality vicarious:

⁹² Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 217, note 2.

⁹³ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, pp. 266, 267.

⁹⁴ Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, pp. 204-205. Also Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 267.

⁹⁵ Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 165.

The really miraculous thing about the Servant's path in life, his suffering and his death is this. The suffering which overtakes an ordinary man without priestly status, a man buffeted and despised, makes it possible for him to take the sins of others upon himself, and so to avert from them the consequences of these, punishment.⁹⁷

The same concept of expiatory or substitutionary sacrifice is in the same verse expressed under the concept of representation or intercession.⁹⁸

The specific identification of the Servant within the Old Testament context remains an unresolved difficulty. Reference has already been made to Jewish attempts at the identification of the Servant.⁹⁹ In Christian circles, some have suggested that the Servant is Israel.¹⁰⁰ Others have suggested that the Servant is an individual. But the picture of the Servant as portrayed in all of the Servant songs (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) is such that it cannot squarely fit into either the mode of Israel as a community or the mode of an individual. It is not an either-or case. Anderson has made a worthy observation:

We are confronted with a singular problem: On the one hand, in many cases the similarities between Israel and the Servant are so close as to indicate that they are the same; and, on the other, the differences seem to be so sharp as to indicate that Israel is not the Servant.¹⁰¹

Anderson then suggests that the problem is with the mode of our thinking:

A great deal of light is thrown on the first question (i.e. whether Second Isaiah understood the Servant in a corporate or in an individual sense) by considering how the relationship between the individual and the community is understood in the scriptures of Israel. Again and again we have seen that an individual may incarnate the whole community of Israel or vice versa, the community may be addressed as an individual who stands in direct, personal relation to God. According to our way of thinking, the alternative is either collectivism or individualism, but in Israel's covenant faith the issue is not an either-or.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 267, Also Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, pp. 219-220; North, *The Second Isaiah*, p.242.

⁹⁷ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 269.

⁹⁸ The term "intercession" in v. 12 does not imply that the Servant prays for others. It simply means that with his life, suffering and death the Servant took their place and underwent punishment on their behalf. See *Ibid.* Also Knight, *Servant Theology*, p.180 who says the expression merely means that the Servant became "the ashram for the sins of the world", i.e., a guilt offering as substitute for the individuals presenting it. Similarly Simon, *A Theology of Salvation* pp. 220, 221 observes that "His intercession consists not of formal prayers but of active mediation."

⁹⁹ See note 530 above.

¹⁰⁰ George A.F. Knight is one of the strong proponents of this view in our time as his *Servant Theology* indicates.

¹⁰¹ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 491.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 493.

He then concludes that the choice between the two alternatives is unnecessary as both are true to Israelite thinking:

So it is unnecessary to choose between an individual and corporate interpretation of the Servant of Yahweh, for both are true to the Israelite sense of community. The conception oscillates between the servant Israel and the personal servant who would perfectly fulfil Israel's mission.¹⁰³

However, Anderson tends to lean toward the view that the Servant is a person: "In his prophecy (i.e. Second Isaiah's) the Servant is a person, although no single person, past or contemporary, corresponds completely to the type. For the person also includes and represents Israel, the community that is explicitly designed as Yahweh's servant."¹⁰⁴

With regard to the genre of the literary style used in this oracle, some scholars have suggested that it is an individual psalm of thanksgiving.¹⁰⁵ However, there has been little agreement about this among form-critics. For instance, there is no consensus on whether the "we" verses should be understood as a penitential psalm or as a psalm of thanksgiving.¹⁰⁶ In line with conclusions drawn from form-critical study,¹⁰⁷ some scholars have held that "the passage has no obvious connection with either its preceding or following context."¹⁰⁸ Modern critical scholarship has, however, not only seen a relationship between this text and its context but has also emphasized that the passage fit well into that context despite the complexity of its literary form. Jones has observed that "There is solitariness about this passage, but that is because familiar themes and problems for a moment have a new dimension in depth, not because it is alien to its context."¹⁰⁹ Simon comments that "the form of the poem is striking but not incomprehensible, unless we remove it from its context and leave it hanging in the air."¹¹⁰ Similarly, Anderson observes that:

Some scholars... believe that the Servant poems had an independent origin. They argue that these poems stand by themselves as originally independent pieces and that they

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 494.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* For a more detailed discussion of the problem, see pp. 488-94. For a thorough discussion on the problem of the identity of the Servant and the various interpretations that have been put forward, see Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah*, Second Edition, New York: Oxford, 1956. Also H.H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* Second Edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 1965, pp. 3-60; North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 106-113; 185-190; 201-206; 226-46.

¹⁰⁵ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 257.

¹⁰⁶ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 234.

¹⁰⁷ Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 2. observes that "After the beginning of this century (i.e. the Twentieth Century), many scholars became so concerned to place the separate paragraphs of chapters in their various *Gattungen*, or types, that they lost all sense of the unity of the book as a whole."

¹⁰⁸ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 234.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, "Isaiah II and III," p. 527.

¹¹⁰ Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 199.

display a conception of the Servant not to be found elsewhere in the writings of Second Isaiah. Hence, they allege that the poems have been introduced into Second Isaiah's writings either by the prophet himself later in his career, or by prophetic editors. These arguments are not conclusive, however. The Servant poems are written in the style that is typical of Isaiah's poetry, and they fit well into their context.¹¹¹

In the same vein Knight observes that Second Isaiah:

Conceived his work in terms of a literary and theological whole... while he made use of a number of ancient forms of artistic writing for the sake of variety, he has threaded these units together to form one closely knit argument and developing thesis... The so-called 'Servant' passages... are to be understood best, when we read them as in the setting in which (Second Isaiah) actually placed them, for they each in turn advance the total argument just where they stand.¹¹²

This is the portrait of the Servant given by the prophet from which the evangelist draws his fulfilment quotation. In the next section, it will be shown that the many typological relationships between this portrait of the Servant and the life and mission of Jesus indicates that the evangelist was aware of this Old Testament picture and its context and that he applied it to Christ's event in that light. The specific quotation from Isa 53:4 provides further evidence in support of this argument.

c *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

Although the evangelist limits his fulfilment quotation to Isa 53:4, there are several typological lines of thought which he draws from the total picture of the Servant as presented by Prophet Isaiah. To see how these theological concepts from Isaiah are applied to the Christ-event one needs to have the picture of the whole gospel in mind. It has already been noted that the immediate context within which the fulfilment quotation appears portrays Jesus as a mighty man who conducts miracles simply by the use of his word of power. By the power of his word Jesus is able to heal, where other miracle-workers would necessarily resort to prayer, incantation or other material objects.¹¹³ At the very point at which the healing

¹¹¹ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, pp. 448, 489.

¹¹² Knight, *Servant Theology*, pp. 2, 3. One example of the manner in which an argument is advanced by a successive unit is the way the present Servant song develops the first Servant song in Isa 42:1-4. While Isa 42:1-4 tells us of the designation and origin of the work of the Servant, Isa 52:13-53:12 discusses its culmination, its success. See, Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 258.

¹¹³ Magic was a very influential art in the 1st Century AD, a means of affecting healing for diseases that a physician could not cure. R.M.L. Wilson, "Pagan Religion at the Coming of Christianity", in M. Black and H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 714, observes that "Disease was attributed to the activity of demons, and we read of spells and charms and amulets to ward off all kind of ills." Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. One, History, Culture and Religion of*

power of Jesus is first celebrated in this gospel, the evangelist draws the attention of the reader to the suffering and self-denial of the Servant of Yahweh. The healing activity is really the Servant's assumption of the sickness and diseases of others. And this is part of his suffering. In this way the evangelist, through the use of the fulfilment quotation at this point, places Jesus' healing ministry in the context of his passion.¹¹⁴ Meier observes that the evangelist has extended the image of the servanthood to include powerful acts as well as a humble service through suffering and death:

Matthew certainly knows the concept of Jesus as the suffering Servant who redeems us by his death.. But he extends the image of servanthood to include the powerful acts as well as the humble death of the Servant. Jesus the Servant makes us whole... the healings thus become part of Jesus' saving of his people... part of the eschatological event prophesied in the Old Testament.¹¹⁵

However, it is probably correct to say that the evangelist sees the image of the servanthood as it is portrayed in the Old Testament rather than saying that he "extends" it as Meier suggests. The themes of both humiliation and exaltation are simultaneously developed in all the major sections of the Servant Song. Both themes are mentioned in the introductory divine proclamation (52:13-15), in the report (including the confession) (53:1-11a) and in the concluding divine proclamation (53:11b-12). In other words, the element of exaltation which Meier calls "powerful acts" is not a Matthean *addendum* as he suggests. It is an integral part of servanthood as portrayed by the fourth Servant Song.¹¹⁶ The suffering aspect in the healing ministry of Jesus becomes even clearer when we see it, with Albright, as a fight or struggle on the part of Jesus against "all disorders and chaos in God's creation (which) is inimical to the divine purpose and must be overcome,"¹¹⁷ a fight which is to bring Jesus "to final trial of strength at the passion."¹¹⁸ Thus the very powerful healing ministry of Jesus already anticipates his passion and death.

the Hellenistic Age, New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987, p. 381: "Several attempts were made during 1 BCE to expel the 'Chaldeans' and sorcerers from Rome. But they returned and could be found everywhere advertising their craft...It apparently was not very difficult for any body to seek out a wizard 'philosopher', the priestess of a backstreet cult, or a useful magical book. How else could one manage to have an admired sweetheart yield to one's desires, get rid of a political opponent, be healed from a difficult disease no physician could cure, or make an important business trip despite ill omens! Magicians were badly needed, if people were unwilling to give up in the face of a menacing fate. Magic quickly conquered all classes of society."

¹¹⁴ Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 115.

¹¹⁵ Meier, *Matthew*, pp. 85, 86.

¹¹⁶ See my discussion in the previous section on the historical context of Isa 53:4.

¹¹⁷ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. LXV.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The consequence of such an intimate connection between Jesus' miracles in general and his healing ministry in particular, and his passion including his death is that the evangelist sees both items (i.e. the miracles which demonstrate his power and the passion he goes through) as one act or process. For him to perform a miracle was not an act of glory but an act of suffering and humiliation, as such miracles only pointed to the inner struggle as he engaged into a conflict with the forces of Satan. This perspective of looking at Jesus' suffering, here represented by the healing miracles, and Jesus' passion and death (i.e. the "official" passion which begins from the moment Peter confesses him as the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi and continues through the cross to the grave) as a single act of humiliation is also not a Matthean creation. It is already present in the fourth Servant Song itself. Westermann observes that: "The Servant's death is to be regarded as the end appropriate to his suffering, for a speedy end had been in prospect from the beginning: The suffering and the death constitute one single thing."¹¹⁹

This perspective has a further theological consequence. Since the suffering, which includes the rest of Jesus' earthly ministry, and the death of the Servant are seen as a single act of humiliation both by the Prophet and the evangelist, it follows that both of them must have a single meaning. Indeed the purpose of this suffering in both contexts is vicarious. The Servant in Isaiah, just as Jesus in the gospel, suffers in order to bear the sins of others and the punishment for sin that would naturally fall upon them. This is primarily the point that the evangelist makes in his fulfilment quotation.

While the main purpose for the suffering of the Servant is atonement for sin and the forgiveness that follows upon it, Goldingay observes correctly that it was not the awareness of sin that brought people to the Servant. Rather, it was the diseases they suffered and the pain that resulted from them which compelled them to seek the Servant for physical healing.¹²⁰ It is from this reason that both the Hebrew of Isa 53:4 and the evangelist's version of it in Matt 8:17 emphasize diseases and weaknesses rather than sin in contrast to the Septuagint version.

But the connection between disease and sin is an intimate one. Hendriksen observes that "our physical afflictions must never be separated from that without which they never would have occurred, namely our sins."¹²¹ This intimate relationship between disease and sin is reflected in the way the two are related in the Isa 53:4, 5 context: v. 4 has: "Surely, he has borne our sickness..." This is immediately followed by: "He was wounded for our transgressions (i.e. rebellions), he was bruised for our iniquities." Thus just as the physical suffering of the Servant has the spiritual value of atoning for the sins of many, the physical healings that many experience point to their spiritual gift of forgiveness for their sins. And

¹¹⁹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 266.

¹²⁰ Goldingay, *God's Prophets, God's Servant*, p. 155.

this is the gift of salvation. Hence the healing ministry of Jesus cannot be divorced from its overall spiritual purpose, namely that of effecting atonement for many.

The nature of the suffering of the Servant in Isaiah also shares a typological relationship with the manner in which Jesus suffers. It has been observed that the way the Servant suffers is quite distinctive. In the traditional Psalms of lament, and the Old Testament in general, suffering is merely an isolated incident in a life of a healthy man or people. However, in the case of the Servant, suffering, like a blanket, covers his entire life span. Such phrases as "he grew up", "out of a dry ground", "he was buried" etc. point to this situation.¹²² The Servant suffers both physical illness and violent persecution according to traditional modes of suffering. He is despised and rejected by the very people he comes to serve. His own community cuts him off and he is left lonely with no one paying any regard to him. This is the experience throughout his life. The use of the fulfilment quotation at Matt 2:18, discussed in the preceding chapter reflects among other things, the rejection and hatred that Jesus met right from his birth. It has been shown here that his miracles were an integral part of his overall mission as a Suffering Servant. It can also be shown that even his teaching and preaching ministries were also an integral part of his vicarious suffering. For Jesus, preaching the Gospel meant bringing light into the world. Light in scriptural language implies genuine learning or true knowledge of God which is life (Ps 36:9); a life to the glory of God (Eph 5:8,14); a life of joy and gladness (Ps 97:11). This means that for Jesus, teaching or preaching meant bringing salvation into the world. Obviously, this means fighting against darkness, i.e., the Devil and his wickedness which cause blindness of heart and mind (II Cor 4:4, 6; Eph 4:18); depravity (Acts 26:18); despondency and hopelessness (Isa 9:2-3).

Thus, Jesus' teaching and preaching, in so far as they constitute part of his struggle against the powers of darkness, are, like his healing ministry, an integral part of his mission of vicarious suffering. Hence, like the Servant of Isaiah, Jesus suffers throughout his life, from birth through ministry to death. Jesus is the object of Herod's persecution in his infancy and of hatred and rejection from the Jewish leaders in his ministry. The latter become instruments for bringing a sudden end to his life through cruel and violent death at the cross.

Another typological line of thought concerns the "new thing" in the drama of salvation. It has already been noted that the new thing in the mission of the Servant was that the power to atone was found residing in an ordinary man, without even a priestly status in the community, and despised and rejected by all. This new thing is also fulfilled in Jesus. Traditionally, God's power had been demonstrated through his mighty acts, i.e., his violent action against his enemies in human history. In the present case, however, God saves his people through the

¹²¹ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 401.

¹²² Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 261.

suffering, self-denial and shame of his own Servant.¹²³ It is in fact the incomprehensibility of the new thing in the history of redemption that led to his rejection for no one recognised him as coming from God. His suffering was thus mistaken for God's punishment for his own sin. Only those who repented would confess his lordship and the vicarious function of his suffering. This is true to both the Servant and Jesus.

The voluntary acceptance of vicarious suffering is yet another typological line of thought. The emphatic use of the pronoun *hû* in the Isaianic passage to stress the active role of the Servant in accepting suffering has already been noted. Jesus, like the Servant, also accepts suffering voluntarily. In the Matthean immediate context, Jesus' active role as a Suffering Servant is seen in the healing of Peter's mother in-law. Jesus heals her on his own initiative. None has requested him to do this, and no confession of faith is demanded on her side (Matt 8:14-15). This voluntary acceptance of suffering on the part of the Servant or Jesus is significant. It is this aspect which renders the suffering of the Servant or Jesus vicarious as Hendriksen observes:

Isaiah had been lifted to the very top of the mountain of the prophetic vision, and uttered things which transcended his own understanding. He stood as it were, on Calvary, and pictured the substitutionary suffering of Christ as if it had already occurred. It was voluntary suffering. Apart from this voluntary character it would have had no atoning value.¹²⁴

In a similar vein, Simon says:

In the immolation of the victim, the priest does not commit murder but liberates the cleansing life, the flesh, the blood, the bones, and the fat so as to operate in the sphere of divine power. The remarkable thing, however, in this sacrifice is that the victim has taken the initiative altogether; He has identified himself with those who take his life.¹²⁵

There is also a typological line of thought related to the universal effect of the vicarious suffering of the Servant. Simon here observes that:

Isaiah includes Israel and probably the Gentiles too in this "we" of a universal penitent humanity; they detect the origin, purpose, and meaning of their own great tragic rejection and presently their recognition of the facts assumes the validity accorded to divine revelation. A spontaneous human realisation outlines the beginning of a dogma of atonement.¹²⁶

¹²³ Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, p 149.

¹²⁴ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 400. Also Meier, *Matthew*, p. 85.

¹²⁵ Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 212. Also R.B. Kuiper, *The Bible Tells Us So*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968, p. 75 who observes that: "In his suffering Christ was decidedly active."

¹²⁶ Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 211. Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 170 also understands the "we" of those who confess as a universal reference: "We, that is to say, humanity at large, had

enjoying a long life graced by the sight of many children and full satisfaction, the idea of resurrection is already implied in that all these blessings lie outside the span of his life from birth, death to burial. And the concluding proclamation refers to the exaltation of the Servant by promising him restoration of his honour and glory (53:12). The New Testament writers have, in general, understood the reference to the exaltation of the Servant in this Isaianic passage as fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Messiah.¹³⁰ In Acts 3:13, Jesus is called “his servant Jesus” (Greek *Pais*). In v. 26 he is called “his servant”. In Acts 2:33, he is “exalted” (Gr. *hypsōtheis*) at God’s right hand. Certainly, this reference to exaltation is reminiscent of the Isaianic passage. The Septuagint uses this word (*hypsōthēsetai*) with reference to the Servant at 52:13. A more allusive New Testament reference to the exaltation of the Servant in the Isaianic passage with conviction that Jesus fulfills the vision of the Suffering Servant is seen in Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Phil 2:7-9):

But made himself of no reputation and took upon the form of a servant and was made in likeness of men

And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.

