

5-2021

## To Fulfill What is Written: Reconsidering the Fulfillment-Formula Quotations of the Gospel of Matthew

Potter Cain McKinney

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To Fulfill What is Written


Reconsidering the Fulfillment-Formula Quotations  
of the Gospel of Matthew

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from  
William & Mary

by

Potter Cain McKinney

Accepted for HONORS  
(Honors)



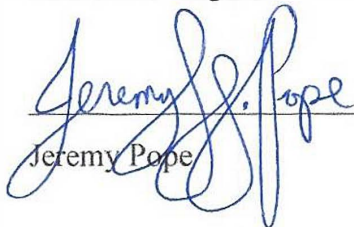
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May 11, 2021

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## Acknowledgments

First, I wish to thank my parents, Alan and Tina McKinney, for always supporting my scholarly endeavors, whether or not they always “get” it.

Next, I thank my roommates, Grant, Spencer, and Jacob, for their companionship and emotional support in all things, including in my research and writing.

I also wish to thank all of the professors who have supported me in my scholarly call, especially those who supported in some way this project: Dr. Robin McCall, who, in teaching me Hebrew and how to read the Hebrew Bible, revealed a hidden love for ancient literature which inspired this thesis; Dr. Alexander Angelov, for his great advice through the years and being the first to encourage me to consider writing a thesis my freshman year; and Dr. Michael Daise, who advised this project and gave direction and initial substance to what were once my hunches and speculations.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this thesis to Rory “Skitty” McKinney, my dog. In addition to being a constant and comforting companion for the past seven years, he dutifully watched over my early research and the earliest writing for this project. He gave up the ghost the morning of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in as peaceful and graceful a manner as any creature could hope or dream for. As a result, he was not able to read the complete thesis himself, though he certainly would have loved it.

## Introduction

It is abundantly clear from the extensive use of Old Testament texts throughout the New Testament that there is no room for a straightforwardly “Marcionite” project of separating the two if the latter is to be understood. However, many of our ideas about NT passages which authoritatively quote the OT are based in the context of assumptions or many centuries of tradition which bound and direct our inquiries. If the OT in the NT is to be properly understood, it is best that we approach the material with as few presumptions as possible. to either justify our assumptions or construct a better theory.

The Gospel of Matthew in particular stands out as a natural starting point for this inquiry. This Gospel was written for Jewish Christians and thus was particularly concerned with the relationships of Christians and Jews. Matthew quotes or alludes to the Jewish Scriptures more than almost any other NT book, making the First Gospel perhaps the single most central text for understanding the relationship of the early Jewish-Christian community to mainstream Judaism and the Scriptures they share. However, there has been remarkably little consensus concerning the fine details of what the Gospel intends with its quotations. The Gospel is not a Scriptural commentary, and Matthew’s hermeneutical principles are not obvious. What we know is that Matthew believes Jesus is the “fulfillment” of OT Scripture. What, precisely, does that mean?

While the term “fulfillment” appears in varying contexts throughout the Gospel, it appears the most in the context of “fulfillment-formula quotations”. These quotations are likely the clearest representation of the Gospel author’s thought surrounding the OT and its

relationship to Jesus. They are prefaced with a formula which states that events in the Gospel take place “in order to fulfill” some OT passage. This terminology is largely unique to Matthew, appearing only sparingly elsewhere, and is intimately tied to the use of OT material in the Gospel.

The fulfillment of a prophecy is typically understood by previous scholars to be the occurrence of something which was predicted by the quoted prophet. The fulfillment-formula quotations, then, function as proof-texts proving the validity of Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. However, this is largely an assumption based on etymology and tradition, and because this terminology seems to be somewhat novel to Matthew, we cannot assume this meaning of the term “fulfillment,” and must instead analyze Matthew’s use of the term and derive its contextual meaning from that use.

I propose that Matthew intends his fulfillment-formula quotations as indicators of a greater correspondence and parallelism between the passages from which the quotes are derived and the Gospel narrative he composes, and not as a marker of a prediction which is realized in Jesus. In order to argue this point, I will begin by reviewing a selection of scholarly works which have engaged the questions surrounding the fulfillment-formula quotations or the use of OT material in Matthew more generally. Afterwards, I will argue for my proposal by analyzing a selection of the fulfillment-formula quotations in conversation with the reviewed scholars, noting where I have observed parallels between the Gospel of Matthew and the OT passages the Gospel quotes, and then explaining why these observations challenge the prediction-occurrence interpretation of the quotations.

## **§1 Review of Scholarship**

Building on the long tradition of historical-critical scholarship of the Bible, many scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in caves at Qumran in Palestine, and scholars onwards into our times, have analyzed the Gospel of Matthew's use of OT texts. I present five works from among the most important such scholars here: Krister Stendahl, Barnabas Lindars, Robert H. Gundry, Richard McConnell, Maarten J.J. Menken, and Richard B. Hays. For each author, I will outline their arguments and major points, with a focus on their treatment of Matthew and the fulfillment-formula quotations found within. Afterwards, I will review their content and voice my opinions on each, then outline general criticisms applying to some or all of the works, from which I will formulate my own hypothesis.

## §1.1 Krister Stendahl's *The School of St. Matthew*

In 1946, a Bedouin shepherd happened upon a collection of texts which revolutionized the study of the Hebrew Bible: The Dead Sea Scrolls. They include some of the oldest copies of Hebrew Bible material, extrabiblical literature, and unique material from the community that produced the texts. This community appears to have been active around the first century CE — the time spoken of in the NT. What insights could this find provide to NT scholars?

Quite a few, thought Krister Stendahl. Stendahl was a Swedish New Testament scholar who received his doctorate from the University of Uppsala in 1954 and would go on to be a professor and dean of Harvard Divinity School, then eventually be consecrated as the Bishop of Stockholm. In his doctoral dissertation, later published as *The School of St. Matthew*, Stendahl sought to investigate the creative milieu, the “*Sitz im Leben*,” of the Gospel of Matthew, with the aim of poking and prodding at a school of thought which created the Gospel and utilized it as a sort of handbook<sup>1</sup> which was intended for “study and instruction” in the group.<sup>2</sup> However, while this is what the book (especially its introduction) is oriented towards, its resounding value is in its analysis of the treatment of OT quotations in the Gospel, which Stendahl takes to be illustrative of the school’s

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<sup>1</sup> Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 29.



exegetical method.<sup>3</sup> He deals with these quotations in a systematic fashion, elucidating their text-forms, presenting versions of the passage in contemporary Greek and Aramaic translations as well as the original Hebrew. He demonstrates their purpose, as he understands it, in the Gospel according to the framework he elucidates in the introduction. The book functions secondarily as a compendium of OT quotations in the Gospel, and it is this which has given it its enduring value and has set the terms for later studies of that subject.

Looking at the Gospel of Matthew, Stendahl took up questions surrounding the influences that shaped the First Gospel and its content. Scholars before him speculated as to who Matthew the author was; Stendahl mentions the work of scholars who argued that Matthew was a rabbi who became a Christian teacher, eventually setting up his school mirroring that of the rabbis and writing the Gospel of Matthew as a manual. However, he worries that in focusing so much on Matthew as an individual, they neglect his background and his audience, and therefore miss key details. Stendahl thus explores the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel text and not only the character of its author.<sup>4</sup>

Stendahl then analyzes the work of the scholars of his century who precede him in asking what the Gospel is *for*. Perhaps the Gospel was written with *preaching* in mind, that

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<sup>3</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 11-12.

is, proclaiming the message of Jesus as the Messiah to the world.<sup>5</sup> But Stendahl notes that preaching could only be one concern of the early Church,<sup>6</sup> and even then, it appears odd that all the material of the Gospel such scholars count as homiletic never appear in the form of contemporary homilies. He opts instead for a view that the shaping purpose of Matthew was not homiletic but scholarly.<sup>7</sup> If the purpose of the material is to be studied and to facilitate study, then this calls for asking *why* and *in what setting*.