The evangelist Matthew, like other New Testament evangelists,¹³¹ has the full picture of the Suffering Servant as portrayed by Isaiah in this text in his mind when he draws a fulfilment quotation from it. The present discussion on the fulfilment quotation at 8:17 has revealed that the evangelist had a comprehensive understanding of the fourth Servant Song and that the specific fulfilment quotation is drawn simply because it best serves his theological interest at this point. The theological interest here is to show that Jesus Messiah’s healing mission is an integral part of his role as a Suffering Servant portrayed in the Isaianic prophecy. Thus, the quotation here is a mere pointer to a portion of his Servant theology. The fulfilment quotation well summarizes the purpose and meaning of the suffering and death of the Servant. He suffers in order to atone for the sins of others and bears the punishment that would be theirs.

¹³⁰ A. McGrath, *Affirming your Faith, Exploring the Apostles Creed*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991, p.82.

¹³¹ The picture of the Suffering Servant as portrayed in Isa 52:13-53:12 is reflected by other New Testament evangelists elsewhere. For instance, the sinlessness of the Servant described in 53:9 is alluded to by the writer of 1 Peter in 2:22. John 12:37-38 which speaks of the disbelief that Jesus meets in his mission is an allusion to 53:4. Paul in reference to Israel’s rejection of the Gospel at Rom 10:16 alludes to 53:1. Acts: 3:32-33, in allusion to 53:7-8 speaks of Jesus’ acceptance of oppression without any protest. Luke 22:37 portrays Jesus as allowing himself to be treated as a criminal in direct fulfilment of 53:12. The writer of 1 Peter in 2:24-25 also applies to Jesus the atoning value of the suffering and death of the Servant described in 53:5-6.

The purpose, hence, of the evangelist in telling these healing miracles is not simply to emphasize the superior status of Jesus as a wonder-worker, a *thaumaturge*, as Dibelius and Bultmann who find their origin in the common Hellenistic miracle stories hold.¹³² Rather, he sees in these miracles a fulfilment of the role of the Suffering Messiah, who bears the sins of many through his suffering, and thus bring *shalom* to the people of God, i.e., the very kingdom of God.

In conclusion, it can be said that this fulfilment quotation is intended to define the nature and purpose of redemptive mission of Jesus Messiah. It is a humble mission characterized by the Servant's suffering and self-denial. It is a mission intended to atone for the sins of many.¹³³ Even the exercise of his divine power, through the word or deed, was essentially an integral part of his suffering mission. As it has already been indicated, this fulfilment quotation places the whole healing ministry of Jesus into the context of his passion, i.e., His suffering and death. For the evangelist, the Christ-event can only be understood in light of Old Testament prophecy. Hence, a proper understanding of this fulfilment quotation can only be achieved when it is set within the context of both the gospel and Isaianic text.

3. *The Fulfilment Quotation in Matt 12:17-21*

The Hebrew original of Isaiah 42:1-4 may be transliterated as follows:

1. Behold, my Servant (*Hēn 'abdī*) whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom my soul (*napshī*) delights
I have given my spirit on him
He shall bring forth justice (*mishpāt*) to the nations (*laggôyim*).
2. He shall not cry nor lift up his voice (*welo' yashmîa'*)
Nor cause it to be heard in the street (*bahûts*)
3. A bruised reed he shall not break
And a wick growing dim he shall not quench;

¹³² Quoted in Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. CXXV. Also see note 367 above.

¹³³ While the atoning value of the Servant's mission has a universal application, it does not mean that everyone would benefit from it. Christ died for those given to him by the Father, not all, as A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961, pp. 57, 58 observes: "Christ did not die to make possible the salvation of all mankind, but to make certain the salvation of all that the Father had given to him... Before the foundation of the world the Father predestined a people to be conformed to the image of His Son, and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was in order to the carrying out of the Divine purpose."

In truth (*le'emet*) he shall bring forth justice (*mishpāt*)

4. He shall not grow dim and not be crushed
Until he has established justice on earth
And the coastlands (*'iyyîm*) shall wait for his law.

The Isaianic text as quoted by the evangelist may be translated as follows:

18. Behold my servant (*Idou ho pais mou*) whom I have chosen (*hon hēretisa*).
My beloved one in whom my soul (*hē psychē mou*) is well pleased (*eudokēn*).

I will put my spirit upon him
And he will announce judgment to the Gentiles (*kai krisin tois ethnesin apaggelei*)
19. He will not wrangle, or cry aloud (*ouk erisei oude kraugasei*)
Nor will anyone hear his voice in the street.
20. He will not break a bruised reed (*kalamon syntetrimmenon ou kateakseî*)
or quench a smouldering wick (*kai linon tyfomenon ou sbeseî*)
Until he brings justice to victory (*Heōs an ekbalē eis nikos ten krisin*)
21. And in his name the Gentiles will hope (*kai tō onomati autou ethnē elpiousin*)

a. Textual Observations

The rendition of the evangelist follows neither the Hebrew original of Isa 42:1-4 nor the Septuagint, nor indeed any other known Aramaic targum on the prophetic text. The only place where the evangelist shows some trace of the Septuagint over against the Hebrew original is in the last line where the Hebrew has “and for his law” (Heb. *Ūletôrātô*). Both the evangelist and the Septuagint have “and his name” (*kai tō onomati autou* and *kai epi tō onomati autou* respectively) at this point. Generally, however, the evangelist’s quotation is closer to the Hebrew original. Allen thinks that the evangelist is more likely using an existing Greek version.¹³⁴ It is, however, highly probable that the evangelist is directly translating from the Hebrew original.

¹³⁴ Allen, *Matthew*, p. 130. According to him, the Greek version is presupposed in Mark 1:11 where it is assumed that the original Greek form used the word *pais*. However, *huios* later was substituted for

The opening words of the fulfilment quotation also support the view that the evangelist is closer to the Hebrew original than he is to the Septuagint. The Septuagint clearly identifies the Servant: "Jacob my Servant, I support you; Israel my chosen one whom my soul (Gr. *hē psychē mou*) accepts favorably." The Septuagint probably offers an interpretation based on Isa 41:41.¹³⁵ In the Hebrew original, the Servant is not identified. Similarly, the evangelist's quotation does not identify the Servant, although the context makes it clear that the concept is directly applied to Jesus Messiah.

The evangelist rendering of the Hebrew "my servant" ('*abidī*) has some significance. The expression could as well be rendered as *ho doulos mou*. The evangelist, at this point, follows the Septuagint in rendering it as *ho pais mou*. This, however, introduces an ambiguity into the Matthean fulfilment quotation. The term *pais* could also be rendered as "Son". The idea of "Son" in the term *pais* used here is further indicated by the themes of choice or election and love which are reminiscent of the divine language uttered both at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:17 = *houtos estin huīos mou ho agapētos, en hō eudokēsa* = This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased) and at his transfiguration (Matt 17:5 = *houtos estin ho huīos mou ho agapētos en hō eudokēsa*) where the word "Son" (*ho huīos*) is especially used. This suggests that the term *pais* here may also mean "Son" in the Matthean context. The evangelist deliberately exploits the ambiguity to refer to Jesus as both the Servant and the Son of God.¹³⁶

The use of the aorist in *hon hēretisa* and *eudokēsen* is probably an imitation of the Hebrew terms. However, the evangelist appears to refer to an eternal pre-temporal act of God in the election of the Messiah. The good pleasure of God in the Messiah is shown in his election (cf Eph. 1:4-6). The Messiah is to proclaim (Gr. *apaggelei*; Heb. *yōtsī'* = bring forth; LXX *kekraksetai* = call out or cry out) judgment or justice (Gr. *krisis*; Heb. *mishpāt*). The servant will not strive, fight or quarrel (Gr. *ouk erisei*; Heb. *lo' yits'aq* = he shall not cry out). Matthew Black observes that *erisei* here has its origin in a Syriac Old Testament of Isa 42:2:

The variant *erisei* in Matthew corresponds to nothing in a Greek or Hebrew source, but bears a curious resemblance to the Syriac *naribh*...The Syriac *naribh* comes from a Syriac Old Testament version of Isa. xlii. 2 ..and has nothing to do with Heb. *ribh*; 'to strive'... G.S. Margoliouth (*Expository Times*, xxxviii, p. 278) regarded the Syriac as the original of Matthew's *erisei*; the translator was more familiar with the meaning of the Hebrew *ribh* than with the Syriac *rubh*, and has given the Hebrew meaning. In that case

pais since it is more applicable to the Messiah. Thus, Allen claims that the use of *pais* in the present quotation is either a return to the original form of the quotation in Greek or it is a reminiscence of the LXX.

¹³⁵ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 106.

¹³⁶ Also Meier, *Matthew*, p. 1323; Harrington, *Matthew*, pp. 180, 181; Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p.120.

we must assume that Matthew's quotations go back at points to a Syriac Old Testament.¹³⁷

The expression "My servant whom I uphold" of Isa 42:1a was not literally produced by the evangelist in v.18a. However, Isaiah's full expression "My servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights" (Heb. *'abdî 'etmāk – bô behîrî rotstâ napshî*) offers the evangelist every right to translate the whole expression by saying "my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased" or "my beloved in whom I delight" (Gr. *idou hon pais mou hōn hēretisa*).

The expression "Nor cause it to be heard in the street" (Heb. *welo' yashmîa' bahûts*) in Isa 42:2b is not essentially different from the evangelist's "Nor shall anyone hear his voice in the street" (Gr. *oude akousei tis en tais plateiais tēn fōnēn autou*) in v 19b.

The expression "He will not break a bruised reed" of v. 20 (Gr. *kalamon syntetrimmenon ou kateaksei*) is not the same as the Septuagint's *kalamon tethlasmenon ou syntripsei* and can easily be recognized as a direct translation from Heb. *qāneh rātsûts lo' yishbôr*.

The last phrase of v. 20 "until he brings justice to victory" (Gr. *heōs an ekbalē eis nikos tēn krisin*), cannot readily be derived from the Heb of Isa 42:3, "He shall bring forth justice to truth" or "He will faithfully bring forth justice" (Heb. *le'emet yôtsî' mishpāt*). Neither can it be readily derived from the Septuagint's "until he lays justice on earth." (*heōs an the epi tēs gēs krisin*). But a theological reflection of the prophetic text "he shall bring forth justice in truth" (Heb. *le'emet yôtsî' mishpāt*) in 42:3b and "until he has set in the earth justice" (Heb. *'ad-yāsîm bā'ārets mishpāt*) enables the evangelist to say "Until he leads justice on to victory" here in v 20 b.

After the word *krisin* in v 20, the evangelist omits Isa 42:4a (*lo' yikheh welo' yārûts 'ad-yāsîm bā'ārets mishpāt* = "He shall not grow dim and not be crushed until he has set in the earth justice"). His attention passes from *mishpāt* to the second occurrence of the same word. The omitted text, however, influenced his translation as I have just indicated in the preceding paragraph.

With regard to the lasting establishment of justice, it has been suggested that there is some influence from Habakkuk 1:4 here.¹³⁸ In suggesting that in "his name the Gentiles will hope" (Gr. *kai tō onomati autou ethnē elpiousin*), the evangelist agrees with the Septuagint (*kai epi tō onomati ethnē elpiousin*). The Hebrew has "and the coastlands wait for his law" (*ûletôrātû 'iyyîm yeyahêlû*). Here, the song includes the idea of Gentile participation in the mission of God's meek and gentile Servant. The "coastlands" (*'iyyîm*) of Isa 42:4b refers to the farthest regions. It represents the nations outside Israel. The evangelist is hence correct in v. 21 in

¹³⁷ Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, Third Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 257.

rendering this phrase as “the Gentiles” or “the nations”. It is also important to note that the “waiting” of the Hebrew text is a waiting with confident anticipation, a hoping. This is a reference to an eschatological and universal salvation that will come with the advent of the Servant of Yahweh, the Messiah.

This discussion on the textual character of the fulfilment quotation has revealed that the evangelist is not engaged in a word-for-word translation of the Hebrew original or copying of the Septuagint. The evangelist is rather engaged in a theological reflection of both the Hebrew and the Septuagint texts of the prophetic oracle, and that much of this is based on the Hebrew original. In this way the Old Testament text, as quoted by the evangelist, is itself a Christological interpretation of the original prophetic text by the evangelist himself.

b. The Historical Context of Isa 42:1-4

It has been suggested by some scholars that the Servant Songs of Isaiah belong to a special strand of traditional material in Second Isaiah. For this reason, it has been maintained by some that they did not come into existence at the same time as the tradition in their current context.¹³⁹ In contrast, most scholars have seen a meaningful relationship between the songs including this song, and their contexts. It is, however, generally understood that they owe their origin to Second Isaiah.¹⁴⁰

The song of Isa 42:1-4 is set in the context of Yahweh’s disputation with the nations. This confrontation is sometimes called “The Trial of the nations.” James Muilenburg has argued that this song forms the climax of the whole poem recorded in Isa 41:1-42:4, a passage he understands as “The Trial of the nations.”¹⁴¹

The figure of the Servant first appears in this disputation. The nations are summoned before Yahweh, the Creator and Lord of history for a judicial inquiry. They are asked to interpret the rise of Cyrus, the conqueror who is greeted with victory wherever he goes (41:1-4). When the nations give no answer except encouraging one another in their idolatrous activities (vv. 5-7), Yahweh turns to Israel and tells her not to fear for he has chosen her to be his Servant. Accordingly, he will strengthen her (vv.8-10). In a later section of the poem, the

¹³⁸ Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 180.

¹³⁹ E.g. Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 92.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ James Muilenburg, “The Book of Isaiah Chap. 40-66”, in George Arthur Buttrick (ed.), *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. V, Nashville: Abingdon, 1965, reprint 1980, pp. 406-14, 447-66, especially p. 447. The idea of a court trial in the poem as a whole has been questioned by Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976, pp. 8-10, 53-63 who regards it as a non-forensic disputation intended “to convince doubters that Yahweh is God.” Most scholars, however,

nations are summoned once more to present their case before Yahweh. They are challenged to provide evidence to support their claims that gods have been able to foretell the new, eschatological age initiated by Cyrus. It is then asserted that only Yahweh is God. It is only Yahweh who knows the meaning of the past events and determines the course of future history. It is Yahweh who stirred up Cyrus who is to act as an agent for the salvation of his people (vv. 21-29).

Again, however, there is no answer from the nations. So, Yahweh turns a second time to the Servant (this time not explicitly identified with Israel). The Servant is not only "chosen" and "upheld". The Servant is also Yahweh's agent, endowed with the Spirit of God, who will quietly and gently bring justice to the nations (Isa 42:1-4).

In Isa 42:10-17, the whole creation is summoned to sing praises to Yahweh who is coming triumphantly to judge the world and lead his people to freedom. In Isa 43:8-13, the judicial scene is again presented. Yahweh orders his people to be brought into the general assembly of nations as witnesses to the fact that there is no God except Yahweh. The nations are again challenged to provide evidence if any god ever foretold the future. The Lordship of Yahweh in history and in eternity is once again vindicated through the witness of Israel.

Thus it is clear that the context of Second Isaiah shows that Isa 42:1-4 is a strand of tradition within the "trial of nations" tradition complex. The same could be said of the other servant songs in 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12. In the context of divine judgment upon the nations Israel, only presupposed in the present song, is called to be Yahweh's instrument for bringing salvation to the world. Each song focuses on some aspect of the extraordinary way in which Yahweh's Servant is to bring salvation to the nations. In the following discussion of Isa 42:1-4, it will be particularly shown that its main thrust falls on the meekness and gentility of the Servant in the execution of his divine mission.

Scholarly attempts to identify the Servant, the nature of his task and the context in which his designation within the Old Testament takes place have proven to be quite difficult. Westerman observes that:

Clear and concise though the song is, its interpretation is very difficult. On three matters we are left in the dark. Who is the Servant here designated by God for a task? What is the nature of the task? In what context is the designation made? ... The cryptic veiled language used is deliberate. This is true of every one of the servant songs alike. From the very outset there must be no idea that exegesis can clear up all their problems. The veiled manner of speaking is intentional, and to our knowledge much in them was meant to remain hidden even from their original hearers.¹⁴²

understand the poem as reflecting a judicial process, e.g. North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 92; Knight, *Servant Theology*, p. 27; Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, p. 68.

¹⁴² Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 93.

Similarly, Goldingay comments that “the Servant’s job is to make that possible. He brings God’s judgment, God’s covenant, God’s light. Precisely how he does that is not here explained.”¹⁴³ He further suggests that “one way that Israel will bring light to the world is by letting God’s light flood through her own life.”¹⁴⁴ But as he correctly points out, this suggestion is based on a different passage, precisely, Isa 2:5, not on the present Servant song. This idea is probably missing in Isa 42:1-4, and clearly it is not its main thrust.

The first verse of the song announces the designation of the Servant. Yahweh publicly proclaims the election of his Servant. The Servant is introduced as if already present while his mission and its fulfilment still lie in the future. Some have seen in this designation the main thrust of the song’s message.¹⁴⁵ The Servant receives a royal designation as indicated not only by the divine proclamation but also his acclamation by the witnessing audience implied in the cry “Behold my Servant.” Royal designation is further suggested by the endowment of the Spirit upon him.¹⁴⁶ Although the word used here to denote the coming of the Spirit upon the Servant is *nātan* which need not imply permanent endowment of the Spirit, it can hardly be doubted that the Spirit is given to the Servant in no less measure than it is given to the Messianic prince as an abiding gift. In Isa 11:2 the Spirit rests (Heb. *ruah*) upon the prince as a permanent endowment.¹⁴⁷ The first verse also summarizes the task of the Servant: “He shall bring forth justice (*mishpāt*) to the nations (*lagoyyīm*) literally “He shall cause *mishpāt* to go out.”¹⁴⁸ The word *mishpāt* is one of those terms in the Old Testament that are difficult to define. It has many connotations. Broadly speaking, it can be defined as a way of life that is shaped by the revealed will of God. Probably, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition as quoted by North is still one of the best attempts at defining the term: “The body of commandments which express the will of God with regard to the conduct of His intelligent creatures.”¹⁴⁹ Thus *mishpāt* refers to the quality of life in which the revelatory will of God is lived out. The word has a forensic origin.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Goldingay, *God's Prophet, God's Servant*, p. 95.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ For instance, Knight, *Servant Theology*, pp. 43-47 has devoted much space to vv. 1 and 4. He dismisses vv. 2 and 3 with a single short paragraph. Similarly, Westerman, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 92, sees a “keynote” to understanding the song in the first two words “Behold, my Servant.”

¹⁴⁶ Westerman, *Isaiah 40-66*, pp. 93-95.

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion on other verbs used to denote the giving of the spirit upon individual persons, see North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 107.

¹⁴⁸ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 107, finds a keynote to the passage in these words: “These words must be the key to the understanding of the passage, since they recur in v3, and in v4 the Servant is to ‘establish’ *mishpāt* in the world.”

¹⁴⁹ North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 108.

¹⁵⁰ For a thorough discussion of the term *mishpāt*, see Simon, *A Theology of Salvation*, pp. 83, 84; Westermann, *Isa. 40-66*, p. 95; North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 107, 108; Knight, *Servant Theology*, pp. 44, 45. Hilary B.P. Mijoga, *The Pauline Notion of the Deeds of the Law*, San Francisco – London -

The declarations of v. 1 have a background in earlier Isaianic passages. The words used to designate the Servant, "My Servant ...my chosen" are also used of Israel in 41:8. The expression, "I support" is again used in reference to Israel in Isa 41:10. It carries the sense of grasping by or with the hand. Isa 11:1-10 speaks of a Davidic prince upon whom the spirit rests (*ruah*) as a permanent endowment (v. 2). The idea of the Servant bringing in *mishpāt* is reflected in vv. 3, 4 where it is said that the prince will not judge according to what is in sight but in accordance with righteousness: *welo'-lemar' ēt 'ênāyu yishpôt... weshāpat betsedeq dallīm*, literally "But not by seeing of his eyes he shall judge... but he shall judge in righteousness the poor." Thus derivatives of the word *mishpāt* are already used here in Isa 11:3, 4.

It has already been noted above that some have seen a keynote to the song in either the designation of the Servant or his task of bringing *mishpāt* to the world. It has also been observed that some only see a veiled hint on the way in which the Servant will bring this *mishpāt* in vv. 2-3. A closer study of the song, however, reveals that the main thrust of the song is in vv. 2-3 where the manner in which the Servant will carry out his mission is indicated. The method through which the Servant will bring *mishpāt* is quite extraordinary. The Servant will carry out his mission quietly, gently and persistently until he establishes *mishpāt* in the whole world.

In order to emphasize on the significance of the Servant's quiet and gentle method, the prophet uses a figure of speech known as litotes "by means of which a positive truth is conveyed by the negation of its opposite."¹⁵¹ The real significance of the seven negative expressions: "not cry", "not lift up (his voice)", "not caused to be heard", "not break", "not quench", "not grow dim", "not be crushed" is that actually the Servant will treat the weak and broken-hearted with profound sympathy and tender concern. He will actually impart strength to the weak and to all who while wasting away will turn to him in faith. The Servant will not seek public fame and will not use his power to oppress and to condemn the weak and the oppressed. His saving power will reach out even to the most abandoned outcast.

In this way, the seven negatives serve to define and emphasize the contrast in the use of royal power between the Servant and those who might compete for the title like the early prophets, the denunciatory prophets (like Amos) or Cyrus.¹⁵² The *mishpāt* (i.e. Justice or

Bethesda: International Scholars Publications, 1999, pp. 64-67 renders the term as "regulation(s)" and observes that it is often used in parallel to such terms as statute, torah and commandment. This suggests its revelatory character. For a convenient list of other nuances of this term, see Georg Fohrer (ed.), *Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, London:: SCM, 1973, p. 166.

¹⁵¹ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 522. North, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 108, 109. Also A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, Fourth Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 728.

¹⁵² North, *The Second Isaiah*, p. 108.

judgment) that the Servant will bring to the whole earth is really a proclamation of salvation, an invitation to the nations to enter into a covenant relationship with Yahweh and to live out a life guided by the revealed word of God that the Servant declares. The primary purpose of the judgment that the Servant brings is not punishment and destruction. It is aimed at bringing salvation to the weak and broken-hearted, and establishing the kingdom of God in which people shall live in accordance with the revealed will of God.

The other songs focus on different aspects of the Servant's mission. The song in Isa 49:1-6 focuses on the victorious nature of his mission at the appointed time. The one in Isa 50:4-9 emphasizes the closer relationship the Servant has to God which enables him to bear affliction submissively. While the one in Isa 52:13-53:12 stresses the suffering aspect of his mission. Similarly, the present song in Isa 42:1-4 focuses on the quiet and gentle character in the Servant's approach to his mission. The information about his royal designation and the statement on his task of bringing *mishpāt* to the whole earth in v. 1 is only included at this point to put the discussion of his extraordinary approach to his mission into a proper perspective.¹⁵³ The universal dimension of the judgment he brings is described in v. 4. The term "coastlands" is a reference, as I have indicated earlier, to Gentile nations in general who await the Servant's judgment with confident anticipation.

c. *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

Like the other fulfilment quotations, the present one in 12:17-21 reveals that the evangelist used such quotations theologically in the light of their Old Testament contexts. It offers further support to the present argument that the evangelist theologically reflected not only on the specifically quoted verses, but also on the wider context to which the specific quotation belongs. The choice of the text quoted, within the portion under theological reflection, depends on the theological emphasis that the evangelist wants to make in its application to the Christ event. The quotation does not appear to be a mere patch from an isolated independent source forced upon a gospel tradition, drawn from a Marcan source or the other postulated sources for the gospel tradition, as some would suppose. Rather, the manner in which the present fulfilment quotation is used fits the theological context of both the Old and the New Testaments.¹⁵⁴

The Old Testament context has already been discussed. The discussion has revealed that Isa 42:1-4 falls within the context in which Yahweh summons the nations for judgment and commissions his Servant to bring that judgment into effect. The quoted text of Isa 42:1-4 then

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Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, pp. 495, 496.

defines not only the royal designation and the divine task of this servant but also the extraordinary character of the way in which the Servant will bring this judgment to the nations. The unusual character of the way in which the Servant employs his royal powers in bringing this judgment into the world is indeed, the focus of this text in both Isaiah and the gospel. We observe with Harrington that "The emphasis of the servant song in Isa 42:1-4 is the meekness and gentleness of the Servant... so too is the thrust of its application in Matt 12:18-21."¹⁵⁵

Within the Matthean context, the evangelist sees in Jesus' mission the fulfilment of Isaianic prophecy. The immediate context of the fulfilment quotation centres on the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees. Jesus is accused for allowing his disciples to do "work" on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8) and for having himself conducted the "work" of healing on the Sabbath during a Sabbath worship (Matt 12:9-12). He is also accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils (Matt 12:22-30). Opposition to him gets so intense that the Pharisees and the Herodians discuss plans on how to get him killed (Matt 12:14).

The manner in which Jesus responded to the controversy with the Pharisees and the deadly hatred that they developed against him is seen by the evangelist as fulfilling the role of the Servant of Isaianic prophecy. The evangelist sees Jesus as the royal Servant of God. In the Old Testament context, royal designation was marked by divine election, public acclamation by Israel and the endowment of the Spirit of God. Divine election and public acclamation are, for instance, presupposed in the divine exclamation: "Here is the man" in connection with Saul (I Samuel 9:15-17). The royal designation of David adds the endowment of the Spirit (I Sam 16). The expression "Here is the man" or "Behold, the man!" (*Hinne ha 'ish*) is parallel to the expression in Isa 42:1, "Behold, my Servant!" (Heb. *Hēn 'abdī*).

Within the Matthean context, the evangelist sees the royal designation of Jesus as a Servant of prophetic expectation at his baptism in the Jordan. Not only does the Spirit of God rest upon him, but also the voice from heaven (i.e. God's) declare "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17). In this expression, the evangelist has conflated two quotations: "You are my Son" (Ps 2:7) "in whom my soul delights" (Isa 42:1). By associating the two passages, the evangelist indicates that he sees something more in Jesus. He is not only the Servant of Yahweh. He is indeed the Son of God. The qualifications Jesus has as a royal representative also qualify him to be the mediator between God and man. He combines the roles of both priest and prophet. As a priest, he administers divine justice, and as a prophet he proclaims it to the world.

¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. LXVIII observes that "the fulfilment texts must be seen in total context, both of the OT passages in question and also of the gospel."

¹⁵⁵ Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 180.

In the immediate context, the fulfilment quotation is drawn to explain theologically two themes, namely, his withdrawal from the Pharisaic circles in the district and his continued healing ministry, in the face of mounting opposition. In Jesus' withdrawal and sustained healing ministry the evangelist sees a sharp contrast between the meek, gentle and compassionate Jesus and the selfish, cruel and ostentatious Pharisees. While the Pharisees have plotted to kill him and are looking for some legal ground for arresting him, Jesus does not respond with a counter-attack against the religious leaders, for instance, by forming an underground force to frustrate their plans. His response conforms to Isaianic prophecy:

He shall not cry nor lift up his voice

Nor cause it to be heard in the street

A bruised reed he shall not break

And a wick growing dim he shall not quench

In truth he shall bring forth justice (Isa 42:2-3)

As already indicated, this is the main thrust of the Servant Song in the Isaianic passage. It is the unusual character of the method that the Royal Servant follows in bringing the judgment of God to the world that is of particular interest in this prophetic text. Royal princes would normally establish justice in their realm through an effective use of the military means at their disposal. Such victory would come, usually, after much bloodshed and destruction of cities, villages, fields and other social infrastructures. Once victory was achieved and order established, the new king would re-enact the laws of the land and have them proclaimed again throughout the realm. The same could be done whenever a new king succeeded to the throne in the ancient Near East.¹⁵⁶ The justice and peace so established, however, was neither perfect nor lasting. This could be said of Cyrus as a Servant of Yahweh.

But the Servant's achievement of victory, as described in this poem, is in sharp contrast with the methods of a military conqueror like Cyrus. The Servant of Yahweh of this poem sets a totally new approach to the use of power. He does not follow tradition and cry aloud in public. Rather, he executes justice quietly, gently and persistently. He is unostentatious and refrains from public notice. He comes not to oppress the poor and the broken-hearted but to give them hope and meaning in life.

The extraordinary character of the Servant's approach to mission as outlined in vv. 2-3 of the Isaianic prophecy is also the main thrust of the fulfilment quotation within the Matthean context. The evangelist sees Jesus' approach to his divine mission as an exact parallel to the prophetic passage. We have just noted above that despite Jesus' awareness of the plot to kill him masterminded by the religious leaders of his nation, he does not form any resistant

movement to counter-attack the murder plot. He does not even engage in a public confrontation with them in order to expose and then disfuse that plot. Instead, Jesus withdraws from the religious leaders, but continues to proclaim divine judgment, i.e., the Gospel, and healing the sick wherever he goes.

In accordance with his humble approach to the mission, he orders all who are healed not to publicize his healing activity. Just as the Servant of Isaianic prophecy does not break a bruised reed and quench a wick growing dim, Jesus does not contribute to the suffering of the weak, the sick and the broken-hearted. Instead, he actively deals with them with great sympathy and loving concern so that they become strong, healthy and hopeful. He imparts strength to the morally and spiritually weak that come to him for help. He heals the physically sick (4:23-25; 9:35; 11:5; 12:15). He seeks and saves sinners (9:9, 10), gives comfort to mourners (5:4), courage to the fearful (14:10-12), reassurance to those who doubt (11:2-6), food to the hungry (14:13-21) and forgiveness to those who repent of their sins (9:2). Along with his healing ministry, Jesus maintains his teaching and preaching ministries always declaring the will of God, even in the face of mounting opposition to his mission.

Jesus persistently carries out his mission against all odds as "he brings forth justice in truth" (Heb.), i.e., "until he leads justice on to victory" (Gr.), in the death-resurrection¹⁵⁷ when he is finally declared "to be the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4). In this eschatological event, the time comes when the command not to make Jesus known (12:16) ceases, and Jesus the Saviour of Israel, becomes "the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). Once his mission is completed and he is vindicated by the resurrection, Gentiles can look to his name, i.e., to Christ as revealed to the world, for salvation (12:21). The period of secrecy and withdrawal (12:15, 16) is then replaced by that of wide publicity as the Church, the new eschatological community, fulfills its mission around the world (28:18-20; Acts 22:21; Eph 2:11-22).

The mission of the Servant of Isaianic prophecy which Israel failed to accomplish is fulfilled in Jesus' humble and gentle ministry, and is later carried on by the Church in its mission to "all nations." The *mishpāt* of the Isaianic prophecy, fulfilled in the mission of Jesus Messiah of the gospel text continues to be proclaimed to the world "even unto the end of the world" (28:20) when all things get to the final consummation. Then all those who are saved both from Israel and the nations shall receive the crown of salvation to the glory of the Servant-Son, and God the Father (Rev 7:4, 9-17).

The typological relationship between the definition of the Servant's extraordinary mission and the actualization of Jesus' redemptive mission reveals a meticulous grasp of the prophetic

¹⁵⁶ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 96.

word and a careful theological reflection on the part of the evangelist. It is hardly conceivable that the evangelist could come up with such a systematic theological analysis of prophecy without himself having a meaningful access to the Old Testament context of the text he quotes.

4. *The Fulfilment Quotation in Matt 13:35*

34. All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; he did not speak to them without a parable.

35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open my mouth in parables,

I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

a. *Textual Observation*

This fulfilment quotation comes from Ps 78:2 (LXX 77:2). The first line of the quotation, "I will open my mouth in parables (Gr. *parabolais*) is reminiscent of the LXX. It corresponds to the LXX text word for word. However, the Greek of the first line also fully translates the Hebrew original, except that the evangelist follows the LXX in using the plural "parables." The Hebrew has the singular "with a parable" (*bemāshāl*). If, however, the Hebrew singular is representative, which is most likely, then either of the rendering would be appropriate. The "one" of the Hebrew original would really stand for the "many" of both the LXX and the gospel texts. For the evangelist, the plural is more appropriate since Jesus used many parables.

The second line reflects an independent translation of the Hebrew. The verb *ereuksomai* basically means "I will pour out/give out/throw out something into something else", "I will disgorge."¹⁵⁷ Here it is used in the sense of declaring, telling. This translates well the Hebrew *'abbî'â* (I will speak). In the Hebrew original the words *māshāl* (parable) and *hîdôt* (secret things or mysteries) are set in poetic parallelism. The literary construction suggests that the psalmist views *māshāl* as a "mystery". *Kekrymmena* is a perfect passive participle of *kryptō* (= "I hide, conceal"). It can, therefore, be rendered: "hidden things." This shows that both the psalmist and the evangelist had in mind the truth that only became known through revelation,

¹⁵⁷ Meier, *Matthew*, p. 132; Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, p. 96.

¹⁵⁸ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 556.

the truth that would otherwise remain unknown. The expression *apo kataboles* (= “from the beginning/foundation/creation”) translates well the Hebrew *minnî-qedem*. The word *kosmou* that ends the quotation in the Matthean text has a weak textual support here¹⁵⁹, although the expression *apo katabolēs kosmou* (= “from the foundation of the world”) occurs several times in other books within the New Testament. The expression occurs, for instance, at Matt 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph 1:4; Heb 4:3; 9:26; 1 Pet 1:20. Such a widespread occurrence of the expression in the New Testament writings suggests that it entered the tradition at a very early date, and this would argue for its authenticity as a Matthean expression.

If the expression *kosmou* is authentic it would mean that Jesus declares mysteries from eternity. While it is true that Jesus deals with eternal truth (Eph 1:4,11), the idea is not necessarily hinted on in Ps 78:2, nor is this suggested anywhere in the Psalter. The Psalmist broadly speaks on the history of ancient Israel. He neither speaks about eternity nor does he tell us anything about creation. The LXX has totally a different set of expressions in the second line. The only common word between the LXX and the evangelist is *apo* (LXX: *phthegsomai problēmata ap’ archēs*). Although the LXX text here may offer a satisfactorily alternative rendering of the Hebrew, the fact that the set of words is almost totally different from the one used by the evangelist sufficiently argues against the evangelist’s dependency on that tradition.

b. *The Historical Context of Psalms 78:2 (LXX 77:2)*

Psalm 78:2 is generally taken as a didactic psalm,¹⁶⁰ applying the lessons from the ancient history of Israel. The psalm has generally been dated as far back as the period between the break-up of the Davidic united monarchy (922 BC) and the fall of the Northern Kingdom to the Assyrians in 721 BC. It is argued that even the linguistic features of the psalm support an early dating.¹⁶¹ It is also generally accepted that the probable *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm is the ritual of covenant-making¹⁶² when the people would be challenged to avoid the sins of their fathers, commit themselves faithfully to God, and praise him for the marvellous works he

¹⁵⁹ See the Textual Apparatus on the text in the Greek New Testament.

¹⁶⁰ Charles A Briggs and Emilie G Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* Vol II ICC, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907, p. 178; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalm II 51-100*, Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1968, p. 78; G.W. Anderson “The Psalms” in M.Black and H.H.Rowley (eds.) *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, p. 429; Arnold B. Rhodes, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. 9, The Layman’s Bible Commentary, Richmond: John Knox, 1960, p 113.

¹⁶¹ Dahood, *Psalms II*, p. 238. Anderson, “The Psalms”, p. 429 argues that the psalms reflects Deuteronomic exaltation of Zion and suggests that it comes from the post-exilic period. He finds it unlikely that vv. 59-72 could be used in the undivided kingdom.