Stendahl believes that such study must occur in a school community attached to the church. Though it seems this church school is not quite like the mainstream rabbinic schools, Stendahl sees the new finds at Qumran as showing an alternative form of Jewish schooling worth analysis.<sup>8</sup> He argues that the school of Matthew utilized a kind of interpretation akin to an exegetical method called *midrash pesher* found in the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, as opposed to the mainstream forms of rabbinic interpretation.<sup>9</sup> *Pesher* interpretation is a particularly imaginative kind of exegesis which radically reimagines passages from the Hebrew Bible through recontextualizing them, applying the texts to a current situation. This reimagining is thought to be the esoteric, or secret, meaning of the

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<sup>5</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 35.

text. The *peshirim* texts that survive among the Dead Sea Scrolls fall into two categories: running commentaries on texts, recounting the book commented on with each citation followed by an interpretation (the most famous of which being the Commentary on Habakkuk, hereafter 1QpHab); and texts which present a theme that brings individual texts in to support it (the most notable being a text called the Florilegium, or 4QFlor). Through both of these genres of *midrash*, the Dead Sea Scrolls community reinterpreted OT texts to concern their leader, the Teacher of Righteousness, and the eschatological battle between them and the forces of darkness. Could the early Christian community have reinterpreted these same OT texts to stitch them together with the story of Jesus? If so, did they do so in any disciplined way?

The thesis of Stendahl's work is that the Gospel of Matthew represents exactly that: a handbook and literary creation of a school of interpretation, "a school for teachers and church leaders, and for this reason the literary work of that school assumes the form of a manual for teaching and administration within the church."<sup>10</sup> In order to prove this, Stendahl hopes "to prove the close affinity between the type of OT interpretation to be found in a certain group of Matthew's quotations and the way in which the Sect of Qumran treats the book of Habakkuk."<sup>11</sup> So, as he analyzes each quotation, he demonstrates ways he feels Matthew or his school exemplifies this peculiar exegetical style. For example,

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<sup>10</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 31.

Stendahl spends considerable time pondering the text of the quotation of Micah 5:2 found in Matthew 2:6: “And you, Bethlehem of Judah, are not least among the rulers of Judah; out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd Israel, my people.” Stendahl notes that this quotation differs considerably from the Hebrew MT and the Greek LXX, “with the latter of which Matthew has only six words in common.”<sup>12</sup> This handling of the text by Matthew might be seen as irresponsible, but we need not worry: “the insight we have received into the Jewish interpretation of the Scriptures through the scrolls of the Qumran Sect will make this less offensive.”<sup>13</sup> This is not exegesis as we are comfortable with. *Pesher* interpretation, so the argument goes, is a principled eisegesis, which can freely even change the text being interpreted beyond what is sanctioned by gloss or paraphrase if it fits the meaning the interpreter understands it to have. Therefore, in this and other quotation passages, if we see the Gospel of Matthew make tenuous stretches to support its claim that Jesus is the Messiah, this is evidence of the Matthew School’s use of an interpretive method similar to the *midrash pesher* of the Qumran community.

He applies such perspectives to different groupings of quotations in Matthew and analyzes their text-forms, beginning first with quotations which Matthew inherits from Mark, moving on to quotations shared with Luke, then the uniquely Matthean fulfillment-

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<sup>12</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 99.

<sup>13</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 101.

formula quotations, and finally dealing with quotations uniquely Matthean but lack any formula.

After analysis of these texts, Stendahl then moves on to observations of what their text forms might mean, particularly comparing their relationship to the LXX. In those quotations that Matthew shares with the other Gospels, Stendahl finds that he follows the LXX tradition more or less faithfully. This is likewise true for those uniquely Matthean quotations with no formula. However, in those quotes unique to Matthew which are introduced by the fulfillment formula, there is a “remarkable freedom of citing” which Stendahl believes demands some explanation.<sup>14</sup>

Stendahl postulates that the fulfillment formula “might here be something of a technical term which Matthew uses to distinguish the *peshet* type of quotation.”<sup>15</sup> Thus these quotations are the *coup de grace* for Stendahl’s thesis: “if our observations and our interpretations of these quotations and of the manner in which they came into the Gospel are found to be right, they constitute an almost conclusive argument for ‘The School of St. Matthew.’”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 151.

<sup>15</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 203.

<sup>16</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 206.

## §1.2 Barnabas Lindars's New Testament Apologetic

In 1961, Barnabas Lindars, then assistant lecturer at Cambridge and member of the Anglican Society of Saint Francis, published a new work addressing the use of OT quotations in the NT. This work, *New Testament Apologetic*, remains influential as a work of form criticism on the whole of the NT. Lindars particularly focuses on the *apologetic* and *rhetorical* use of the quotations of the OT found throughout the NT. This is not, for Lindars, more particular than NT apologetics in general, for this relationship of the Old and the New is, quoting C.H. Dodd, the “sub-structure of New Testament theology.”<sup>17</sup>

The connection drawn by Stendahl between the Gospel of Matthew and the *midrash pesher* of 1QpHab provides Lindars with a key presupposition: the early Church was furnished with a method of exegesis regulated by the life and work of Jesus as an eschatological Messiah and not by a strict grammatical interpretation of the text, which justifies “subtle modifications of the texts which are used” to clarify the provided inner meaning.<sup>18</sup> Building on this presupposition, Lindars illustrates his hypothesis that the earliest Church studied larger passages of OT books and applied to them certain interpretations, likely through “the apologetic element of the early preaching,”<sup>19</sup> and that these early studies form the associations with doctrines that prompt later authors to cite

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<sup>17</sup> Dodd in Barnabas Lindars. *New Testament Apologetic*. (London: SCM, 1973), 14.

<sup>18</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 19.

them in part when addressing such doctrine in their work. However, the actual applications of and associations with doctrines seem to shift over time as doctrine develops and rhetorical needs arise in the Church. For example, Lindars recalls that a quotation of Isaiah 6:9 (“hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not,”) appears in the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Gospel of Mark. In the former two texts, the quotation rationalizes why the Jewish acceptance of Jesus was so sparse, but in Mark, it rationalizes Jesus’ use of parables in teaching and preaching. Lindars postulates that the concern with a lack of Jewish response to Jesus is an earlier rhetorical need than the use of parables, because parables only become a problem when they become more mysterious when severed from their context. The Gospel of Mark, therefore, shifts the application of Isaiah 6:9.

Lindars deals also with questions surrounding the provenance of the particular text forms of the OT quotations. This is not out of a merely textual-critical concern, but because he believes shifts in application will correspond to the modification of these texts. This modification is key to the enterprise of *midrash pesher* as it is described by Stendahl. The particular manners that these OT text-forms are conformed to fit the rhetorical purposes of the NT texts reveals to Lindars the developing rhetorical use of the passage for the whole Christian tradition, not only the author’s use.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 24-31.