¹⁶² B.K. Rattey, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1938, reprint 1969, p. 136 suggests that the psalms was sung during the Feast of Tabernacles.

performed for the redemption of his people¹⁶³. In terms of a genre, the Psalm is couched in a style of wisdom writings¹⁶⁴ and presented in a parabolic form. It has been observed that "the most famous form used by Jesus in his teaching is the parable... (It) is the most characteristic element of his teaching, for not less than thirty-five percent of his teaching in the synoptic gospels is found in parabolic form."¹⁶⁵ However, it is not only the extent of parabolic material in the gospels that has attracted scholarly attention. The parables are reflective of both Jesus' mission and his unique approach to it. Jeremias finds that "they reflect with peculiar clarity the character of his good news, the intensity of his summons to repentance, and his conflict with Pharisaism."¹⁶⁶ He further observes that:

Jesus' parables are something entirely new. In all the rabbinic literature, not one single parable has come down to us from the period of Jesus (except for only two similes from R. Hillel, c20 BC). The uniqueness of Jesus' parables comes out clearly when they are compared with analogous productions from the same period and cultural context, such as the Pauline similitudes or the rabbinic parables. Its among the saying of Rabbai Jochanan ben Zakai (d.c. AD 80) that we first meet with a parable. Comparison reveals a definite personal style, a singular clarity and simplicity, a matchless mastery of construction.¹⁶⁷

But what is a parable? The word derives from the Greek *parabolē* which basically means "to put side by side," "a comparison." In Greek, the word could be used of any comparison. The idea of analogy is basic in classical Greek.¹⁶⁸ But the word in the New Testament has a Semitic background. It translates the Hebrew word *māshāl* which in the Semitic context has many nuances. It represents a variety of figures of speech. In the Old Testament it could refer to a proverb (I Sam 24:13); a satire or taunt (I Kings 9:7; Deut 28:37; Ps 69:11); a riddle (Ezek 17:2; Ps 49:4; Hab 2:6) or a story parable or allegory (Ezek 17:2-10; 20:49-21:5; 24:2-5;). Similarly, the word *māshāl* in the New Testament refers to a variety of different figures of speech including a metaphor (Mark 7:14-16; Luke 5:36-39); a proverb (Luke 4:23; Mark 3:23-24); a similitude or expanded simile (Mark 4:26-29, 30-32; Matt 13:33; 18:22-34; Luke 11:11-13; 15:8-10; 17:7-10); a story parable (Matt 8:2-8; 21:28-31; Luke 8:2-8; 15:11-32;

¹⁶³ Rhodes, *The Book of Psalms*, p. 113. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, p. 178 thinks that vv 40-48, 51, 53 describing the Egyptian plagues are an insertion by the editor from an ancient poem and that the chapter has legalistic (vv 4b-7a, 10-11, 56b) and expansive glosses (vv. 15, 21-22, 25, 28-30a, 36-37, 49-50, 58-59, 62, 65-66, 69, 71c-72).

¹⁶⁴ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150, A Commentary on Books II-V of the Psalms*, Leicester +Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1975, p. 281.

¹⁶⁵ Robert, H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978, p. 34.

¹⁶⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, London: SCM, 1972, p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ Douglass, R A Hare, *Matthew A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Lousville: John Knox, 1993, p. 146. Also Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, p. 35.

16:1-9) example parable (Matt 18:23-35; Luke 10:29-37; Luke 12:16-21; 14:7-14; 16:19-31; 18:9-14); and an allegory (Mark 4:3-9; 13-20; 12:12; Matt 13:24-30; 22:2-14; 36:43)¹⁶⁹

The most important element in these Semitic nuances of the word *parabolē* or *māshāl* is the enigmatic quality that is basic to them all. It is not a simple comparison.

There is always something hidden, something mysterious with regard to its meaning so that the meaning of the *māshāl*, whatever form it takes, is not immediately apparent to the simple minded or the uninitiated. Gibson compares the parable to a nut which has both a shell and a kernel of meaning. He compares the shell to the simple meaning of a parabolic story and the kernel to its deeper meaning which is not always apparent, lying hidden inside the shell.¹⁷⁰ It is this capacity to both reveal and conceal the truth that makes the parabolic form especially suitable for religious teaching.

The whole of Ps 78 (LXX 77) is itself a *parabolē*, a *māshāl* in which God's grace and love for his people are the underlying principles to both the mighty acts he performs for them and the terrible judgment he metes out to them for their characteristically sinful and rebellious nature. Throughout its history, the Servant Israel remained disobedient and rebellious. Yet – and this is the hidden truth – God had chosen Israel as his Servant through whom his mighty acts might be revealed not only to her but also to the whole world, in an ultimate redemptive plan designed to draw the Gentiles through the Servant's witness to both his power and his loving-kindness.

The parable of Psalm 78 is intended to reveal the glorious power and the gracious love of God as manifested in ancient history of Israel. This revelation is intended to help present and future generations of Israel learn the mighty acts of God, be faithful to his will, and avoid walking in the sinful and rebellious way of their forefathers (vv. 6-8).

God performed miracles in Egypt which led to their release. At the Red Sea he held out the waters so that Israel crossed on dry ground. He guided them with a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night, and provided them with streams of water from the rock (vv. 12-16).

Despite these mighty acts the people rebelled against God and tempted him by asking for food (vv. 17-20), which he provided (vv. 23-24, 26-27). But this provision was immediately followed by divine judgment (vv. 30-31). The effect of this judgment upon them caused them to remember their God (vv. 32-35) who immediately responded with compassion and forgiveness (v. 38). He considered their human weakness and failure to respond in faith to the many miracles he had performed for their redemption in Egypt and during the Exodus (vv. 39-42). Even the administration of his divine judgment upon Egyptians did not cause any

¹⁶⁹ For a thorough discussion of these various connotations of the word *māshāl* = parable, see Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, pp. 35-39.

¹⁷⁰ John Monro Gibson, *The Gospel of St. Matthew*, The Expositors Bible, New York: A.C. Armstrong, 1905, pp.176, 177.

genuine repentance (vv. 43-51). In light of his compassionate understanding of this human failure, he forgave them and led them as a flock through the wilderness (v 52). He guided them safely to the Holy Land and gave it to them for an inheritance (vv. 54-55).

But Israel's history was not better in the Promised Land. They rebelled against him and involved themselves in a flirtation with Canaanite deities (vv. 56-57). In anger, God rejected Shilo (v. 60), gave up his "power" and "glory" (i.e. his ark) along with his people and handed them over into captivity (v 61). Consequently, all classes of people perished (vv. 63-64). However, for the sake of his glorious power and gracious love, he chose Judah and Mount Zion to replace Ephraim (vv. 9, 67, 68) and David to be a shepherd for his people (vv. 70-71), and through David, he guided his people with a tender concern. The Psalm ends on a climactic and triumphant note, indicating how God chose David to be Israel's shepherd. This implies the establishment of the Davidic covenant¹⁷¹ which forms the background to Messianic prophecy consequently fulfilled in Jesus Messiah.

Clearly, the Psalm narrates the history of ancient Israel "in which some deeper meaning lies, to be gleaned by means of the hidden comparison."¹⁷² The human story is set side by side with the divine proclamation of God's glorious power and gracious love. In a historical context dominated by Israel's rebellion and divine judgment, God still manifests his saving power.

c *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

Matthew 13 falls within the context of the rejection of Jesus and divine judgment that this rejection brings, already observed in our previous discussion of the fulfilment quotation at 12:17-21. Jesus is rejected. He is denied his true identity as the Servant/Son of God who carries out the mighty works of his father, particularly in the form of miraculous healings. Even the meekness and gentility that characterize his mission does not help the Jewish leaders acknowledge him for what he really is. Thus, Israel, represented by its leadership, in the time of Jesus is as disobedient and rebellious to God as their forefathers were.

It is in response to this rebellion that Jesus declares the judgment of God primarily through the parabolic teaching. The parables provide an explanation for the unresponsiveness of contemporary Israel to his authoritative teaching of God's word and his manifestation of God's power through the healing miracles he performed.¹⁷³ We have already noted in our discussion of the textual character of this fulfilment quotation that a parable in the Semitic

¹⁷¹ For a thorough discussion of this covenant, see Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, pp. 229-269.

¹⁷² Dahood, *Psalms II 51-100*, p. 239.

¹⁷³ Hare, *Matthew*, p. 147.

sense of a *māshāl* denotes some hidden truth which must be revealed in order to be comprehended. We also noted in the same section that both the psalmist (or the prophet as the evangelist calls him, cf. II Chron 29:30) and the evangelist hold that the truth, though old and already in existence, can only be known through revelation. This is why the Psalmist calls that truth the “dark things of old” (*hîdôt minnî-qedem*) and the evangelist calls it *kekrymmena* (hidden things). Jesus finds the parabolic form an appropriate method for teaching God’s truth, God’s judgment to the rebellious generation of God’s people, Israel.

The parabolic form of teaching God’s truth or judgment has a unique advantage in that it suits better the divine purposes of bringing judgment, but at the same time showing God’s gracious love and forgiving mercies. As exemplified in the parabolic Psalm 78 from which the evangelist draws the present fulfilment quotation, this method serves a dual purpose. It conceals the truth to the hard hearted but reveals it to the repentant. Psalm 78 (LXX 77) communicates God’s saving power and unfailing love to those who repented, though temporarily. At the same time, it communicates the wrath of God to those who refuse to acknowledge the manifestation of his glorious power in the miracles he performs and his gracious love in the tender care and guidance he provides. Thus, through the parabolic form, God communicates simultaneously both his wrath and his grace.

In a similar fashion, Jesus proclaims the judgment of God to the rebellious generation of the Israel of his day in order to both conceal and reveal the truth. In the face of the proclamation of the judgment of God, the Messianic Community of Israel gets divided. While others reject the truth, others receive it with faith. The structure of Matthew 13 reflects this intended purpose.¹⁷⁴ In the first half of the chapter, vv. 1-33, the evangelist reports parables that Jesus delivered to the crowds who simply did not understand them (v. 11). The crowd in this section well represents those who are not committed to a personal companionship with Jesus. In the last half, vv. 36-52, the evangelist presents the disciples of Jesus as having understood the parables, and only in exceptional cases do they ask for more details as in the present case regarding the meaning of the “parable of the tares of the field” (v. 36).

But this divine concealment of the truth to some does not mean that the object of the parables is to teach “predestination in its hardest sense, dooming the poor misguided soul to hopelessness forever.”¹⁷⁵ There is always an intention to reveal even behind the apparent concealment of the truth carried through the parabolic dress. The simple – common -life story form of the parable makes it memorable and easy to be remembered and reflected upon. This offers the listeners the gracious advantage of having to reflect on the parable repeatedly until their hearts are ready to accept the truth hidden in that parable when it crosses their mind. This is not the case with the truth that is presented directly like the “Sermon on the Mount” in

¹⁷⁴ Edward Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, London: SPCK, 1976, p. 308.

activities of God. The only distinctive factor between the two settings is that while in the Old Testament God reveals himself directly through his glorious power and gracious love, in the gospel setting, God reveals his power and love through his Servant/Son. Jesus himself, as the Messiah, embodies the mysteries of God in his person. He is himself the revealed truth of God.

Through this fulfilment quotation, the evangelist defines a specific method of Jesus' teaching as he carries out his mission. The role of the parabolic method in reflecting the nature of Jesus' mission, and the uniqueness of his parables has already been noted.

It is again very unlikely that the evangelist could apply the present fulfilment quotation to Jesus and his mission in the manner he has done without a thorough reflection of its Old Testament background. His application reflect diligent study and thoughtful reflection of Psalm 78 in its Old Testament Context.

B. Exegetical – Theological Analysis of the Fulfilment Quotations in the Passion Narrative

With Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the period of his formal passion has come. It has been already shown in the preceding fulfilment quotations that largely define his Galilean mission that the element of suffering, hence, passion, was always present in his ministry. Even when, *prima facie*, his authoritative word of preaching, teaching or healing were the focus, his passion always underlined the purpose of his ministry. The totality of his earlier ministry in a sense anticipated his final passion in Jerusalem leading to his death on the cross. The final passion thus long awaited begins here with his physical entry into the city of Jerusalem. It is, indeed, the events of the passion week that form the central message of the Gospel, namely, his death on the cross and his resurrection. This section focuses on those fulfilment quotations that are found in the passion narrative of the gospel. These are Matt 21:4-5 and Matt 27:9-10.

1. The Fulfilment Quotation in Matt 21:4-5

Say to Daughter of Zion

Behold your king is coming to you

Gentle and mounted on a donkey

Even upon a colt, the foal of a luggage animal.

The fulfilment quotation here combines two different prophetic texts. The first line, “Say to Daughter of Zion” (*Eipate tē thygatri Siōn*) is reminiscent of the LXX of Isa 62:11 which it follows at this point word for word. Both the LXX and the evangelist here offers a natural rendering of the Hebrew (*‘imrû lebat – Tsiyôn*). In Hebrew, v.11 begins with “Behold, the Lord has proclaimed (*hishmîa’*).” The word *hishmîa’* is a technical term for the proclamation of the message of salvation.

Lines two and three of the evangelist largely agree with LXX text of Zech 9:9, almost word for word. Line two has “Behold, your King is coming to you” (*Idou, ho Basileus sou erchetai soi*). At this point, the evangelist omits two important adjectives found in both the LXX and the Hebrew of Zech 9:9 (LXX: *dikaïos kai sōdzōn autos* = “He is righteous and victorious (lit. brings salvation).” Hebrew original: *tsadîq wenôsha’ hû’* = “righteous and victorious (saving) is he”). The word *nôshā’* here is in a passive form.¹⁸⁰ The word occurs in the active form in Zeph 3:17.¹⁸¹

Despite the omission, however, the idea of riding to victory is not missing (cf. Ps 45:4; Rev 6:2; 17:14).

Line three corresponds to the LXX, except for the final word *hypodzygion* (luggage animal).¹⁸² The evangelist has *onon* at this point instead of the LXX *hypodzygion*. Here the evangelist is closer to the Hebrew in describing the animal as “a donkey” (i.e. *onon*). The LXX describes it as “a luggage animal” (i.e. *hypodzygion*).

The evangelist’s final line: *epi onon kai epi pōlon huion hypodzygiou* looks like a translation of the Hebrew *‘al-hamôr we‘al – ‘ayir ben – ‘atonôt* (i.e. on an ass even on a colt, the son of a she-ass), with adaptation of the words of the LXX. In this line, the evangelist, like the Hebrew but unlike the LXX describes the animal as “a colt, the foal of a luggage – animal.” The LXX here has *epi hypodzygion* i.e. “on a luggage-animal.”

Most scholars have generally accepted the view that the evangelist has presented Jesus as sitting on two animals at the same time in the evangelist’s attempt to see a literal fulfilment of Zech 9:9. On this account, some have charged the evangelist with twisting the scriptures. It is often argued that the evangelist deliberately altered the gospel narrative in order to serve his

¹⁸⁰ J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1939, reprint 1955, p.311.

¹⁸¹ Scholars have found that the theological concepts in Zech 9:9 have their background in earlier prophecy. See Carroll Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope, A Commentary on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah*, International Theological Commentary, Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans + Edinburgh: Handsel, 1988, pp. 123-25.

¹⁸² Stephen W. Paine, *Beginning Greek, A Functional Approach*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 321.

interests in literal fulfilment of Scripture.¹⁸³ The difficulty is caused by the lexical prefix *we* in the clause *we'al – 'ayir* translated in the LXX and the New Testament Greek by the conjunction *kai*. In the English versions, it is often rendered by the coordinate conjunction “and”. The force of this conjunction has led most scholars to see two animals in the Zechariah text on which the king mounts, and to see the evangelist as portraying the same picture with Jesus riding on both animals simultaneously.

It is, however, not often recognized that the prefix *we* can also be legitimately rendered as “even” instead of “and”. Since the animals in Zech 9:9 are named in a context of Hebrew parallelism, the real meaning may as well be that the humble king comes riding a young donkey, probably not used for a similar purpose before. It is hard to see the humble king riding on both of the named animals here. The evangelist also employs a parallelism here. He does not see Jesus riding on the two animals as it is often suggested. Rather, he employs a parallelism here to emphasize that Jesus mounts on a young donkey, probably not used for a similar purpose before. This meaning comes out clearly when the *we* prefix and the *kai* conjunction are understood in the sense of “even” not “and”.

Further the word *autōn* (i.e. “them”) appears twice in Matt 21:7. The first is a reference to the animals. The clothes are put on “them”, i.e., the two animals. But the second “them” does not refer to the animals. Its closest antecedent is not *tēn onon kai ton pōlon* (“the ass and the colt”). Rather it is *ta himatia* (“the garments”). The meaning is that Jesus sat not on the two animals but on the garments. Obviously, he could only physically sit on the garments put on one of the two animals. Both the prophet and the evangelist suggest that the humble king sat on the young animal. The evangelist speaks of bringing two animals to Jesus, over against Mark (11:2) and Luke (19:30). But whatever he says about them through his parallelism, he does not say that Jesus sat on both animals.¹⁸⁴

From the textual character of this fulfilment quotation, it would appear that the evangelist is responsible for its formation. While translating from the Hebrew, he feels free to adopt the LXX rendering where that serves his purpose. For instance, he follows the LXX in rendering the Hebrew *rokēb* (“riding”) with *epibebēkōs* (“mounted”), but renders the Hebrew *hamor* (“an ass”) as *onon* (“donkey”) instead of the more general term, *hypodzygion* (“a pack-animal”) which the LXX uses. This shows that the evangelist was not simply copying from or following the translation of a particular tradition. Rather, he was working out his own text based on the older traditions, especially the Hebrew text.

¹⁸³ For this position, see S.V.M. McCasland, “Matthew Twists the Scriptures,” *Journal of Biblical Studies Literature* (June 1961), p.145.