Modifications of the text-forms are not necessarily intentional, though they may reflect intentions which long preceded the quoting author. Lindars notes that “where approximate dates of composition of documents are possible, it is noticeable that the later the date the greater the appearance that the writer quotes from memory.”<sup>21</sup>

Lindars does not follow each quotation in their time as they appear in the NT; instead, his work follows a logical structure he has devised based on a procession of concerns that the early Christian community would have to answer.<sup>22</sup> The raw assertion of the resurrection, and its eventual apologies from the Scriptures, leads to a justification of the Passion, then to Jesus’ origins, and so on. As evidenced above, the approximate dating of a given text says nothing about how primitive or developed a given rhetorical purpose and use of an OT text is; while Mark is usually counted as the earliest Gospel and John the latest, it was John, according to Lindars, who utilized the quotation of Isaiah 6:9 in a more primitive way.

While the book is not focused solely on the Gospel of Matthew, its methodology is applied to it throughout, and Lindars develops a viewpoint highly relevant to the particular study of that Gospel. Like Stendahl, he understands Matthew to be engaged in *peshet* interpretation; for instance, Lindars understands the citation of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23 as a *peshet* citation, “purely descriptive in motive. The story is thought of as a straight

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<sup>21</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 29.



fulfilment of the prophecy.”<sup>23</sup> In this way, Lindars receives the observations of Stendahl happily. However, Lindars describes the rhetorical *purpose* of the quotations, which he believes dispenses for the need of a “School of Saint Matthew” to explain their provenance and grammar. Rather than putting together the quotations himself as a handbook, the quotations and their interpretations are inherited from earlier exegetes who had to defend Christianity apologetically over time.<sup>24</sup> More importantly, the texts are themselves engaged in the purpose they are included for; that is, the Gospel is not a narrative sort of proof-text collection, as one may call the manual of Stendahl’s Matthean school, but itself a rhetorical contribution to an ongoing conversation in the early Christian community. This dispensation therefore allows Lindars to extrapolate the mechanisms of *midrash peshet* to the whole NT.

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<sup>23</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 260.

<sup>24</sup> Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 16.

## §1.3 Robert Gundry's Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel

Robert Horton Gundry is an American evangelical scholar of the NT. In 1961, Gundry completed his dissertation at Manchester University, which would later be published as *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* in 1967. He felt that continued research on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the many different explanations of Matthew's use and interpretation of OT quotations required a more conclusive assessment<sup>25</sup>. The bulk of the volume is dedicated to the discussion of text forms in a manner analogous to Stendahl, handling the quotations as well as allusions one by one, noting how the Greek of the Gospel differs from the LXX, its recensions, and the MT. He also surveys different explanations for these textual discrepancies, including the work of Stendahl and Lindars.

However, he believes that Stendahl, Lindars, and others neglect *allusions* to OT texts in their work and privileges explicit quotations too highly, particularly the fulfillment-formula quotations in Matthew.<sup>26</sup> He disputes their explanations for the mixed text-forms of these formula quotations on the grounds that, when juxtaposed with allusive quotations, their text-forms are not terribly distinctive. Instead, he argues that disparate texts of the

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<sup>25</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, xi.

<sup>26</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 2.

quotations can be attributed to Matthew as a Targumist, who draws on a knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to produce written Greek targums for the Gospel that would be applied for both explicit quotations of and allusions to OT passages. These targums were based on a multilingual context that implies a Palestinian origin that predates a break with the Jewish community,<sup>27</sup> and both the quotations and allusions reflect the habitual thinking of a person in such a context.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Matthew is not engaged in “atomizing exegesis” in the manner described by Stendahl or Lindars. Gundry also argues that Matthew does not radically alter the historical traditions of the gospel.<sup>29</sup>

Gundry analyzes the text-forms of many explicit and allusive quotations throughout the Gospel of Matthew, emphasizing their affinities to biblical texts in various languages and similar references in Second Temple literature. Afterwards, he places his observations next to the theories of previous scholarship. He argues against Stendahl’s argument that a School of St. Matthew is possible in the early Church on the grounds that Matthew preserves some anti-Rabbinic sentiment in Matthew 23:8 (“Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren”) and that the relationship of Jesus to the disciples must have been *sui generis* for Christians.<sup>30</sup> Gundry also rejects that *midrash pesher* can

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<sup>27</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 178-179.

<sup>28</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 155-156.

explain the divergence of the text-forms of the fulfillment-formula quotations, arguing that the lemmas of 1QpHab are also explained by a Palestinian mixed-text, rather than intentional alterations on the part of the commentator.<sup>31</sup> He also challenges the hypothesis of Lindars on the grounds that it forces many OT quotations into an apologetic mold that they do not fit into.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Gundry considers Lindars's elaborate genealogy of rhetorical development to be a house of cards, founded on too many unfounded assumptions about which usages of OT texts must come later than other usages. The key issue, however, is that Lindars ignores allusions and their text-forms in the same manner as Stendahl. These allusions, according to Gundry, overthrow explanations of quotations found in Lindars.<sup>33</sup> Instead, Matthew is a Targumist in the tradition of the Palestinian Jewish synagogue.<sup>34</sup> He cites the testimony of the Dead Sea Scrolls that targumizing was practiced in the Palestinian Jewish tradition of recording and copying texts, as well as the account of Melito of Sardis that early Christians engaged in oral targumizing into Greek for homiletic purposes as corroborating his thesis.<sup>35</sup> Gundry further notes that, even if the method of Matthew is parallel to the *midrash peshet* of 1QpHab, it is far more likely that

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<sup>31</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 158.

<sup>32</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 160.

<sup>33</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 160-163.

<sup>34</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 172.

<sup>35</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 173.

both of these methods have their root in a common Targum tradition, rather than a method separate from the mainstream Jewish tradition.<sup>36</sup>

Gundry then moves forward in the second part of his book to the intention of Matthew behind the Gospel quotations and allusions. He attacks what he calls “radical form-criticism” as based on faulty views of historical method, philosophical prejudice against supernaturalism, and fideist theology<sup>37</sup>. According to Gundry, these views ignore the interest in eye-witnesses to Jesus manifest throughout the NT, and claims that such interest in history would discourage the invention of narrative and the preservation of enigmatic events and sayings.<sup>38</sup> He goes on to argue against views holding that Matthew invented many of the narratives in his Gospel based on the OT, positing instead that they were genuine traditions preceding the author, perhaps even coming from the use of the OT in the ministry of Jesus himself.<sup>39</sup> If Matthew were interested in inventing a mythical Jesus based on OT passages, then Gundry argues that the Gospel would make use of a wider range of Messianic prophecy from the OT.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the acclimation of the text-form of a quotation to the narrative context of the Gospel in the course of Matthew’s “targumizing”

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<sup>36</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 174.

<sup>37</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 189-193.

<sup>38</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 191.

<sup>39</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 193-215.

<sup>40</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 194.

indicates that Matthew is conforming prophecies to an existing historical tradition and not vice-versa.<sup>41</sup>

The final section of the book addresses the theme of Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy in the Gospel of Matthew, questioning whether Matthew's applications of prophecy display the atomizing hermeneutics of Qumran or respect the intent and context of passages that he cites, discussing what he terms "the problem of legitimacy."<sup>42</sup> He draws on the work of C.H. Dodd, who argues that the NT authors selected passages for quotation based on broader themes of the books in which they are found, and while Gundry notes that Dodd does not deal with allusions, Gundry finds that Dodd's thesis applies likewise with his selection of allusions.<sup>43</sup> Thus Gundry believes that Matthew does not deal with OT material atomistically, but according to its context.

This does not, however, establish that Matthew's use of the material is *legitimate*. The elaborate typology of Christian exegesis of the OT appears to Gundry as eisegesis, that is, a reading into the OT themes and meanings which have no basis in the OT texts themselves. In other words, if Matthew cites a prophecy as Messianic and applies it to Jesus to argue for his being the Messiah, but the prophecy itself has nothing to do with the Messiah, then this is reasonably considered an illegitimate use of the prophecy. In order to

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<sup>41</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 194-195.

<sup>42</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 205.

<sup>43</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 206-208.

establish the legitimacy of Matthew's use of prophecy, Gundry argues against modern hermeneutical theories that discount any Messianic intention in OT texts written prior to the exile, allowing for the possibility that such texts could be used as Messianic.<sup>44</sup> He then addresses a selection of prophecy citations in the Gospel most easily accused of illegitimacy, and demonstrates that their use in Matthew is agreeable to their context. Gundry comes to posit something akin to the traditional view of Matthew's argument and purpose: "When we anchor the broad Christian view of divine purpose guiding OT history toward Jesus Christ in specific fulfillments as well in general typology, then the remarkable correspondence between OT history and prophecy and the life and ministry of Jesus becomes the kind of kerygmatic argument intended by Jesus and the first evangelist in their use of the OT."<sup>45</sup> That is, through a mix of typological and literal realization of prophecy, Matthew demonstrates how Jesus is foreseen by the OT and how he embodies the OT's concerns and themes, demonstrating him as the culmination of the Jewish Messianic hope which is present throughout the OT.

In short, Gundry argues that unlike the Qumran interpreters, Matthew does not deal with OT quotations in an atomistic way. He notes that he and other NT authors deal with OT texts thematically, challenging Stendahl's thesis on *peshet* interpretation with which Lindars substantially agrees, though he recognizes some similarities between Matthew and

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<sup>44</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 218-224.

<sup>45</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 234.

Qumran. The work is not apologetic, though it does argue that we cannot rule out the divine fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus. It also is not reactionary, in that it reckons with modern scholarship and takes seriously the modern situation in proper and responsible exegesis, concerning itself with the native contexts of OT passages and the *Sitz im Leben* of their quotation. In broad strokes, Gundry provides a traditionally minded foil to the arguments of his predecessors.



## §1.4 Richard McConnell's Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel

In 1968, Richard McConnell submitted his doctoral dissertation with the title *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel: The Authority and Use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of St. Matthew*. In it, he sought to elucidate the understanding of the earliest Church of the OT Scriptures relative to Jesus, in contrast to various modern explanations which harbor far too modern presuppositions. He intends to do this by analyzing the Gospel of Matthew and how it presents how Jesus relates to and interprets the OT Law and prophecies on the assumption that Matthew, concerning itself with the OT to a much greater extent than many other NT texts, would be the best representation of the whole Church.<sup>46</sup>

The work is two pronged: first, it deals with the use of OT Law by Jesus in his five discourses. Through juxtaposing Jesus' statements about himself with contemporary and Rabbinic Jewish literature, McConnell fleshes out an image of the Matthean Jesus as a new Torah-bringer with the authority of God. He makes much of Matthew 28:20, agreeing with other commentators that the whole of the Gospel has this verse as its key.<sup>47</sup> Second,

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<sup>46</sup> Richard McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." (PhD diss., University of Basel, 1969), 1.

<sup>47</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 100.

McConnell treats the use of prophecy in the Gospel. He begins with a treatment of the formula quotations, first in general and then each in turn. Giving great attention to the text forms, McConnell examines the “relationship between the textual forms of the formula quotations and those of the various Old Testament versions” with a particular hope of answering the question of whether “there is evidence of Matthew’s forming the text to suit his own theological purpose.”<sup>48</sup>

McConnell’s treatment of the Law in Matthew begins by considering Matthew 5:17: “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.” McConnell understands “law and the prophets” to refer to the whole OT as the will of God<sup>49</sup>, but the meaning of “fulfill” is less obvious in this context. McConnell lists three possibilities: first, “fulfill” might simply mean that Jesus carries out what is commanded in the Law (and accordingly, Jesus fulfills the prophets by doing what they predict).<sup>50</sup> Second, Jesus might “perfect” the Law by explaining its true significance.<sup>51</sup> Lastly, “fulfill” may refer to an Aramaic word which encapsulates both meanings to some degree.<sup>52</sup> However, McConnell does not believe that the term “fulfill” can be understood so simply as any of these, and that the term has a very specialized meaning in Matthew which

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<sup>48</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 102.

<sup>49</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 13.

<sup>50</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 14.

<sup>51</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 15.

<sup>52</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 16.

refers only to the *sui generis* relationship of Jesus to the OT, where Jesus makes concrete the plan and promises of God in his actions,<sup>53</sup> a meaning which encompasses both Law and prophecy.

Having established this meaning of “fulfillment” and analyzed its operation in Jesus’ moral teachings, McConnell turns his attention to quotations of prophecy in the Gospel. After analyzing all the fulfillment-formula quotations in conversation with other scholars, particularly Stendhal, he summarizes his thoughts as follows. Throughout his treatment he brings attention to the idea that Matthew is applying OT texts to historical facts which precede him, and concludes that Matthew had an “apologetic intention” behind his quotations; “because Jesus had been a far different Messiah than had been expected in many respects (e.g. in his identity, his place of ministry, and his kind of ministry) Matthew thought it was necessary to show by careful exegesis that Jesus had in fact fulfilled God’s prophetically announced plan.”<sup>54</sup> Secondly, McConnell resolves that Matthew has a high respect for the authority of the OT, but this sense of authority and deference seems to be in tension with the odd text forms, which McConnell seems content to attribute to a dependence on one or more *testimonia*, though only in part. He also, with Stendahl, attributes much to a perceived sense in the work of Matthew that the evangelist has significant authority in interpreting the OT, devising meanings, esoteric and subtle as a

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<sup>53</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 26.

<sup>54</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 134.

phantom, which the authors of the OT had no frame of reference for understanding, as Jesus' life alone could be the key.<sup>55</sup> He goes so far as to say, based on the disparate genres of quoted material beyond prophetic material and the relative sparsity of future-focus within them, that "in every case of the formula quotations the original meaning of the quotations and its context has been ignored."<sup>56</sup> The OT was authoritative, yes, but "not regarded as authoritative in themselves... rather, the prophecies which were important were determined by the life of Jesus."<sup>57</sup>

This seeming paradox can make sense if we agree largely with Stendahl's thesis that Matthew was an exegete along the lines of the interpretation 1QpHab. McConnell affirms three commonalities: first, that every prophecy has a "veiled, eschatological meaning;" second, that the meaning often relies on textual idiosyncrasies and variants; and third, that features are applied according to "analogous circumstance."<sup>58</sup> While Matthew seems to be a bit more conservative than the Qumran interpreter, these fundamental commonalities remain. Matthew's seeming idiosyncrasy is explained, for McConnell, by this context.

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<sup>55</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 135-137.

<sup>56</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 137.

<sup>57</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 138.

<sup>58</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 139.

After treating the formula quotations, McConnell moves on to consider every quotation put in Jesus' mouth throughout the Gospel,<sup>59</sup> then provides explanations of Jesus' titles "Messiah" and "Son of Man" with an eye to historical context and biblical parallel.<sup>60</sup> In his conclusion, McConnell summarizes the vision of Jesus in Matthew he has explained. Jesus is the bringer of a new law and a divine authority on its interpretation, allowing him to critically interpret the Law and make binding commandments. As the new law-bringer, Jesus is allowed to decide which commandments in the Law are binding and which are not. As the fulfiller of prophecy, Jesus may decide which prophecies bind him and which do not. McConnell writes that "the revelation of God's will found in the commanding and the prophetic content of the OT is to be known only through Jesus. With Jesus there is not a basic opposition to the OT but a fulfillment of the OT which is at the same time a surpassing of it."<sup>61</sup> Just as Jesus is not bound to the whole letter of the OT as its fulfillment, Matthew, in describing Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy, is not bound to any particular text-form of quotations or to their context. In the work of elucidating the esoteric dimensions of these OT texts "he did not pay attention to the original meaning and context of the text, he did not think he was violating the text but rather discovering the divine intention of the text which went beyond the its in the Old Testament and only came to light when it was related

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<sup>59</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 142.