¹⁸⁴ For a similar view, see Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 764. Also R.G.V. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1961, p. 198.

b. *The Historical Context of Isa 62:11 and Zech 9:9*

It is generally agreed that the final eleven chapters of the Book of Isaiah were written by a disciple of the so-called Second Isaiah, the writer of chapters 40-55 of the same book. Consequently, these chapters are usually referred to as Third Isaiah.¹⁸⁵ The historical situation presupposed in this book of Isaiah is that of the post exilic period. The people have returned from Babylonian exile and are in Jerusalem where they face the difficulties of the restoration. The social-economic conditions that obtain are clearly reflected in the Book of Haggai. Only the well-to-do among the returnees are able to build good houses and live comfortably in Jerusalem (Hag 1:4). However, the majority who are relatively poor face great hardships. After staying idle for almost half a century, the land becomes unproductive and renders farming futile. Frequent droughts and famine aggravate the situation (1:10, 11). Those who are employed in various sectors of business receive very low wages (1:16). These social and economic difficulties probably account for the failure to embark on a Temple building project as soon as possible following the return. In addition, there are political factors which include the problem of Samaritan hostility.¹⁸⁶

Thus the social, economic, political and religious life looks so bleak that the people begin to question the reality of the promises of God as especially prophesied by Second Isaiah. The promises of salvation do not appear to be fulfilled in the hard reality of post-exilic life. To many, it seemed that the judgment of God or at least its effects are still upon them. Indeed, prophet Haggai attributes these difficulties to the failure of the restored community to build the Temple. This puts Isa 62:11 in a context of divine judgment.

Isaiah 60-62 is a single prophetic complex uttered in response to community lament. Isaiah 60 is a response to the communal lament because of their enemies. The prophetic response was that these nations would be subdued and would come to Zion to worship Yahweh. Isaiah 61 is a response to a communal lament for the shame that the restored community was put in through their difficulties. The prophetic response was that Yahweh would restore Zion to her former glory. Isaiah 62 is a prophetic response to the charge that God has forsaken his people.

¹⁸⁵ For a recent discussion on the problem of the unity of Isaiah, see Walter Brueggemann, "Unity and Dynamic in the Isaiah tradition," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (1984), pp. 89-107; Ronald E. Clements, "The Unity of The Book of Isaiah", *Interpretation* 36 (1982), pp. 117-29. Also Ronald E. Clements, "Beyond Tradition-History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah's Themes", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31 (1985), pp. 95-113. For a canonical approach to the problem, see Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, pp. 325-38.

¹⁸⁶ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, pp. 510-20; P.R. Ackroyd, "Haggai", in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, pp. 643, 644.

To this the prophetic response was that God will turn afresh to Zion and fulfil all the promises he made to her.¹⁸⁷

Isa 62:11, from which the evangelist draws the first line of his fulfilment quotation, is a final promise which Yahweh introduces with summons to go forth to all nations. The message that is to be proclaimed is that of salvation: "Say to the daughter of Zion" states the summons. And what is declared to Zion is "Behold, your salvation comes." Set against the background of an epiphany (cf. v. 1b and 60:1b), the word "salvation" in v. 11 must refer to God himself.

Westermann observes that: "This is one of the numerous passages in Trito-Isaiah where he speaks of the coming of salvation in words which properly refer to God's coming."¹⁸⁸ Thus the coming of salvation means the coming of God himself to Zion. The LXX has accordingly personified the Hebrew *yish 'ēk* (your salvation) and renders it as *sōtēr* (Saviour or Redeemer) instead of simply *sōteria* or *sōterias* (salvation).

Thus, in the context of communal lament, because of the difficult life that the post-exilic community experiences, Third Isaiah sees prophetic intercession for redemption as his central calling "to put God in remembrance" of his promised salvation.¹⁸⁹ This intercession will not cease, hence, giving Yahweh no rest until the prophecies that relate to Zion are ultimately fulfilled. In the meantime, the community still feels the sad effects of divine judgment upon them, the judgment that led their forefathers into exile.

The evangelist moves on in his fulfilment quotation to the prophecy of Zech 9:9. Here, in reference to the coming of the same salvation to Zion, the text specifically personifies the word "salvation" in the Hebrew original, replacing it with "king": "Behold, your king is coming" (Heb. *Malkēk*).

Although there is no great difference between the Isaianic text and that of Zechariah, the evangelist prefers the Zechariah text because it clearly sees the embodiment of salvation in the person of the Redeemer. The evangelist continues to quote Zech 9:9 because it further serves his theological purpose. It defines the character of the king and the manner of his arrival in Zion. Isa 62:11 stops at defining the gift of salvation that Yahweh brings. It does not proceed to define his character. The theological interest is simply on God's turning to his people.

¹⁸⁷ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, pp. 373, 374.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 375. Also George A.F. Knight, *The New Israel, A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 56-66*, International Theological Commentary, Edinburgh: Handsel + Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 19. p69.

¹⁸⁹ Douglas R. Jones, "Isaiah II and III," in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 533.

The wider context of Zech 9:9 also presents a picture of divine judgment. The overall theme of Zechariah 9 is to show the manner in which God's kingdom is to be created.¹⁹⁰ Zech 9:1-8 focuses on the international extent of Yahweh's sovereignty. It is an oracle of judgment and promise.¹⁹¹ Judgment is proclaimed against the cities and states of northern Israel (vv. 1-7), and a promise of salvation is given to Judah (v. 8). The oracle is delivered in an indicative mood and forms the basis for the assurance of salvation for Judah.

The oracle in 9:9-12 to which v. 9 belongs, is given in the imperative mood. Now that the redemption of Zion has been assured, Zion is herself challenged to repentance. Yahweh's immediate presence among his people provides ultimate ground for the imperative call to repentance at vv. 9, 12.

Yahweh is committed to peace and he himself takes the initiative in bringing salvation to Zion. His redemptive actions are based on the covenant relationship he established with Israel: "As for you also, by the blood of your covenant (*bedam berîṭēk*) I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit" (v. 11). This is a reference to the blood rite which ratified the covenant between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai (Exod 24:8). The language of "their God" (*Elohēhem*); "his people" (*'amô*) in v. 16 is further indication of this covenant relationship. Zion must return to her God (v. 12). The language of "return" in this verse is a reference to repentance unlike Isa 52:11; Zech 2:6-7 where the reference is to a physical return to Jerusalem.¹⁹²

Verses 12-16 focus on what Yahweh will do for his people in the course of bringing their salvation without the participation of any earthly king. Yahweh himself "will appear", "will trumpet" (v. 4), "will protect", "will save" (v. 15). The salvation of Zion will be an act of God's grace alone.

Verse 13 identifies the object of divine judgment. It is *Yāwān* (i.e. Greeks). While the historical background to this reference may be real conflict between the Greeks and the Persians¹⁹³, the prophet sees in this the eschatological Day of the Lord in which Yahweh engages himself in a cosmic conflict with the enemies of his people, here identified as *Yāwān* (v. 14). In that cosmic context, Yahweh acts as a military hero who fights for his people with great determination for victory (v. 15). In vv. 16-17, the imagery shifts from that of a military

¹⁹⁰ David, L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi, A Commentary*, Old Testament Library, London: SCM, 1995, p. 56.

¹⁹¹ P.R. Ackroyd, "Zechariah", in Black and Rowley (eds), in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 652.

¹⁹² Petersen, *Zech 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 61.

¹⁹³ Petersen suggests that the historical background to the reference to the Greeks as an object of divine judgment could be the Greek-Persian wars of 490, 480-79, 460 BC. These could have affected Syria-Palestine through the general Persian militarization of the region. Since Jewish interests sometimes

hero to that of a shepherd of Israel. By leading his people as a flock, God, like a shepherd, saves them.

In the last four verses, i.e., 14-17, the poem focuses on Yahweh's redemptive actions for his people. It should be noted, however, that the emphasis is on Yahweh himself as the sole actor. The role of the king mentioned in v. 9 is not preeminent. Yahweh himself takes up his role as a military hero and as a shepherd of Israel. This appears to suggest that the tradition here does not suggest an expectation for a reappearance of the monarchy. The role of the king falls into the background.¹⁹⁴ It is Yahweh himself who saves his people.

It is within this context that Zech 9:9 quoted by the evangelist falls. It is a context of divine judgment and promise. Yahweh himself brings judgment upon the enemies of his people, firstly identified as the cities and states of northern Israel (vv. 1-8), and secondly identified as *Yāwān* (v.13). Yahweh also promises salvation to his people on the basis of the covenant he established with Israel. The judgment and the promise become operational in a context of a cosmic struggle in which Yahweh himself acts as a military hero and a shepherd for his people.

In this context, v 9 appears to stand alone in offering an extraordinary definition of the manner in which Yahweh will bring this judgment and salvation to Zion. We have already noted that it defines the character of the king, the Redeemer, and the manner of his arrival in Zion. It has been suggested that the verse has its background in earlier prophecy with Zeph 3:14 and Zech 2:10, 13 as critically important textual forerunners.¹⁹⁵ It is clear that the reference to "king" in Zeph 3:14 and the surrounding context relates to Yahweh himself and not the Messiah.¹⁹⁶ The reference in Zech 2:10-13 is probably also to Yahweh's immediate presence.

However, it is generally agreed that Zech 9:9 is a reference to a human king, the Messiah. Some have suggested that the original reference was to Zerubbabel, a Persian governor in Judah but also a member of the Davidic royal house.¹⁹⁷ The argument that this verse is a description of a human king, the Messiah, is a weighty one.¹⁹⁸ This is evidently the way in

favoured the health of the Persian empire, Greek hostility against Persia was likely to be viewed as a hostility against Syria-Palestine itself. See *Ibid.*, p.63.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.57.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.57.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Also J.P. Hyatt, "Zephaniah" in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 642 who sees in this reference "the presence of Yahweh" and compares vv. 14-15 to the "Psalms of Yahweh's enthronement," eg. Pss 47, 48, 95-9.

¹⁹⁷ Michael Fallon, *The Winston Commentary on the Gospels*, Sydney: Winston, 1980, p. 316.

¹⁹⁸ Among those who argue for this position, Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 57, note 45 mentions Saebo, *Sacharja 9-14*; Mason, *The Use Earlier Biblical Material in Zechariah IX-XIV*, p. 88; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, p. 165; Rudolph, *Sacharja 9-14*; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, p. 320.

which the evangelist also understands the passage. The Messiah is here, in Zech 9:9, defined as “triumphant”, “victorious” and “humble.” The word rendered “triumphant” (Heb. *Tsaddîq* or Gr. *dikaïos*) actually means “righteous one” or the “just one” or “the one declared right or acquitted.” It refers to Yahweh’s justice toward himself and to his word by fulfilling all the divine promises in every respect.¹⁹⁹ The word rendered “victorious” is the Hebrew. *Nôshā’* i.e. “to save”. It is here in the passive form. Customarily, the word has received an active rendering in the Greek and other translations. According to the Hebrew, the Messianic king who brings salvation to Zion experiences Yahweh’s saving activity in himself. The king is himself the servant and follower of God. As he leads others, he is himself led along the way of righteousness and obedience filled with wisdom and the Spirit of God. He receives in himself the salvation he imparts to others.²⁰⁰

Thus, in the very process of saving others the Messianic king is himself saved. This means that the Messianic king identifies himself with both God and man through this attribute. Like Yahweh he brings salvation embodied in his own person²⁰¹. Like man, he himself experiences the salvation he brings to others, and is himself led and guided by the Spirit of God.

The king is also described as ‘humble’ (Heb ‘*ānî*). Although it may be difficult in the present context to press for a meaning of suffering and humiliation,²⁰² it is clear that this character is an exception to the royal imagery painted by the preceding qualities. It is however, generally taken that the word can mean “stricken”, “afflicted” and that it is also used in the general sense of humility. In this connection, the word is often used in the corporate sense. This is actually the way in which the word is used in prophetic texts that form a background to Zechariah’s use at this point. For instance, Zeph 3:12 employed the word “humble” to describe a group of an oppressed and lowly people: “I will also live in the midst of thee an afflicted (i.e. humble) and poor people.” This is a corporate reference to the oppressed and lowly people of Zion. The corporate usage of the word in reference to a suffering and humiliated people also appears in Isa 49:13; 51:21, 53:4, 54:11.

With such a prophetic background usage of the word “humble”, it is almost certain that the prophet Zechariah at 9:9 sees in the king’s act of riding a donkey as he entered Zion a self-

¹⁹⁹ B. Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, London: Samuel Bagster + New York: Harper, 1950, p. DCXL. Also Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p. 124; Ackroyd, “Zechariah”, in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, p. 652.

²⁰⁰ Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p. 124.

²⁰¹ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, pp. 57, 58 also observes that the king shares the two qualities of being “righteous” and “victorious” (i.e. “saving”) with God. He further observes that: “by connotation through allusion the author indicated that the arrival of this king should be celebrated in much the same way that Yahweh’s presence as king deserved accolade.”

²⁰² In the ancient Near East, donkeys or asses were a normal mount for royal princess who proceeded in a friendly and peaceful way through their territories. In this sense, mounting a donkey would not in itself connote any sense of suffering or humiliation, see Stuhlmueller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p. 25.

a prophet. The same feature is seen in the story of Saul and Samuel, when the prophet is able to tell the future king all about what will happen to him after he leaves... (I Sam 10:2-6) ... The story of the entry is composed with the same freedom of fancy.²⁰⁴

Beare here seems to suggest that the actual occurrence of the entry does not fit the picture that the evangelist presents. The event was itself unspectacular and passed unnoticed by both the disciples and the rest of the people. It was only after the resurrection that any theological significance was led into it. Then the evangelist composed the fanciful narrative that we now have before us. Thus Beare, here, claims that the narrative as it stands is an imaginative creation of the evangelist designed to "fulfill" the Zechariah prophecy. Clearly, Beare's view presupposes the theory of the Messianic Secret and takes certain form-critical assumptions relating to the origins of the gospels for granted. However, in modern critical scholarship the theory of the Messianic Secret is largely abandoned²⁰⁵ and certain form-critical assumptions previously taken for granted are critically questioned. Consequently, the entry, as presented by the evangelist, has become once more an issue worth of rigorous theological investigation. The present study proceeds from this perspective.

It has been noted earlier that the wider contexts of both Isa 62:11 and Zech 9:9 concern divine judgment to the world and a promise of salvation to Zion. Yahweh was to bring both of these in person. Zech 9:9 puts this eschatological event into a Messianic perspective. The judgment and the promised salvation are to be realised through the person of the Messianic king. The day of the Lord becomes the eschatological day of the Messiah.

Similarly, the evangelist employs a fulfilment quotation in a Matthean context characterized by the atmosphere of divine judgment and promise. Jesus' extraordinary entry into Jerusalem is seen by the evangelist as a final challenge to the people of Zion.²⁰⁶ They are for the last time offered the gracious privilege of being invited to repentance. According to Zecharian prophecy, the promise of salvation to Zion was an act of divine grace based on the covenant relationship which Israel enjoyed. The Messianic king was expected to bring this promise into practical effect. However, the Messiah finds that the covenant is not honoured by Israel. Consequently, Israel is condemned for her unproductiveness. The fig tree in Matt 21:19 offers this lesson. Judgment is further noted in Jesus' condemnation of the Temple activities. The Temple was to be vindicated by the Messiah (Zech 6:13), but now it has become an object of his judgment (Matt 21:12). In overturning the tables in the Temple court, Jesus proclaims judgment over the Temple system. Instead of holding the light of true religion and worship to the world, the system has become an instrument for furthering nationalistic

redefine the character of the divine king."

²⁰⁴ Beare, *Matthew*, p. 414.

²⁰⁵ For a critical discussion of this theory, see Hendriksen, *Matthew*, pp. 60, 61.

²⁰⁶ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. 253.

interest. Instead of being used as a tool for the proclamation of the will of God, and the declaration of his loving presence to the nations, Israel keeps these blessings to herself.²⁰⁷

While Jesus enters as a royal king and as an eschatological Davidic Messiah, the residents of Jerusalem fail to recognize him for what he is. The Messiah then brings salvation to those who recognize his Messiahship. To the city of Jerusalem and its leaders, however, Jesus is simply a "prophet" (v. 11, chapters 23, 24) of its eschatological judgment.²⁰⁸ The city expresses final rejection of its eschatological king through the crucifixion. The crucifixion of the Messiah is an ultimate expression of rejection which consequently vindicates divine judgment upon Zion itself.²⁰⁹

But the manner of the Messiah's entry into Jerusalem was primarily intended to bring salvation to Zion. It was a supreme expression of God's covenant love for his people. In the Isaianic and Zecharian contexts, the single act of Yahweh's visitation, through the Messianic king, was intended to work out judgment and condemnation to the enemies of Israel, but salvation to Israel herself. It was only after Israel's failure to maintain its covenant relationship with God that the judgment intended for her enemies actually fell upon her. This is also the case with Jesus Messiah. The good news he brings to Zion only becomes a message of her condemnation after it is rejected. Initially, Jesus enters the city as a Redeemer of God's people. He brings God's salvation in his own person. Accordingly, he enters the city not as a militant Messiah of the popular expectations but as a peaceful and gentle king of the prophetic word. It is this peaceful and humble approach to the work of establishing the kingdom of God that primarily concerns the evangelist's application of the fulfilment quotation at this point. Through this quotation, the evangelist defines the peaceful and gentle character of Jesus' Messianic mission.

That he who brings salvation to Zion is the meek and gentle Jesus is significantly shown by what the evangelist does not say. In the discussion on the textual character of the fulfilment quotation, it has been noted that the evangelist omits from the Zecharian prophecy the clause "triumph and victorious is he." It has been argued earlier that the two adjectives contained in the clause do have a great theological significance. By omitting these two adjectives, the evangelist reveals his primary concern with the humility and the meekness of the peaceful king.²¹⁰ That the evangelist knew the theological significance of these two adjectives is indicated in Matt 1:21 where one of them is used to describe Jesus' mission on earth. Jesus came to "save" his people. The word "save" is the same as the word "victorious" in the omitted phrase.

²⁰⁷ Fallon, *The Winston Commentary on the Gospels*, p. 318.

²⁰⁸ Trilling, *Matthew*, p. 376.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.373.

²¹⁰ Also Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 764; Harrington, *Matthew*, pp. 293, 295; Meier, *Matthew*, p. 233.

We also noted that the word “triumphant” in the phrase actually means ‘the just one.’ God is the “just one” in the sense that he is faithful to his own will and that he brings that will faithfully into operation, and thus ensuring successful actualization of his works – hence the word “triumphant.” This again applies favorably to Jesus who successfully carries out God’s will through an ultimate act of obedience to God, an obedience which inevitably led him to the cross. The LXX makes the meaning of the two omitted adjectives very clear. It refers to the king as “just and saving” as well as “humble.”

The evangelist, however, skips these important words and rests his eyes on the third quality of the Messianic king, namely, that the Messianic king is humble. He finds this Messianic humility in Jesus who deliberately prepares a public proclamation of his Messiahship in deliberate fulfilment of the Isaianic and Zecharian prophecy (*contra* Beare).²¹¹ Jesus enters Zion mounting an ass as a Messianic king who brings salvation to Zion in accordance with the prophetic word of Zech 9:9. The fulfilment quotation here forms the linchpin to the discussion of the whole chapter.²¹² Although there are many other ordinary quotations that are fulfilled at various points in the narrative, they all serve to support the theme of humility and gentleness of the peaceful king.

In the ancient world, the triumphant kings on a conquest campaign normally rode high-spirited war steeds or prancing stallions as a symbol of their glorious and royal power. They pranced into a foreign capital as they publicly declared their possession of it along with the nation it represented. But Jesus enters Jerusalem, not as a glorious and powerful conqueror but as a meek, gentle, peaceful and gracious king. In this way he claims possession of the city, its Temple and its people in the manner predicted of the Messianic king. He comes to save, not to destroy; to strengthen the weak, not to oppress the poor; to heal the sick, not to condemn them as outcasts; to serve and not to be served. He comes not as a violent and terrorizing foreign conqueror, but as Jerusalem’s own loving and gracious king in whom the Messianic prophecies are fulfilled. He comes as the eschatological Son of David with a mission to establish the eschatological kingdom of God. He embodies the salvation of Zion in his own person. This is the major focus of the evangelist as we noted earlier.²¹³

The eschatological procession gives Jesus a red carpet treatment (v. 18). Branches of trees and people’s garments are laid along the road so that the donkey carrying the eschatological king would walk over them. The use of palm branches is usually associated with the joyful celebrations of the Feast of the Tabernacles and the Hanukkah (Lev 23:39-43; II Macc 10:7).

²¹¹ Trilling, *Matthew*, p. 373.

²¹² Meier, *Matthew*, p. 232 similarly observes that “the whole story must... be read from its theological centre, the fulfilment quotation in vv. 4-5.”

But in I Macc 13:51, the palm branches are associated with a celebration for victory over the defeat of Israel's enemy. The throwing down of garments is associated with the proclamation of Jehu as king in II Kgs 9:13. Thus through the red carpet offer, Jesus is proclaimed as the eschatological king who conquers the enemies of Israel, and in that way save his people.

As the eschatological procession matches on into Jerusalem, Jesus is greeted by the Hosanna acclamation (v. 9) (Ps 118:25, 26), a customary way of greeting the Passover pilgrims as they arrived in Jerusalem. In the context, the greeting functions as a greeting of homage rather than a cry for help. Each pilgrim came in the name of Lord, "but this 'pilgrim' riding in is blessed beyond others. No one but the Son of David was to be welcomed with such hopes and expectations since no one else came in the name of the Lord as he did." (*contra* Beare).²¹⁴

As the crowds shout "Hosanna" to Jesus, the divine summons: "Tell the daughter of Zion" (Isa 62:11), "that your salvation comes" (Zech 9:9) unwittingly gets fulfilled. At the sight of the excited procession, the residents of Jerusalem become perplexed and ask who it is that enters the city in that manner. The evangelist tells us that "all the city was moved" (v. 10). The verb used here is *eseisthē*. It is a strong word which is also used to describe the effects of an earthquake (25:51). The evangelist emphasizes the eschatological effect of Jesus' entry. The residents of Jerusalem are told that it is "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee" (v. 11). The mention of "prophet" certainly recalls in their minds the Prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15, 18) who has now made his appearance in the form of a humble Messianic king. On the one hand, while being the eschatological Davidic Messiah, Jesus also fulfills the prophecy of Deuteronomy concerning the Prophet like Moses. On the other hand, the identification of Jesus as a prophet may only serve to conceal his true identity as the Davidic Messianic king to the Jerusalem residents because of their lack of faith in him.

According to the evangelist, the climax of the eschatological event is the cleansing of the Temple (21:12-17). The eschatological work of cleansing the Temple follows immediately upon the entry into the city, according to the evangelist, placing it at a climactic position within his entry narrative. For Mark, the cleansing event takes place on the following day (Mark 11:11-15). According to the evangelist, however, the Messianic king immediately moves on to the Temple area and passes judgment upon it. The whole system is condemned.

The religious leadership is condemned (v. 13) into a "den of robbers" (Jer 7:11). "To call the Temple a den of robbers is to judge it to be an institution seeking gain and gain is always

²¹³ Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 128; Fallon, *The Winston Commentary on the Gospels*, p. 317; Trilling, *Matthew*, pp. 372-75; Meier, *Matthew*, p. 232; Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 294; Hendrikson, *Matthew*, p. 760; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. 253.

²¹⁴ Trilling, *Matthew*, p. 374.

already embodied in his person. As one who saves, Jesus is vindicated by the power of the resurrection and is raised to glory at the right hand of God. In that glorified state Jesus receives cosmic powers to bring ultimate judgment and salvation to the world (28:18-20).

The manner in which the evangelist formulates the fulfilment quotation in 21:4-5 from Isa 62:11 and Zech 9:9 and his decision to quote more of the latter prophetic text, not only reflects a careful study of these quotations in their Old Testament setting, but also reveals an inspired reflection on the Christ-event. The claim that the evangelist simply follows the Marcan account and only appends fulfilment quotations to that text coupled with a few redactional changes falls far short from explaining the theological implications that the fulfilment quotations have. The way in which the present fulfilment quotation is used by the evangelist further supports the argument that he applies them to the Christ-event in full light of their Old Testament context.

2. *The fulfilment Quotation in Matt 27:9-10.*

9. And they took the thirty pieces of silver,

the price of the one that was valued,

whom they from the sons of Israel did price and

10. gave them for the field of the potter as the Lord directed me.

a. *Textual Observations*

This is the last fulfilment quotation in the gospel. It shares all the characteristic features of this special group of quotations in this gospel. The first problem one faces is that the evangelist says he is quoting from Jeremiah. But the text quoted is not found anywhere in that prophetic book. Nowhere in Jeremiah is there a mention of "the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one that was valued..." It is actually a quotation from Zech 11:13, probably with allusions to the "field" and "potter" passages in Jeremiah (i.e. Jer 18:1-12; 19:1-13; 32:6-9).²¹⁸

In Zech 11:12:13 we read:

And I said to them, 'If (it is) good in your eyes, give me my wages; but if not, let it go.'

So they weighed for my wages thirty shekels of silver. Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' the splendid price at which I was valued by them. And I took the thirty (pieces of) silver and threw it to the potter in the house of the Lord.

²¹⁸ For a critical discussion of some theories on the problem, see *Ibid.*, pp. 947, 948 especially note 870.

The text as quoted by the evangelist is significantly different from the LXX. A comparative study of the Hebrew original suggests that the evangelist has the Hebrew text in mind but quotes from memory. The clause "the price of the one that was valued, whom they from the sons of Israel did price" appears to be a loose translation of "the splendid price at which I was valued by them" in the Hebrew. The clause "And gave them for the field of the potter" is a loose translation of "and threw it... to the potter." The idea of "field" here is a contribution from the evangelist. The last clause in the evangelist's quotation, "as the Lord directed me" is a loose translation of the first clause in the Hebrew text, "and the Lord said to me."

In the evangelist's text, the reading *edōkan* (2nd aorist, third person plural of *didomai* = to give) does not fit the context well. The first person of the original Hebrew and the first person in the clause "as the Lord directed me (*moi*) suggest that *edōka* (2nd aorist, first person singular) would be a better reading.

But a major hermeneutical problem surrounds the variants *'ōtsar* ("treasury") and *yōtsēr* ("potter"). The Hebrew of Zech 11:13 has "potter." Since the time of C.C. Torrey, who argued for the existence of furnaces for burning offerings and smelting coins at the temples of the ancient world, most scholars have in the past, favored the variant "potter"²¹⁹ of the Hebrew original. This view is, however, losing ground in current scholarship. Most scholars suspect interpolation or wordplay in the Hebrew original (MT) and have adopted the Syriac reading which has "treasury".²²⁰

The latter view is probably to be favoured. The word "treasury" is directly concerned with money and was, obviously, an integral part of the Temple. In the context of Zechariah, the thirty pieces of silver could not be returned to the treasury for it had been used as payment for a despised labour of a prophet. It is, indeed, an equivalent of the price of a slave. But the "potter" rendering would be free of this connotation. The evangelist would also find the "potter" rendering more appropriate. He is already thinking of the potter's field which was bought by the Sanhedrin using the money that Judas returned. Again this money could traditionally not be put back into the treasury. It was "blood money."²²¹ However, the way in which the evangelist alludes to both words in the context (vv. 6, 7) seems to suggest that the evangelist was aware of the background to the Syriac tradition.²²²

²¹⁹ C.C. Torrey, "The foundry of the Second Temple at Jerusalem," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 55 (1936), pp. 247-60 for a discussion of this theory.

²²⁰ Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 368; Beare, *Matthew*, p. 525; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. 340; StuhlmueLLer, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p. 140; Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 87.

²²¹ For a similar view, see Allen, *Matthew*, p. 288.

²²² Beare, *Matthew*, p. 525; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 288.

It is not possible to identify the particular text or texts from Jeremiah which the evangelist alludes to. But the mention of the buying of the field of a potter suggests an allusion to the "field" (Jer 32:1-15) and "potter" (Jer 18:12; 19:1-13) passages in that prophetic book.²²³

Probably the most significant observation that can be made here is the fact that the fulfilment quotation in both the Zecharian and gospel contexts focuses on the treacherous rejection of the prophet (and the Messiah in the gospel) reflected in the low value that is placed on him.²²⁴ The focus is not on the death of Judas nor is it on the potter's field his money buys. The focus is Messianic or Christological. It emphasizes the leaders' responsibility for Jesus' death. The shepherd of Israel receives as wages from the rulers of the people a paltry sum of money. This symbolizes ultimate rejection of the prophet or Messiah by his own people.

This understanding, of course, depends on our assessment of the "thirty pieces of silver." Some have argued that the "thirty pieces of silver" was just an appropriate payment. It was "no mean sum."²²⁵

The Biblical texts mostly used in this discussion are Exod. 21:32 and Neh 5:15. It is important to note that in both of these texts the noun *shekel* is used. However, in Zech 11:12, the word takes the form of a verb and simply means "to weigh out", "to measure." This means that Zech 11:12 leaves the denomination of payment indeterminate.

It is, however, generally accepted that the phrase refers to an insignificant amount: "In sum the expression 'thirty pieces of silver' should be understood as an insultingly low wage."²²⁶ Fallon observes that the Jewish leaders "insulted God by offering his prophet the price of a slave... for wages."²²⁷ Petersen reports Erica Reiner's observation that in the Sumerian poem of "Gilgamesh and the Huluppu tree" the phrase "thirty shekels" expresses a trifling or minimal amount. Petersen also reports a similar finding made by Lipinski who studied the

²²³ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 948, thinks that Jeremiah 19 is the only source for the evangelist's allusive reflection. Many, however, see in addition to Jeremiah 19 elements of Jeremiah 18 and 32 in the evangelist's quotation. See Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 386; Meier, *Matthew*, p. 339. Beare, *Matthew*, p. 525, on the other hand, finds that the whole question of allusions to the Book of Jeremiah (18:2; 32:9) "is completely irrelevant in this Matthean context." Beare's view is critically discussed later in this study.

²²⁴ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 948 sees the focus of the quotation on the suicide of the traitor and the purchase of the field with his money. Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 387, sees it in the fulfilment of scripture in Judas' death and the shameful behaviour of the chief priests.

²²⁵ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, An Introduction and Commentary*, London: Tyndale, 1972, p. 184 holds this view.

²²⁶ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, pp. 96, 97.

²²⁷ Fallon, *The Winston Commentary on the Gospels*, p. 415. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 160 sees the incident as part of the process of "a public ritual of humiliation" for Jesus.

Akkadian texts from Tell el Amarna.²²⁸ From these observations, it may be concluded that the expression in the ancient Near East meant an insignificant sum of money. It is the latter understanding of this phrase that is adopted in this study.

This textual study of the fulfilment quotation has shown that this quotation, like the other fulfilment quotations discussed in this study, is the evangelist's own loose translation of the Hebrew, possibly, quoted from memory. It has also shown that the evangelist alludes to certain passages in the Book of Jeremiah in addition to his loose quotation of Zech 11:13. It has also shown that the focus of the fulfilment quotation here is not Judas and the use to which the money that was paid to him was put. Rather, it focuses on the humiliation and rejection of the Prophet-Shepherd of Israel at the hands of his own people which is partly expressed through the insulting wage or price they set for his betrayal.

b. The Historical Context of Zech 11:13 and Jeremiah 18, 19, 32.

We have already noted in our discussion of the previous fulfilment quotation partly drawn from Zech 9:9 that Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai. Both prophesied during the post-exilic period. The process of restoration was beset with many difficulties. Only the well-to-do could live comfortably. The majority poor experienced severe difficulties. The land had become unproductive. Wages were very low and life was generally difficult. Judah was still under the Persian control although it was given freedom to run its own affairs under a Persian governor.

Zecharian prophecy falls within this historical context.²²⁹ Zechariah is generally difficult to interpret. His oracles are quite enigmatic. Zechariah 11 is not an exception from this. Despite this, however, the general message of the prophet is reasonably clear. In the context of Zechariah 9-14, chapter 11 reflects human failure set in a larger context in which divine action ushers in the eschatological age. The prophet sees the collapse of world powers before the humble and peaceful king. Yahweh leads his people through the darkness of depression

²²⁸ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, pp. 96, 97.

²²⁹ Many have seen *Zechariah 9-14* as a separate book from *Zechariah 1-8*. Linguistic and stylistic features have been used to support this view, for instance, Hinckley G. Mitchell et al., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Jonah*, ICC, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912, pp. 232-259. But these are capable of a satisfactory explanation, and there are points of contact between the two sections. We may note, here, with Ackroyd, "Zechariah", in *Peake's Commentary*, p. 651 that "the divine protection of 9:8 resembles that of 2:5; the wording of the commands to the prophet in 11:4, 13, 15 is not unlike that of visions in 1-6, and perhaps more particularly of 6:9-14. More evidently, too, the whole emphasis on divine deliverance and the age of salvation provides close contacts, though the distinction must be observed between the immediacy of the promises of the new age in 1-8 (especially 7-8), linked to the rebuilding of the Temple, and the apocalyptic tone of 9-14." It appears that there is no compelling reason to question the unity of the book.

and apostasy to the day of salvation (9:1-11:3). Human failures and sorrows even among God's people give way to eschatological victory on the Day of the Lord (chap 14).

Whatever might be the vernal practices associated with the religious leaders (10:1-2; 11:5-6), the prophecy closes at a joyous note with the glorious celebration of a universal Feast of the Tabernacles. Thus, although chap. 11 ends with the rejection of the prophet (v. 17), the prophecy as a whole concludes with an optimistic note. Yahweh leads history forward so that on the day of the Lord (11:11) history is brought to its final consummation before his victorious presence.²³⁰

When chapter 11 is taken by itself, the ideas of failure and rejection run through the whole of it like a thread. The rejection of the Messianic Shepherd-King is emphasized. The Lord commissions his Prophet-Shepherd-King to "feed the flock" (v. 4). The Prophet-Shepherd-King prepares for his task and adopts a covenantal approach. He selects two staffs (Heb. *Maqlôt*) and labels them "Grace" (Heb. *No'am*) and "Union" (Heb. *hoblîm*) (v. 7). He then engages with other shepherds and dismisses some of them, a move which earns him much disdain from them (v. 8). The Shepherd-King decides not to function as a shepherd to the flock. "In so doing he continues to act out Yahweh's command. This statement is not a rejection of the deity's mandate. Instead, it is a further working out of the Shepherd's task, which has already included the removal of several shepherds from their position."²³¹

The Prophet-Shepherd in a further symbolical act breaks one of his tools for effective shepherding, the staff "Grace." This symbolic act is a reference to "Israel's 'nullification' of the old covenant... making null and void the promises of blessing associated with the covenant relationship."²³²

While the purposes of God are reflected in names of the staffs: "grace" and "union", the disobedience of the people frustrates those purposes. Consequently, God does not pity them. Zechariah here sees a collapse of what Ezekiel had enunciated about the Good Shepherd. Yahweh himself would save (Ezek 34:9-16), and anoint one shepherd to feed them. He would establish a covenant of peace (v. 25) and bless them (vv. 26-31). In contrast, here in Zechariah 11 the Lord scatters (v. 6), and raises a shepherd who opposes them (v. 16). The covenant is nullified and doom and destruction show their ugly faces.

²³⁰ Also see Stuhlmuller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, pp. 133-35.

²³¹ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 95.

²³² Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenant*, pp. 284, 285 and note 15. Scholars have attempted to specify the covenant relationship that is referred to here. Suggestions include Israel's covenant (Otzen), universal eschatological judgment (Elliger), Abrahamic covenant (Mason) and the Noahic covenant between Yahweh and humanity (Petersen). But the cryptic nature of Zecharian prophecy makes this task extremely difficult and any certainty on this is probably unattainable although the reference to divine covenant is quite clear. See Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 95.

With this revision or termination of the divine promises regarding the protection of humanity, the Lord turns his sovereignty to those shepherds in charge of various nations (v.10).²³³ This act of covenantal abrogation receives an eschatological dimension in v. 11 where the shepherds who now receive ultimate political authority witness it for themselves and take it as an emphasis on their ultimate control.²³⁴

With his task at an end, the Prophet-Shepherd-King seeks payment for the work of shepherding he has undertaken. The demand for payment includes a quality judgment: "If it is good in your eyes give me my wages but if not, let it go" (v. 12). It is in response to this demand for his wages that the Prophet-Shepherd receives the "insulting low wage" of "thirty pieces of silver" discussed earlier.