<sup>60</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 147.

<sup>61</sup> McConnell. "Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew's Gospel." 218.

to the life of Jesus.”<sup>62</sup> McConnell thus synthesizes the various contributions of previous scholars on Matthew with his analysis of the Gospel into a single concept of “fulfillment.”

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<sup>62</sup> McConnell. “Law and Prophecy in St. Matthew’s Gospel.” 215.

## §1.5 M.J.J. Menken's Matthew's Bible

Maarten J.J. Menken was a Dutch NT scholar who, in 2004, published a monograph entitled *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist*. This book deals with a topic which could be seen as dry and pointless: the origin of the text-form of OT quotations in Matthew. Yet this topic has been the locus of a great cloud of ideas, postulations, and theories regarding the direction of these quotations in the works previously cited and many others for whom the text-forms of OT quotations in Matthew and their speculated origins form key pillars of their arguments. Menken thinks it would be straightforward and reasonable to think that Matthew, when editing material from his sources, used the text of the Bible with which he was familiar in adding explicit quotations. However, as we have seen, the text-forms of the fulfillment quotations seem highly divergent from the mainstream LXX texts used in other quotations, which prompted the analyses of Stendahl, Gundry, and many other scholars mentioned by Menken.<sup>63</sup>

However, Menken considers the growing evidence of a highly diverse tradition of revising the LXX in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century CE indicative of another explanation for the seemingly disparate text-forms of Matthew's quotations. He believes that, rather than positing that Matthew translated and targumized the text of the OT to suit his narrative purposes. The book, then, intends "to examine whether the assumption that Matthew's

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<sup>63</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, (Leuven, Leuven University, 2004), 4-5.

Bible was a revised LXX constitutes a viable explanation for the peculiar traits of his fulfillment quotations.”<sup>64</sup> He likewise investigates whether Matthew received these texts from a complete, or mostly complete, and continuous set of OT texts as might be found in the synagogues of the time, or instead as a series of atomized testimonies (eventually and conclusively settling with the former).

Menken conducts an investigation of each quotation in the Gospel, beginning with each quote which appears only in Matthew, followed by the other quotations, which are shared with the other synoptic Gospels. While Matthew has received “many quotations from his sources Mark and Q... In his role as editor, however, he also inserted quotations into his traditional materials.”<sup>65</sup> Menken submits each of these quotes to several criteria in order to determine whether or not they can reasonably be considered to have derived from a LXX recension that was not of Matthew's creation. First, he says, “there must be distinctive LXX elements in it, that is, translations that cannot be due to any translator from Hebrew into Greek but must go back to the LXX translator.” Second, “it must be possible to explain those items of the translation that deviate from the LXX as either corrections towards the Hebrew, or improvements of the Greek text, or incorporations of ancient exegesis.” Lastly, “the chance that the evangelist himself was the translator or the reviser must be reasonably

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<sup>64</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 1.



excluded, preferably by identification of un-Matthean elements in the quotation.”<sup>66</sup> He begins by analyzing each of the fulfillment-formula quotations, dedicating a chapter to each. He concludes that Matthew indeed drew these quotations from a continuous LXX recension, which leads him to then analyze quotations in Matthew shared with the other synoptic Gospels alongside quotations which Matthew added to shared synoptic narratives.<sup>67</sup>

Following this analysis, Menken is satisfied that his hypothesis holds. He finds that the fulfillment-formula quotations “have been integrated into the Matthean context to such a degree that it must have been the evangelist who determined their extent.”<sup>68</sup> The quotations as a whole contain many elements that cannot be explained by positing Matthew to be a Targumist. Instead, they call for an explanation Menken feels is best provided by a pre-Matthean LXX recension, on the grounds that divergences from the “mainstream” LXX text-form as Hebrew-oriented corrections, improvements in Greek style, or alterations “due to ancient biblical exegesis.”<sup>69</sup> Likewise, Matthew only sparingly edits the quotations to fit the narrative context, and seemingly inherited the base text rather than invented it himself.<sup>70</sup> In dealing with quotations found in Mark or other sources, Matthew does not edit

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<sup>66</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 279.

<sup>69</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 280.

<sup>70</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 280.

the texts in any systematic way. In short, “if [Matthew] borrows quotations from his sources... he simply copies them or edits them in his usual way; if he himself inserts quotations into his sources, he makes use of a revised LXX text.”<sup>71</sup>

Menken thus presents an image of Matthew as a far more reserved editor of his sources and a far more conservative exegete than the Matthew presented by the previous scholars. If free modification of the text is a key component of *midrash pesher*, as it seems to be in the treatments of Stendahl, Lindars, and McConnell, then Menken’s findings seemingly rule out the assertion that Matthew utilized such interpretation. If Matthew indeed received a pre-Matthean revised LXX and used it as his primary source of the OT text, then the assertion of Stendahl and Gundry that Matthew was an imaginative translator and Targumist, likewise, cannot stand. It also rules out the assertion of Lindars that Matthew received a collection of testimonies. All of these positions, though they are not the theses of these authors, are integral to their arguments, so Menken’s position carries high stakes in the investigation of Matthew’s use of the OT.

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<sup>71</sup> Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 281.

## §1.6 Richard B. Hays's Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels

Richard B. Hays, an American Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, has made a name for himself in the guild of New Testament studies on the merit of an idea which posits that, in the realm of NT use of the OT, there exists a third category beyond quotes and allusions he terms “echoes,” themes that the texts of the NT share in common with OT texts which quotes and allusions point to but cannot contain wholly within themselves. Hays suggests that the encounter of the earliest Christians with Jesus Christ forced a revolution in their understanding of the Scriptures of Israel, but that these Scriptures continued to hold considerable and normative influence over them and their imagination. Hays first argued for this concept of echoes in 1989 with his book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, publishing a sister volume in 2016 titled *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*.

In the preface to his volume on Paul, Hays balks at a statement made by a colleague that Paul's exegesis of Scripture is rooted in anti-Semitism, on the grounds that Paul is led to such a hatred by his firm conviction that Jesus relates so directly to Scripture. In that preface Hays even posits that the criticism could be more justly applied to Matthew or John (though surely he comes around by the book on the Gospels!).<sup>72</sup> This statement brings him

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<sup>72</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), ix-x.

to a firmer conviction that what is needed in understanding Paul is not only the historical-critical methodologies most common in New Testament studies in his day, but a *literary* and *intertextual* approach to the Pauline letters which begins with Paul as an author of texts in explicit conversation with other texts, rather than imagined contexts and opponents.<sup>73</sup> He later applies this very same eye to the Gospels. In both works, Hays believes that more must be done to understand the relationship between the Testaments, and that by elucidating how the Gospel narratives and Pauline discourses are founded on the narratives of the OT and, in turn, re-read OT texts and themes, the independent, yet intertwined, dignities of the Testaments in Christian understanding can be better established and “Marcionite” understandings can be repudiated. To illustrate this thesis in *The Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, which will now have our exclusive attention, Hays goes through each of the four Gospels, first Mark, then Matthew, Luke, and John, allotting a chapter to each. He begins with quotations which he allows to shape larger themes; the quotes garner some analysis in themselves, but it is their service to thematic echoes that he focuses on.