In giving "thirty pieces of silver", an equivalent of the sum that would be given to an owner of a gored slave (Exod 21:32) for a price, the other shepherds express their rejection of the divinely commissioned Prophet-Shepherd-King. In responding to this insult, the Lord orders his Prophet-King to throw the insulting wage toward the temple treasury. Immediately, the prophet breaks the remaining staff "Union" (v.14). Petersen understands this staff as a symbolic reference to the Davidic covenant, a covenant which unifies all of God's people and in that way concern the very existence of God's people.²³⁵ This further abrogates the promises of blessing associated with Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord. What Gerhard von Rad observes about Jeremiah's view of Israel might also be said of Zechariah at this point: "... the old covenant is broken, and in Jeremiah's view Israel is altogether without one."²³⁶ Zechariah sees Israel's covenant with the Lord as totally terminated at this point.

But the consequences for their rejection of the anointed king are dire. The Lord has given over control of human affairs to shepherds and sheep-dealers who have rejected his anointed. They fail in their performance. The flock is doomed (vv. 4,5,7). To this failure, humanity responds with a curse in response to their plight (v.17) against the worthless shepherd(s). At this point, the situation is ripe for divine judgment.²³⁷

Similarly, the Jeremiah passages alluded in this fulfilment quotation appear in a context of divine judgment offering both the message of divine condemnation and divine promise.

There are three passages which form a possible background to certain elements in this fulfilment quotation as earlier indicated. These are Jer 18:1-12; 19:1-13; 32:1-15. The first reference concerns a potter's wheel, the second a potter's flask and the last a purchase of a

²³³ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p.96.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²³⁶ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. .II, London: SCM, 1965, p. 212.

²³⁷ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, p. 101. For a thorough discussion of Zechariah 11, see *Ibid.*, pp. 89-101. Stuhlmüller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, pp. 133-41. For a brief but helpful discussion, see Ackroyd, "Zechariah" in Black and Rowley (eds) in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 653.

field. In Jer 19:1-13 the prophet is commanded to buy a potter's (i.e. earthen) flask and go down, along with some priests and elders of the people, to the valley of Ben Hinnom near the entrance to the Potsherd Gate. There he is to break the vessel in a symbolic act and announce that the Lord will destroy the people and the city in the same manner. Following the symbolic act, the prophet repeats the proclamation of doom and destruction in the Temple court (v. 14, 15). The significance of such a symbolic act is well expressed by Bright who observes that it was no mere dramatic illustration of a point. It was rather viewed "as the actual setting in motion of Yahweh's destroying word."²³⁸ There is a wide scholarly consensus over the interpretation of this symbolic act. The irrevocability of divine judgment and destruction over the Temple, the city and its people, indeed over Judah as a whole, is the essence of the action.²³⁹ The sins of Judah have reached untold proportions.

Of the three passages, Jer 19:1-15 has much in common with the evangelist's context in Matt 27:1-10. Just as Judas in the gospel, Jerusalem in the prophetic text shades innocent blood (Jer 19:4; Matt 27:4). In both, the chief priests and the elders are preeminent (Jer 19:1; Matt 27:3, 6, 7). A potter is also mentioned (Jer 19:1, 11; Matt 27:7, 10). Traditionally, the Potter's field is located in Tophet, i.e., the Valley of Hinnom. In the prophetic text, the name of the valley is changed to "the Valley of Slaughter." This is almost identical with the "Field of Blood" known to both the evangelist and Luke (Jer 19:6; Matt 27:8; Acts 1:19). The Valley or the Field becomes a famous burial ground (Jer 19:11; Matt 27:7). Clearly, there is much in the evangelist's account that reflects this particular prophetic text.

In both texts, the theme of rejection stands out clearly. Just as the word of God and the prophet behind it are rejected, so is the gospel and the Messiah behind it. For the first time²⁴⁰ in his ministry, the prophet is physically persecuted and exposed to public shame by religious leaders. He is beaten and then put in stocks and placed at the Temple gate. The prophet resents this and correctly sees it as an affront to the majesty of God whose words he proclaims (Jer 20:1-6). In the gospel setting, Jesus the Messiah is also rejected by the religious leaders and no effort is spared in order to get him executed by the Roman officials (Matt 27:22, 27, 35).

²³⁸ John Bright, *Jeremiah*, The Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1965, p. 133.

²³⁹ For instance, H. Cunliffe-Jones, *The Book of Jeremiah, Introduction and Commentary*, London: SCM, 1960, p. 141, observes that "the breaking of the earthenware flask, a highly expensive water decanter which could not be repaired, symbolizes and helps to bring about the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah." Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah, A Commentary*, London: SCM, 1986, pp. 386, 387, also notes that "the breaking of the ceramic object is the destruction of the city and its people... The broken flask remains broken because the fired clay cannot be remoulded, so the action represents and anticipates the permanent destruction of the city... Hope is no longer on the agenda."

²⁴⁰ John Paterson, "Jeremiah", in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London: Routledge, 1962, reprint 1987, p. 549.

But Jeremiah 19 does not settle the whole problem. It does not state anywhere that Jeremiah actually bought a potters' field (Matt 27:10). Neither is this stated anywhere in the Old Testament. In search for further possible background texts to the fulfilment quotation, Jeremiah 18 and 32 have often been cited.

The preceding context to Jeremiah 18 reveal that the sin of Judah is so firmly rooted that it has reached indelible proportions. Consequently, divine judgment is now irrevocable: "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" (17:1). This method of writing was used to inscribe the most vital and permanent record (Job 19:24). The sins of Judah are inscribed in this way to be remembered by God, not to be atoned for (Lev 16:18). Yahweh will therefore send them into exile (17:2-4). Judah has served foreign gods, and to a foreign land, to the land of those gods, she must go (vv 10-13).

Jer 18:1-12 presents the prophet's visit to the potter's house. The Lord commands the prophet to visit this place and observe how the potter works with his clay. The prophet notices that the potter is ultimately free to make or remake the kind of vessel he wants. Then the Lord declares that he has ultimate freedom and sovereignty to deal with Judah the way he wills just as the potter has over the clay.

Some have found a great difficulty in the seemingly contradictory views of the deity toward the nations. In vv. 7-10, national changes bring about changes in the deity. The future of any nation is presented not as predestined by the sovereignty of the deity but as determined by its (the nation's) readiness to change. Here the flexibility of the divine attitude to nations and call for repentance are emphasized. Carrol puts it in this way:

A rather different understanding of the piece (i.e. vv 1-12) is provided by the inclusion of vv 7-10... These verses set out a general point about divine attitudes, using some Deuteronomistic terminology which removes the image of the potter's activity as a positive one and focuses on the clay as a substance with its own capacity for choosing what will happen to it... The theoretical nature of vv 7-10 with their image of a predictable deity contracting with nations and kingdoms a reciprocal agreement of corresponding and alternating plans for the future is idyllic and unreal... It is partly composed by the redactional variations on the motifs "pluck up", "break down", "destroy", "build" and "plant" which run through the construction of the book... In the latter stages of the employment of these motifs they are applied to nations and 18:7-10 belongs to this state (by this stage of the tradition Jeremiah has been transformed into a prophet to the nations, hence his message to them here).²⁴¹

Thus the difficulty here is that the flexibility of the divine attitude to the nations in vv. 7-10 contradicts the traditions which view divine judgment for Israel as irrevocable since turning for Israel is no longer a possibility. On the ground of this seeming contradiction, vv. 7-10 are

²⁴¹ Carrol, *Jeremiah*, pp. 372, 373.

charge of high treason (37:13). Verses 4-5 are also considered as an insertion. Although this prophecy against Zedekiah comes from the prophet (34:2-5), it is felt to be out of place here.²⁴⁹ Verses 6-15 which give an account of the deed are generally attributed to Jeremiah himself, while the rest of the chapter, i.e., vv. 16-44 is by some considered as a latter expansion. This section consists mainly of a prayer by Jeremiah and an answer from God. On this so-called later expansion, Cunliffe-Jones makes the following comment:

But some later thought that the obvious needed elucidation and that it could be done by means of a prayer and an answer from God. Most of both are irrelevant to Jeremiah's situation, and where relevant they tell us nothing that we do not know from vv 6-15. Jeremiah could not have been so lacking in perception.²⁵⁰

But it does not seem to be quiet necessary to attribute vv. 16-44 to a latter editor. The section does not seem to be as "irrelevant to Jeremiah's situation" as Cunliffe-Jones, among others, claim. We observe with Bright that: "Jeremiah's action in this regard was intended symbolically as an earnest of Yahweh's promise that normal life would one day be resumed in the land. This theme, which is made specific in v 15, is developed through the remainder of the chapter."²⁵¹ When verses 16-44 are taken as genuine, Jeremiah's prayer in vv. 16-25 seems to indicate that the prophet was unable to grasp the full meaning of the word that has come to him (v.15). This perfectly suits the situation of the prophet. With Judah facing an imminent invasion, destruction and possible exile from a super power, and with the historical demise of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel through an Assyrian exile more than a century earlier in 722 BC, neither history nor current situation would support any hope for a return. It was human enough for the prophet in these circumstances to doubt the reality of a future hope for Judah.

Further, the fourfold answer from the Lord in vv. 26-44 are in line with Jeremiah's other teachings.²⁵² It makes it clear that Yahweh, not the Babylonians, is Lord of history (v. 27). It also makes it clear that divine judgment for Judah is certain and irrevocable and that it will fall upon sinners (vv. 28-35). The impending divine judgment is, however, not to be an annihilation. It will be followed by a restoration in which normal life shall return (v.43). The destruction that preceded the restoration is, in fact, its guarantee (v.42). The reference to an

²⁴⁸ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 417.

²⁴⁹ Cunliffe-Jones, *The Book of Jeremiah*, p. 205.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁵¹ Bright, *Jeremiah*, p. 297.

²⁵² Paterson, "Jeremiah", in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 557.

everlasting covenant in v. 40 recalls the New Covenant of 31:31-34.²⁵³ Here the future hope for Judah based on her covenantal relationship finds a clear expression.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the whole of chap. 32 is a unit and that vv. 16-44 must be seen as its integral part. Its central message is that Judah will shortly go into exile in Babylon where there is only suffering, horror and death. But God will later restore her to the Promised Land, and all covenantal blessings will be renewed. The prophet's purchase of land, seen from this perspective, is an eschatological event in which that restoration is divinely assured (15). Yahweh has a future for the land of Judah.

Jeremiah 32 is set in a wider context which consists of prophecies of judgment and hope for redemption, namely, Jeremiah 26-35. Within that wider context chap 32 takes its place in a more immediate setting of 30:1-33:26, generally known as "The Little Book of Comfort."²⁵⁴ This section portrays the ultimate restoration of both Israel and Judah. It is the longest sustained passage in that prophetic book dealing with the future hope of the people of God. Chapter 32 contributes to this glorious picture of the future for the people of God.

Beare has strongly objected to the view that the evangelist makes a meaningful allusion to the Jeremiah passages in his fulfilment quotation:

It contains only two stray phrases from Jeremiah, viz, 18:2, 'go down to the potter's house' and 32:9 'I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my cousin, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver' (39:9, LXX). This is completely irrelevant in the Matthean context; there is nothing but the mention of a potter in the one passage, and of a field that is purchased with pieces of silver (shekels) in the other.²⁵⁵

It is significant here to note that Beare does not account for the many allusions that the evangelist in Matt 27:1-10 has to Jeremiah 19. Beare has limited himself to Jeremiah 18 and Jeremiah 32. But even in that case the ideas of "potter" in Jeremiah 18 and "field" in Jeremiah 32 are thematic in those chapters so that it is not surprising for them to live a deep impression on the mind of the evangelist. Further tradition appears to have connected the two ideas long before. Hendriksen has suggested that the term "potter's field" probably indicates a field from which potters (or a potter) used to get their (his) clay, but which had become depleted. Since it could no longer serve as a source for further supplies, it was offered for sale. The religious leaders then planned to turn this piece of land into a burial place.²⁵⁶

We have already noted in our discussion of Jeremiah 19 that tradition identifies the potter's field with the Valley of Hinnom. The existence of a parallel tradition in Acts 1:18-19 where it

²⁵³ For a thorough discussion of the New Covenant in Jer 32:31-34, see Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenant*, pp. 271-300.

²⁵⁴ Anderson, *The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 393.

²⁵⁵ Beare, *Matthew*, p. 525.

²⁵⁶ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 945.

is Judas who purchases the field and later dies on it, further supports the traditional connection between the two ideas. Although Acts 1:18-19 does not say that the field which Judas bought was formerly a potter's field, the possibility cannot be ruled out. The relationship between the ideas of "potter" and "field" in the evangelist's tradition appears to have deeper roots than can possibly be unraveled.

In this light, Beare's contention that Jeremiah 18 and 32 are "completely irrelevant in the Matthean context" loses its force. Even if there were no traditional linkages between the two ideas of 'field' and 'potter', the mere mention of them in these chapters, as Beare himself acknowledges, would be sufficient ground for the evangelist's allusion to them.

Thus our discussion here of Zech 9:9 and the Jeremiah passages indicates that all of them, in their varying degrees, made a theological contribution to the evangelist's formulation of the fulfilment quotation. This presupposes a meticulous study and much theological reflection of the Old Testament context of the passages quoted or alluded to.

c *The Theological Significance of the Fulfilment Quotation*

It is quite difficult to reconcile Luke's version of the betrayal found in Acts 1:18-19 with the one our evangelist records at 27:3-10. In Luke's tradition, it is Judas who buys the field and later dies violently on it. The field is later called "Field of Blood" because of Judas' blood shed there. In our evangelist's tradition, it is the Sanhedrin which buys the field, presumably, after Judas' suicide. The field is called the "Field of Blood" because it was bought with blood money, that is the money given in exchange for the shedding of Jesus' innocent blood.

However, in the evangelist's account, at least three facts relating to the gospel tradition on which the application of prophecy depends can be singled out. First, Judas had thrown thirty pieces of silver into the Temple. Secondly, the Sanhedrin refused to put this money back into the treasury. And, thirdly, the money he rejected was used for the purchase of a potter's field.²⁵⁷

There are several typological lines of thought between the prophetic contexts of the texts quoted or alluded to and the gospel situation on which the evangelist comments. We have noted that all the Old Testament contexts of the passages applied to the Christ-event speak of both divine judgment and promise of salvation. Zechariah 11 speaks of the treachery of those who were supposed to be the shepherds of the people. Not only do they betray their leadership roles, turning it into a personal career geared towards their own personal gain,²⁵⁸ but also

²⁵⁷ Allen, *Matthew*, p. 945.

²⁵⁸ Stuhlmüller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p. 135.

rejected the only person, the humble Prophet-Shepherd-King, commissioned to save them.²⁵⁹ The prophetic mission of the Shepherd-King is insultingly valued by the leaders of the people at thirty silver pieces, essentially a mere price of a slave gored to death (Exod 21:32). This is symbolic of the ultimate rejection and betrayal of the divinely commissioned Shepherd-King. At the Lord's command, the Prophet-King throws the thirty pieces of silver in the Temple.

The evangelist sees the outworking of this prophetic symbolic act in the passion of Jesus, the humble Prophet-Shepherd-King of the eschatological age. Jesus is also ultimately rejected by those who should have been the shepherds of Israel, i.e., the religious leaders of the people. His redemptive mission is also insultingly valued at thirty pieces of silver by the false shepherds of the people. The prophet's casting of the silver pieces at the Temple is seen by the evangelist as prophetic of the Sanhedrin's rejection of the proffered wages of Judas, and the giving of them for the potter's field. The throwing of the silver pieces back to the Temple in both the Old Testament and the gospel contexts emphasizes the responsibility of the leaders for the rejection and betrayal of the divinely commissioned Shepherd-King. It also anticipates divine judgment upon these leaders.²⁶⁰

Thus by referring to the prophetic symbolic act in Zecharian prophecy, the evangelist condemns the religious leaders for repeating the horrible sin of their predecessors, namely, their rejection and betrayal of the humble Shepherd-King, the Messiah. In the immediately preceding context (27:1-3), the Sanhedrin has just made a decision to get Jesus executed, and to effect that decision they have referred him to Pontius Pilate on charges of high treason. Stendahl, commenting on vv. 3-10, observes that: "By placing the account of the death of Judas at this point...Mt. indicates that he understands the decision of the Sanhedrin as the crucial one."²⁶¹

The natural consequence of the Sanhedrin's decision to reject and betray their divinely commissioned Shepherd-King, the Messiah, was to have Jesus pass through a series of "status degradation rituals"²⁶² which inevitably led to his crucifixion. The dreadful chorus of the religious leaders and their people as they cried out, "Let him be crucified" (27:22, 23) is an ultimate expression of their rejection of the Messiah.

The physical agony and mental torture as well as the public shame that accompanied crucifixion as a method of punishment in the ancient world has been well documented by

²⁵⁹ Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, pp. 96-97.

²⁶⁰ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, pp. 946, 947; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, pp. LXXII, 340; Allen, *Matthew*, p.287.

²⁶¹ Krister Stendahl, "Matthew", in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p.796.

²⁶² Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 159 define "social degradation ritual" as "a process of public recasting, relabeling, humiliating, and thus recategorizing a person as a social deviant. Such rituals express the moral indignation of the denouncers and often mock or denounce a person's former identity in such a way as to destroy it totally."

Hengel.²⁶³ Crucifixion in itself was “the most wretched of deaths.”²⁶⁴ To speak of the crucifixion of Jesus as the crucifixion of the Messiah and Son of God was not only insultingly offensive to the cultured man but also totally incomprehensible even to the man of limited intelligence:

A crucified messiah, son of God or God must have seemed a contradiction in terms to anyone, Jew, Greek, Roman or barbarian, asked to believe such a claim, and it will certainly have been thought offensive and foolish.²⁶⁵

The problem of the crucifixion of the Son of God has posed one of the greatest difficulties of the Christian faith not only to primitive Christianity²⁶⁶ but also to contemporary Christian faith. Hengel observes that “the theological reasoning of our time shows very clearly that the particular form of the death of Jesus, the man and the Messiah, represents a scandal which people would like to blunt, remove or domesticate in any way possible.”²⁶⁷ The humility and shameful cross of Jesus Messiah has left an indelible mark on the face of the Christian faith, a constant reminder of his suffering and rejection by his own covenant people. Left unenlightened by the prophetic word, the cross remains a strange constituent element of the Gospel itself.

In light of what we have seen so far relating to the evangelist’s approach to the use of Scriptures, namely, his meticulous study of passages he quotes and his studious attention to their wider context, it would not be a far-fetched idea to suggest that he may have seen the crucifixion of Jesus foretold in Zech 13:7:

²⁶³ Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8, quoting Josephus.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁶⁶ Paul the Apostle observes that the message of the cross is a “stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor 1:23). Several voices in antiquity support the apostle’s observation: Justin says: “They say that our madness consists in the fact that we put a crucified man in second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, the creator of the world” (*Apology* I, 13.4). Minucius Felix adds: “To say that their ceremonies centre on a man put to death for his crime and on the fatal wood of the cross... is to assign to these abandoned wretches sanctuaries which are appropriate to them... and the kind of worship they deserve” (*Octavius* 9:4). An oracle of Apollo given in response to a man’s inquiry on what to do to dissuade his wife from the Christian faith recorded by Porphyry and preserved by Augustine says: “Let her continue as she pleases, persisting in her vain delusions, and lamenting in song a god who died in delusion, who was condemned by judges whose verdict was just, and executed in the prime of life by the worst of deaths, a death bound with iron” (*Civitas Dei* 19:23)- Quoted in Hengel, *Crucifixion*, pp. 1, 3, 4. Hengel then concludes that the evidence “makes it clear that the death of Jesus on the cross was inevitably folly and scandal even for the early Christians... pagan opponents quite unjustly assert that Christians worship ‘a criminal and his cross’... No criminal, indeed no earthly being whatsoever deserves to be regarded as a god,” *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.90.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, says the LORD of hosts: Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn my hand upon the little ones²⁶⁸.

In this context of rejection, betrayal and divine judgment, Judas must be seen as one with the false shepherds. The whole scene "throws into high relief the infamy of one who had been called to shepherd the new Messianic community and had failed his calling."²⁶⁹ Further, the name "Field of Blood" given to the piece of land bought with the thirty pieces of silver bears "a continuing testimony against Judas, the priests and all who had agreed with them."²⁷⁰ In a mysterious way Judas becomes an uncalled -for instrument in the process of prophetic fulfilment: "In the suicide of the traitor and the purchase of a field with his blood money prophecy is again being fulfilled, and God's plan is being carried out."²⁷¹

But the wider context of Zech 11:13 and the Jeremiah passages alluded to do not only speak about rejection, treachery and divine judgment. They point forward to a new age marked by Yahweh's dramatic victory through his humble Messianic Shepherd-King over all his enemies and an establishment of the kingdom of God in which all covenantal blessings shall be renewed. While the context of the "potter" passages in Jeremiah 18 and 19 speak of imminent and inevitable divine judgment upon the people of God, the "field" passage in Jeremiah 32 is an assurance of salvation. In the midst of contemporary rejection, treachery and divine destruction in which the whole life and ministry of Jeremiah is set,²⁷² the prophet rises above the troubled waters of the contemporary situation and proclaims salvation. On the prophetic horizon beyond the contemporary clouds of suffering, Jeremiah sees a ray of hope. For the people of God who are to be scattered abroad imminently, especially in Babylon, will later be gathered back to the Promised Land to form a new eschatological community. Life will come back to normal and people will once again enjoy the fruits of a renewed covenant relationship with their God. This is the message of the "field" passage in Jeremiah 30-33, the so-called "The Little Book of Comfort." Israel and Judah will be ultimately restored to the joy of the covenant people and to the glory of Yahweh their God.

²⁶⁸ Many scholars have associated this utterance with the shepherd imagery of Zech 11:4-17, placing it immediately after the latter. Although we cannot be sure that the shepherd of Zech 13:7 is identical with that of Zechariah 11, it is probably inappropriate to conclude that the evangelist would not see them as identical. Some have preferred to treat as a separate shepherd imagery linked not to 11:4-17 but to 12:1-13. See Ackroyd, "Zechariah", in Black and Rowley (eds) *Peake's Commentary*, p. 654.

²⁶⁹ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. LXXII.

²⁷⁰ Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 946.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 948. Also Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 378.

²⁷² For discussion of Jeremiah's rejection as a prophet by his contemporaries including his relatives as well as leaders, see Paterson, "Jeremiah", in Black and Rowley (eds), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, pp. 537-539.

The same is the case with Zecharian prophecy. In Zechariah 11, there is no hope on the prophetic horizon. The chapter ends with the rejection of the prophet (v. 17). The emphasis lies on the rejection of the Prophet-Shepherd-King (vv. 12-13) and the lowly condition of the people or flock (vv. 7, 11). In vv. 7, 11, the LXX has "Canaanites." The original meaning of the term "Canaanites" was "merchants" or "traffickers" (Job 41:6; Prov 31:24; Zech 14:21). The translations that have "merchants" or "traffickers", like the RSV, are based on the LXX and a slight emendation of the Hebrew.²⁷³ The Hebrew, however, has 'aniyê hatso'n, literally "the poor of the flock." Following the Hebrew, the AKJV has "the poor", and the NIV has "the oppressed."

The wider context of Zechariah 11, however, has an overall momentum toward a victorious and happy conclusion. In Zechariah 11 the prophet presents the rejection, apparent failure and divine judgment as a prelude to Yahweh's final eschatological victory. Present rejection, suffering and divine judgment are a guarantee for future redemption (cf. Jer 32:42).

In Zech 12:1-14:21, the prophet portrays the eschatological siege of Jerusalem. The Messiah returns to inflict a crushing defeat on the enemies of Israel and to establish his kingdom. As the siege of Jerusalem takes its course (12:1-3; 14:1-2), Judah's enemies gain an initial and temporary victory (14:2). But the Lord sets up a defence for Jerusalem (14:3-4) and brings judgment upon nations (12:9; 14:3). Topographical changes take place in Judah, setting the conflict in an eschatological context (14:4-5). In the end, the Lord wins ultimate victory (14:9) and restores Jerusalem (14:11). Then, the new eschatological community which includes people from other nations celebrates the glorious Feast of Tabernacles (14:16-19). The Lord establishes ultimate holiness for Jerusalem and her people (14:20-21). Thus, God transforms victoriously the once devastated area with new life.

The evangelist, similarly, sees a typological relationship between this overall message of redemption and the Christ-event. Although the focus of his fulfilment quotation is the rejection, betrayal and suffering of Jesus Messiah,²⁷⁴ the evangelist, in drawing upon prophecy in an account of Jesus' suffering and death already anticipates Jesus' ultimate victory in the resurrection. For Jesus, the humiliation, sorrow, suffering and death which he experiences only guarantee a new life in a new age. They lead to a full and glorious life in

²⁷³ Stuhlmüller, *Rebuilding with Hope*, p 141.

²⁷⁴ Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990, pp. 112-122, especially 120, 122, also observes that the rejection of Jesus by Israel had a double effect. It was judgment upon Israel in the sense that the gospel would turn away from her to Gentiles who would be more responsive. In this way, Israel would lose her exclusive claim to be God's people. Israel's rejection was also a blessing, "a paradoxical moment of grace" because from Israel's failure would come the Christian mission to Gentiles, leading to the establishment of a new eschatological community, the catholic Church.

eternity. For Jesus, the passion only guarantees a glorious victory in the resurrection and his session at the Father's right hand.

As a victorious Messiah or Shepherd King, Jesus ultimately fulfills the role of Israel as a Servant-Shepherd-King rendering Yahweh's throne of grace accessible to all who through him enter into the new covenant. God finally vindicates his Servant-Shepherd-King by declaring him Son of God by his resurrection from the dead (Matt 28:6-7; Rom 1:4).

In and through the resurrected Son of God, the Kingdom of God has truly and finally come. To be with the Son (Matt 28:20) is to enter into the very presence of God, and this is what the kingdom of God is. The eschatological kingdom of God is now here with us.

It is, again, extremely difficult to imagine that the evangelist did not have a meaningful access to the wider prophetic context of Zech 11:13 and the Jeremiah passages he alludes to. Like the preceding fulfilment quotations, the present one reveals that the evangelist undertook meticulous study of the Old Testament background to his fulfilment quotations. It also reveals that he engaged himself in an intense theological reflection of the gospel tradition. His theological use of the fulfilment quotation at this point is then a fruit of much labour on his part. The theological richness of the fulfilment quotations as shown by closer examination of their Old Testament contexts and the manner in which the evangelist applies them to the Christ-event cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by a mere literary dependence on sources, with Marcan gospel prominent among them, as many would suppose.

C. Conclusion

This chapter reveals that the evangelist is responsible for the formulation of the mixed text-form of the fulfilment quotations in both ministry and passion narratives of the evangelist's gospel. Exegetical analysis of these quotations has consistently pointed to an independent construction by the evangelist with, especially, the Hebrew bible (our Old Testament) in the background, and some allusions to the LXX where that tradition would better serve his purpose.

The chapter also reveals that the redemptive mission of the Messiah essentially takes the form of suffering, rejection, humiliation and death which eventually lead to his glorification in the resurrection. It also shows that the Old Testament context of the fulfilment quotations used in the ministry-passion narrative section of the gospel provide the conceptual framework for the evangelist's understanding of these elements in the redemptive mission of the Messiah.

In this regard, crucial to the evangelist's understanding of the Christ-event are the imageries of the Suffering Servant of the Lord of Isaianic prophecy (Isa 42:1-4; 53:4) and the divinely commissioned but rejected Shepherd-King of Zecharian prophecy (Zech 9:9; 11:3).

According to these Messianic categories, the Messiah suffers rejection, humiliation and death before he is restored or raised to ultimate glory through divine vindication of his seemingly lowly and humble service. Through this humble service of the Servant-Shepherd-King, the eschatological kingdom of God finds its ultimate establishment in the world and begins to draw people from all nations around the world. Although in reality the Christ-event transcends²⁷⁵ these traditional categories of Messianic conception, they are instrumental for the evangelist's understanding of this essentially new and unparalleled event.

This chapter also shows that the thorough grasp of these categories and their theological application to the Christ-event presuppose a thorough understanding of their Old Testament context by the evangelist. This further presupposes meticulous study and intense theological reflection of those prophetic sections in preparation for their theological application to the Christ-event within the context of his gospel.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ In this sense, the Christ-event does not only fulfil prophecy but also critics it.

²⁷⁶ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, p. 42 rightly observes that "a doctrinaire insistence on source criticism tends to underestimate Matthew's abilities as a writer and the perceptual sensitivity of his intended audiences."

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The study leads to quite stimulating, if not provocative conclusions. Here, these can only be treated in a summary fashion. The study has revealed that biblical quotations were used theologically in ancient Judaism and early Christianity and that these provide a literary background to the evangelist's use of fulfilment quotations. The practice continued right into the early centuries of the Christian church. The evangelist, thus, falls within such a literary environment (chap 2).

The results have also shown that the evangelist formulated the fulfilment quotations himself for theological purposes, although it remains unclear whether he draws the variants from other textual traditions or whether they are his own textual contribution. The results also show that he applied them to the Christ-event not only in full awareness of their Old Testament contexts, but also taking into full account those prophetic contexts in his theological application (chaps. 3, 4). Hence, the overall results support the thesis of the present study. The fulfilment quotations in this gospel are applied theologically to the Christ-event by the evangelist, in light of their Old Testament contexts. This theological role is reflected in the way these Old Testament quotations are formulated, and in the manner in which they are used by the evangelist.

The study has also shown that the fulfilment quotations in the infancy narrative define the Person of Jesus as the Messiah who is both human and divine. Jesus is both Son of David and Son of God. It has also shown that the fulfilment quotations in the ministry and passion narratives define the redemptive work in terms of suffering, rejection, humiliation and death which, eventually lead to final victory and glory in the resurrection. It has also shown that the aspect of suffering characterized the whole of his life and ministry. Jesus as the Messiah takes the roles of the Servant of the Lord of Isaianic prophecy and the Shepherd-King of Zecharian prophecy. Thus, in general, the results reveal that the Old Testament prophetic contexts of the fulfilment quotations provide a conceptual framework for the evangelist's understanding of the nature of the Person of Jesus and the form of his redemptive mission. This in turn reflects a thorough grasp of the Old Testament prophetic contexts in which the Messianic categories he applies to Jesus originally appear (chaps. 3, 4).

These results from the research do have significant implications on the Matthean authorship and the Synoptic Problem in general. The evangelist's independence in the formulation of the fulfilment quotations and his distinctive theological application of these

quotations to the Christ-event point to the evangelist's freedom and independence as a writer as he brings to bear upon his theological reconstruction the raw materials of gospel tradition (oral or written) and prophecy. Thus, the results portray the evangelist as an independent theologian engaged in a theological discussion of the Person and work of Jesus as the Messiah in light of the prophetic word.

This sharply contradicts the popular scholarly opinion that the evangelist was primarily concerned with the needs of his community over against the Christ-event itself and with the construction of a Marcan-based theology over against an independent theological reconstruction using the gospel traditions and prophecy at his disposal. In this way the research puts the theory of Marcan priority¹ and the creation of the so-called Matthean

¹ The Two-Source hypothesis and its corollary of Marcan priority, taken for granted by most critical scholars for many years can no longer be accepted uncritically in our time. After an extensive study of the nature and development of the Marcan hypothesis in his *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*, Macon: Mercer University & Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980, Hans-Herbert Stoldt concludes that: "The Marcan Hypothesis for more than a hundred years almost universally regarded as the solution of the Synoptic Problem, is untenable (p.xv... We can state that the second Gospel does not possess priority over Matthew and Luke and was not their source. Therefore the result of our critical examination is that the Marcan hypothesis is false – false in its conception, execution and conclusion" (p. 221). In an introduction to Stoldt's book, William R Farmer observes that "There is little evidence for Marcan priority... Every attempt to resolve the issue of priority in open discussion... by appealing to redactional considerations, has thus far failed to produce critical consensus ... the Marcan hypothesis, in light of Stoldt's research, appears increasingly problematic" (p. xvii). Similarly, Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, observe that "The more critically the material in the three synoptic gospels is examined, the harder it is to determine precisely what – if any dependence there was of Matthew and Luke on Mark, or in what way – if at all Matthew or Luke were dependent on each other (p. XL1)... Mark and Matthew may represent two quite separate collections of tradition; it is only a failure to take tradition itself seriously that has driven many to assume the existence of almost a multitude of copies of written gospels on which the evangelist could exercise scissors and paste" (p. XLViii). In an unpublished article, "Christology", 2000, p. 39, note 65, Ulf Strohbahn observes that "Newer research gives credible evidence that the gospel of Matthew was written very early-around 60 AD. This would add a lot of credibility to Matthew's record, since many eyewitnesses would have still been alive and were able to confirm his gospel". Strohbahn bases this observation on the findings of Carsten P. Theide in his *Der Jesus Papyrus*, German edition, Luchterhand, 1996. In a personal communication to me, Strohbahn further noted that Theide's finding is all the more significant since Theide was not a confessing Christian at the time he published his study of this ancient Matthean Papyrus. His finding, therefore, cannot be said to have been coloured by any apologetic considerations. Thus his early dating of this Papyrus cannot be accounted for by any such considerations. See also Richard N. Ostling, "A Step Closer to Jesus?" *Time Magazine* (Amsterdam, 1995), p. 59. Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, (London: SCM, 1979) p. 71, opts for a qualified Marcan priority. He accepts Marcan priority provided that, that does not systematically guarantee relative antiquity of Marcan traditions over against those in Matthew, Luke and John; that it does not provide grounds for wholesale deductions as is often the case in critical scholarship; and that even when priority is established this does not in itself establish a superior claim to historicity: "To confuse relative antiquity vis-à-vis other traditions with superiority in the claim to historicity is to deny *a priori* that a tradition arising to correct or clarify an earlier tradition might do so in historically valid fashion." That there is a growing

community, based on it and the Two-Source hypothesis, into serious question. The results point to an early date for the Matthean authorship and a parallel development² of the gospel tradition reflected in the synoptic gospels, woven together like a piece of a string. In this view the differences in the synoptic tradition would be better accounted for by such factors as geographical, theological and literary differences, rather than by positing a very long time-lag between the writing of the gospels as the trend is in much of contemporary Matthean scholarship. The pre-Christian character of the Dead Sea Scrolls with which the evangelist shares in the theological use of quotations and other literary aspects further supports the early date for the evangelist's gospel. Even if the evangelist had access to the Marcan gospel, it does not follow that his gospel depended on it. Access and dependency are quite different issues. Scholars in all ages have had access to each other's material but that has never meant dependency on those other works in the manner the evangelist's gospel is said to depend on its Marcan counterpart.

The results further provide a new perspective to the role of prophecy in gospel tradition with particular reference to the Matthean gospel. The results bring the Old Testament into a central position as a source which played a significant role in the evangelist's theology. This further suggests that it is inappropriate to disregard the Old Testament as source in favour of such sources as Mark, Q, M, Testimonia, if such sources really existed as *sources* for the evangelist.

As I have indicated earlier, the research does not intend, nor claim, to present systematically a coherent synoptic theory of parallel development of the synoptic tradition. Rather, it only points this out as a possible solution to this difficult problem, in view of the main results of the inquiry, as a logical consequence of those results.

It is hoped that the insights presented in this study provide a unique contribution to New Testament study in general and Matthean scholarship in particular.

dissatisfaction with the Marcan hypothesis in modern critical scholarship is clear from these observations.

² The view that the synoptic gospel tradition had a parallel development is shared by E.P. Sanders in his *The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition*, Cambridge: University Press, 1969 and John A.T. Robinson in his *Redating the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1976 pp. 93-117. For a convenient summary of alternative views, see France, *Matthew*, pp. 335-37. John Wenham holds the view that there was "a large measure of independence as well as an important measure of interdependence". See his *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke, A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem*, London & Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p. 10.

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