Matthew is no different. However, Hays acknowledges the central place of quotations in this Gospel, noting that they often make explicit connections to the OT which Mark leaves implicit.<sup>74</sup> The first thing one notices when considering the use of the OT in Matthew, according to Hays, “is his distinctive manner of introducing prooftexts” with the

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<sup>73</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, xi-xii.

<sup>74</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, (Waco: Baylor University, 2016), 105.

fulfillment-formula. Hays explains that these fulfillment-formula quotations “frame Israel’s Scripture as a *predictive* text pointing to events in the life of Jesus.”<sup>75</sup> He contests that, as tempting as it may be in consideration of the highly apologetic and rhetorical purpose he understands the quotations to have, it is overly speculative to reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew’s Gospel as Stendahl attempted.<sup>76</sup> Noting that the fulfillment-formula quotations constitute only about one-sixth of the total explicit quotations in the Gospel, Hays argues that focusing on these quotations is an overly narrow way to understanding the full relationship of Matthew to the OT. Instead, he argues, one must be attentive to the wide range of references to the OT in the Gospel. Hays sets out to describe, first, the ways that Matthew re-narrates the story of Israel, and then considers how Matthew interprets Scripture in explaining the identity of Jesus and the Church.<sup>77</sup>

Hays follows the narrative of Matthew once, along the way highlighting episodes and quotations which he interprets as illustrating Jesus as recapitulating the calling, exile, and liberation of the nation of Israel. He sees the genealogy which opens the Gospel in Matthew 1:1–17 as contextualizing the Messiah in relation to the Babylonian Exile,<sup>78</sup> a frame which Hays carries through the Gospel. He argues that the fulfillment-formula quotation in Matthew 2:15 of Hosea 11:1 must be contextualized by the whole chapter of

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<sup>75</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 107.

<sup>76</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 107–108.

<sup>77</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 109.

<sup>78</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 110–12.

Hosea: “the fulfillment of the of the prophet’s words can be discerned only through an act of imagination that perceives the figural correspondence between the two stories of the exodus and the gospel.”<sup>79</sup> He analyzes one more fulfillment-formula quotation and interprets their purpose as connecting “both the history and the future destiny of Israel to the figure of Jesus, and he hints that in Jesus the restoration of Israel is at hand.”<sup>80</sup> Jesus is led into the wilderness for forty days by the Spirit as Moses and Israel are led into the wilderness for forty years by God,<sup>81</sup> channeling the oration of Deuteronomy in his confrontation with Satan,<sup>82</sup> and reconstitutes a new covenant in his Passover.<sup>83</sup>

Hays then moves on to illustrate how Matthew identifies Jesus as a person within the thematic contextualization of the Exile. According to Hays, Matthew does not present any systematic theological image of Jesus, but instead weaves together references to the OT’s images and stories to present Jesus as “the one who fulfills and exceeds all of Israel’s hopes” through an “irreducibly complex” story amalgamating a wide selection of the OT.<sup>84</sup> In addition to embodying the national history of Israel, Jesus is beloved by God as Isaac

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<sup>79</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 113.

<sup>80</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 116.

<sup>81</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 117.

<sup>82</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 118–119.

<sup>83</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 134.

<sup>84</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 139.

was beloved by Abraham,<sup>85</sup> daughter Jerusalem ashamed by her enemies as in Lamentations,<sup>86</sup> the antitype of Moses,<sup>87</sup> the messianic Son of David,<sup>88</sup> “the figure of divine Wisdom,”<sup>89</sup> the righteous Suffering Servant,<sup>90</sup> and finally, the ever-abiding presence of God.<sup>91</sup>

In his final section, Hays outlines the mechanics of Matthew’s Scriptural hermeneutics as he understands them. Hays rejects that Matthew is engaged in proof-texting and is only partially interested in the realization of prophetic predictions. The fulfillment-formula quotations open a window into understanding Jesus as the fulfillment of *all* of the OT, not only the citations given.<sup>92</sup> Hays understands that a mix of two different texts in one quotation, rather than being mistakes, are intentional calls to recall the context and greater meaning of both passages which are blended.<sup>93</sup> All of this illustrates that we see in Matthew a new, “transfigured” understanding of OT Scripture as the national history of

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<sup>85</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 140.

<sup>86</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 141–142.

<sup>87</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 143–145.

<sup>88</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 146–153.

<sup>89</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 153.

<sup>90</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 159–162.

<sup>91</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 162–175.

<sup>92</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 186.

<sup>93</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 186–187.

Israel, which “summons to transformation of heart, radical obedience, and mercy,” prefigures Jesus, and ultimately calls the Church to witness to the nations of the world.<sup>94</sup>

Hays’s approach to the Gospel is interesting and illustrative of an excitingly fruitful hermeneutic. The complex symphony of OT references Hays identifies in the Gospel, if true and accurate, would invalidate the conclusions of Stendahl and Lindars (which presume the severing of quotes from their native context), and perhaps bolster the conclusions of Menken that Matthew worked with a continuous biblical text. In many ways, Hays fleshes out the more “holistic” view of *peshet*-fulfillment found in McConnell’s work, though Hays nowhere commits himself to the idea that Matthew utilized *midrash peshet*. If any satisfactory account of Matthew’s use of the OT is to be developed, it will have to reckon with this literary and intertextual approach so passionately manifest in his work.

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<sup>94</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 188–190.



## §1.7 Review and Criticism

Thus far, I have reviewed a selection of the most important and relevant work which has been written on the relationship of Matthew and his Gospel to the OT in its various dimensions. I have left open the question of agreement, disagreement, and critical reception, though this is somewhat implicit in the narrative of development, itself somewhat implicit; having looked at them through a dim glass, we must now approach these matters face to face. I will now air my criticisms of each work, with a particular focus on their interpretation of the fulfillment-formula quotations.

Stendahl's *School of St. Matthew* is, rightly, the starting point and standard for discussing OT quotations in Matthew. However, even he recognized that its bold thesis of a School behind the Gospel is somewhat dated.<sup>95</sup> Stendahl's enduring contribution, then, is the theory that Matthew's Gospel interprets OT texts with a method that is also extant in the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly 1QpHab. This exegetical method, called *midrash pesher*, involves the expounding of esoteric meanings within Scriptural texts. It does this by recontextualizing and at times re-writing them to fit them into a mold set by an eschatological leader, which for Matthew would be Jesus. The fulfillment-formula, for Stendahl, signals this kind of exegesis in the Gospel.

Within the exciting *Zeitgeist* which emerged immediately following the discovery and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is understandable that a scholar would look

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<sup>95</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, i.

therein to solve the problems of form and legitimate use in Matthew's quotations. However, is Matthew really engaged in *midrash pesher*? Beyond the mere assertion of similarities between the interpretive glosses of Matthew and the midrash of 1QpHab in Stendahl and McConnell, it is not immediately obvious that there is any evidence Matthew is utilizing *pesher* interpretation as opposed to other sorts of Second Temple interpretive methods extant, or even a hermeneutic beyond these options. The Gospel, as a narrative, does not share any genre, form, or formula with 1QpHab or the other exegetical documents found at Qumran. That is not to say that there cannot be similarities, but the dramatic difference in genre should warrant pause. The connection to the interpretive tradition extant in the Dead Sea Scrolls appears to me highly tendentious, and best embraced only after all other options have been exhausted. Considering that scholars such as Hays furnish evidence that Matthew was aware of and made use of the native contexts of his citations, I set Stendahl's hypothesis aside as inadequate.

Lindars's framing of Matthew as a participant and inheritor of an apologetic and rhetorical tradition which Matthew participates in unwittingly and deterministically is interesting, but again, I object. The problems with this approach are several, and two are particularly salient. First, is the logical structure of dogma which Lindars projects onto the texts (which he admits does not pattern onto the chronology of the dated texts themselves) a reasonable projection onto the text to make? What confidence can we derive that this structure is in fact true? Secondly, can we really derive so confidently the mind and state of the whole Christian community of the early decades from these texts? Do they really speak with one voice the same ideas, in more or less developed form, or do they communicate the

views of their author and remain entirely the fare of that author, including in their use of the OT? In other words, are the quotations really derived from a unitary use of the Christians of these texts, perhaps as a collection book of testimonies, as Lindars asserts, or are they brought in by each author for that author's particular purpose, and thus too opaque a window through which to view the entire early Church? I very much think this latter assertion is the case, and thus dispense, too, with Lindars's theory.

Lindars also takes seriously the *purpose* of quotations in the NT, particularly the fulfillment quotations in Matthew. However, in painting with a broad brush over the whole NT tradition, I also feel as though he has not adequately dealt with the First Gospel on its own terms. Lindars makes clear that the quotations are rendered for apologetic purposes, to either convince Jewish believers to believe in Jesus or to defend certain unexpected actions of the Messiah. However, as I will illustrate below, it seems to me that only some of the fulfillment-formula quotations could even conceivably be understood in this way, and thus this apologetic theory cannot fit these quotations.

Most of the cited scholars, however, are a bit humbler in their projections than Lindars or Stendahl. Gundry is correct to approach the Gospel with a broader perspective that considers *allusions* to the OT and not only quotations of it. However, his dichotomy between them is too stark. Allusions pertain to "general typology" and quotations to "specific fulfillments,"<sup>96</sup> which he understands as realizations of predictions. As stated

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<sup>96</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 234.

above and argued below, I think it is doubtful that the fulfillment-formula quotations have this realization as their primary purpose, so I therefore disagree with Gundry on this point as I have with Lindars.

McConnell provides the best account of the *midrash pesher* theorized by some to be present in Matthew, and unlike the other authors dealt with here gives considerable attention to the concept of “fulfillment” in the Gospel with consideration of its use for both prophecy and Law. However, as with Stendahl, I doubt that the similarities McConnell draws between Matthew’s use of quotations and *midrash pesher* to be weak. I likewise question if McConnell’s understanding of fulfillment as a concrete carrying out of God’s will found in prophecy or Law really holds<sup>97</sup>, seeing as it, like previous authors, assumes a purpose of illustrating Jesus as the realization of prediction.

Menken’s thesis of Matthew possessing a continuous biblical text and having some familiarity with it, if accepted, means that the psychological and social forces that underlie the selection, application, and form of the quotations are too complex to deduce to or from. Likewise, if Matthew had such a bible, and quoted it more or less faithfully, then we can tell very little about his *Sitz im Leben* on the ground of text forms alone and must understand the how the quotes function in the narrative they are employed in if anything more is going to be critically inferred. As his work makes little to no statement concerning the purpose of Matthew’s quotations and sticks only to their text-form, I have no qualms

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<sup>97</sup> McConnell, “Law and Prophecy in Matthew’s Gospel,” 26.

with his conclusions, and in many ways agree with them on the grounds that they cohere well with my own observations of the fulfillment-formula quotations.

Finally, Hays presents perhaps the most interesting understanding of the OT in Matthew, choosing not to deal with quotations as prooftexts but as signals for a complex web of thematic echoes and figural interpretations. This intertextual and literary perspective on the Gospel and the OT and their relationship *as texts* is a highly compelling alternative to a historical view of Matthew as an author who may or may not be in relationship to the OT as a larger whole. However, I dispute Hays on one point which, to his credit, is not the core of his argument. He zooms out from the fulfillment-formula quotations in his analysis of echoes and prefigurations precisely because he believes them to be “predictive texts” which Matthew claims Jesus carries out,<sup>98</sup> while Hays is more interested in figural and typological readings which these quotations exist in relation with. The quotes do lead into echoes, but this is in addition to their apologetic purpose as realized predictions. Again, the idea that the fulfillment-formula quotations are primarily *predictive* seems to be an unfounded assumption.

In summary, my criticisms and receptions of these various authors and their theories fall under three general headings:

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<sup>98</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 107.

1. I reject the notion that Matthew ignored or was ignorant of the contexts of the OT passages which he quotes in the Gospel and accept those views which put Matthew in conversation with these larger contexts.
2. I believe it is a mistake to pry into the person of Matthew as an author or the milieu in which he existed before approaching the purpose and affect of the OT quotations, and instead believe that the most fruitful analysis of these quotations come from their analysis in the Gospel as a text as it comes down to us and the texts of the OT from which the quotations are derived, rather than anything behind the texts.
3. It seems to me that the concept of “fulfilment” in the Gospel of Matthew is not synonymous with the realization of predictions found in prophecy and I reject views which conflate the two.

The first two points can be found in some of the authors treated here. The third criticism, however, applies to all of them.

## §2 Exegetical Case Studies

I propose a hypothesis which stands alongside and against the previously treated theories concerning OT quotations in Matthew according to the three criticisms stated above: When Matthew quotes a passage of the OT, this is a reference not only to the cited passage but to its surrounding narrative as well, which gives us license to juxtapose both the greater context of the cited passage in its specific details with the greater narrative in which the passage is cited in the Gospel. In doing so, precise parallels can be drawn between the details of the two passages. The purpose of these quotations and their parallels are not to show Jesus as the realization of predictions made by the prophets, but to show that the story of Jesus is consonant and coherent with the story of the OT as a whole.

This intertextual method of interpretation is very similar to Hays's method. However, the primary difference is that Hays expounds only on *thematic* parallels and general ideas. I propose instead that Matthew was conscious of precise details in the texts he cites which he parallels in his Gospel narrative in concrete and specific ways. That is, Matthew is not only presenting the OT Scriptures as prefiguring Jesus in general thematic ways. Instead, Matthew tells the story of Jesus in ways which imitate passages from the OT in specific details.

In order to illustrate and argue for this hypothesis, I present a representative selection of the fulfillment formula quotations. I argue that certain details in Matthew's Gospel can be best explained as parallels to details in texts he quotes outside of the precise passage cited, and after explicating these parallelisms in each selection, argue that this

parallelism and consonance is the proper understanding of “fulfillment” in Matthew, instead of a prediction-occurrence paradigm.



## §2.1 Matthew 1:22–23//Isaiah 7:14

### Matthew 1:22–23

NA28: τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος·

ἴδου ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ,

ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.

NRSV: All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel”,

which means, “God is with us.”

### Isaiah 7:14

BHS: :לִכֹּן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא לָכֶם אֹת הַנְּיָה הַעֲלֵמָה הָרָה וְיִלְדֶת בֵּן וְקָרְאָת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל׃

LXX: διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον· ἴδου ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται

υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ·

NRSV: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

The first of Matthew’s formula quotations appear as a narrative interjection following the Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary, which establishes that the narrative events of the whole passage from the end of the genealogy to this point took place “to fulfill” this prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14. These two verses are the subject of one of the most volatile lexicographical debates between Christians and Jews, as well as between Christians and other Christians or secular scholars in the modern day, which has ever been carried out in

the 2000 years or so of the NT. These debates center around the word “virgin,” *virgo* in the Latin Vulgate for both Isaiah and Matthew, *ho parthenos* in Matthew and the LXX, but *ha ‘almah* in the MT Hebrew text of Isaiah. This latter term is usually taken as meaning “young woman” more generally, rather than virgin. If that is the case, then it was argued that a foundational belief of Christianity was incorrect or founded simply on poor exegesis. Not only is Matthew proof-texting, but he is thoughtlessly proof-texting based on a mistranslation. Christians since the time of Justin Martyr have therefore argued that the LXX and Matthew’s translation is justified; Gundry does exactly this and argues that the text must be a Messianic prophecy on these grounds.<sup>99</sup>

This debate, however, may obscure the full range of what Matthew is doing by citing this passage of Isaiah, even if it is endlessly fascinating on other grounds. Working under the premise that Matthew had the whole of Isaiah at his disposal, should he be aware of the context of the quotation? What is the context, anyway?

Isaiah 7:1–2 begins the chapter with a situation plaguing the kingdom of Judah and the court of Ahaz; the kingdoms of Israel and Syria are collaborating against Judah to conquer it. From vv. 3–11, Isaiah calls on King Ahaz to ask for God’s advice, but in v. 12, Ahaz refuses; he asks the king of Assyria to invade Syria and Israel instead. Isaiah, however, brings prophecy anyways; even though Ahaz would not ask for a sign, God will give him one. A virgin/young woman will become pregnant and deliver a son, who will be named Emmanuel. In v. 16, Isaiah explains that before this child is old enough to know

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<sup>99</sup> Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 226–227.

right from wrong, the kings of Israel and Syria will be forsaken by God and conquered. But this is not good news for Ahaz and Judah; soon after, a great and poetic desolation will sweep Judah from all sides, because of Assyria, which is expressed metaphorically as God shaving the whole of Judah's body with a razor in v. 20. In chapter 8, another son is mentioned as a prophetic sign; Isaiah and "the prophetess" have a child prophetically named Mahershalalhashbaz in v. 8:3, which approximately means "hurry to plunder." His meaning is very much like Emmanuel's; v. 4 tells us that before Mahershalalhashbaz is old enough to cry out to his father or mother, Israel and Syria will be plundered, and their wealth carried off by the Assyrians. But this child leads up to a graver warning elaborated in vv. 6–8; because Judah has rejected the gentle "waters of Shiloah", God will bring a river flood, the Assyrians, which will flood the whole of Judah, water rising up but only to the neck of the land of Emmanuel. All the nations may collaborate, the Israelites with Syria or Judah with Assyria, but none of it means anything, for God is with us.

This paraphrase is only somewhat less perplexing than the original, and a fuller and more explicit exegesis is warranted. The precise identity of Emmanuel is highly uncertain; it has already been mentioned that many Christians assume this to be a prediction of Jesus; Emmanuel, then, is not a name but a title, and Stendahl argues that Matthew changes the LXX "καλέσεις," "she will call," to "καλέσουσιν," "they will call," in order to account for this interpretation. It is also possible that the identity is unknowable. However, what is clear is what this child represents for Isaiah: God is present with Judah. Emmanuel represents a live option set before Ahaz and his court: they may say towards the struggles ahead, "God is with us," and rely on this maxim. In such a case, the coming Assyrian threat is likened to

a razor which shaves Judah from head to toe, in a manner reminiscent of the shaving a person inflicted with various skin ailments was commanded to undertake in Leviticus 13. However, Ahaz and his court may instead say to the Assyrians, “hurry to plunder!” the Ephraimites and Syrians. This imperative, which was counted as a failure of the king to rely on God and instead rely on the Assyrians, will lead to God metaphorically flooding the kingdom with the Assyrians as he once flooded the world. Ahaz chooses to call on the Assyrians for aid, and thus has chosen this latter path.

At first glance, it does not appear to be the case that any of this from Isaiah has much to do with the virgin birth in Matthew. In a very narrow sense, this is true; however, the virgin birth is not an independent article of faith in Matthew but the beginning of a narrative. This narrative, the whole gospel, did not have verse and chapter numbers until long after its writing, so while the virgin birth of Jesus ends the first chapter of Matthew, there is no great gulf fixed between the first and second chapters. In Matthew 2, “wise men from the east” came to the court of King Herod the Great, the king of Judea, asking to know the whereabouts of the child born the King of Judea, about whom they heard through the stars. Herod, who is already the king of Judea but certainly not born in recent days, finds the news troubling. He asks the wise men to bring him the child when they find him. They do not, however, being told in a dream that they should not return to him. Herod, in a rage, then commands that every child in Bethlehem under two was to be killed. The family of Jesus is warned to escape to Egypt and is preserved. Eventually, King Herod dies, and the family is called to return.

Put together, Matthew 1–2 appears to have significant parallels to Isaiah 7–8. In both accounts, the birth of a child, designated as a prophetic sign, is posed as a threat to the reigning king of Judah who kowtows to a foreign power to maintain their power, rather than rely on God. In Isaiah, the child is Emmanuel, and the King is Ahaz who must rely on the Assyrians to win his war; in Matthew, the child is Jesus, the promised Messiah, and the king is Herod, a subject of the Roman Emperor who gained the throne with Roman support. The details do not in every way correspond one-to-one, but whether Matthew is recounting historical events or crafting a narrative based somewhat on historical events, it would not be proper to expect such correspondence; analogy requires the presence of disanalogy. The parallel still exists, and Matthew’s framing of the events in this way indicates a working knowledge of the prophecy in Isaiah in its fuller context.

Of great interest is the fact that these parallels imply that Matthew understood Isaiah was predicting something occurring in his own day. When Isaiah spoke about the fall of Israel, Syria, and Assyria, it is safe to say that he *meant* Israel, Syria, and Assyria. If Matthew implicitly compares Herod to Ahaz and the Romans to Assyria by echoing this passage of Isaiah, it would be strange for Matthew to also discount Isaiah’s context in order to apply Isaiah 7:14 as a prediction of a virgin birth realized by Jesus. Rather than selectively ignoring Isaiah’s point or misunderstanding it, it is probable that Matthew is only *comparing* Jesus and Emmanuel through this citation, rather than literally identifying them with each other, or saying that the Emmanuel prophecy *prefigures* Jesus as the

presence of God, as Hays argues.<sup>100</sup> On such an interpretation, it matters little whether or not the Hebrew can be legitimately translated as “virgin” or “young woman,” as the point far exceeds any fine details about the mother’s age or virginity.

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<sup>100</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospel*, 163.

## §2.2 Matthew 2:17–18//Jeremiah 31:15

### Matthew 2:17–18

NA28: τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη, κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὄδυρμος πολὺς· Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν.

NRSV: Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

### Jeremiah 31:15<sup>101</sup>

BHS: פֶּה | אָמַר יְהוָה קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל-בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה:  
לְהַנְחֵם עַל-בְּנֵיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ:

LXX: Οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος Φωνὴ ἐν Ραμα ἠκούσθη θρήνου καὶ κλαυθμοῦ καὶ ὄδυρμου· Ραχὴλ ἀποκλαιομένη οὐκ ἤθελεν παύσασθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς αὐτῆς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν.

NRSV: Thus says the Lord: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

Within the context of the narrative of Jesus’ youth, Matthew brings in three more quotations with the fulfillment formula. One, in particular, does not seem to abide well with

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<sup>101</sup> Jer 38:15 in LXX.

the traditional understanding of prophecy in Matthew. This one is the quotation of Jeremiah 31:15 which Matthew claims is fulfilled by the events of the Matthew 2:13-18, the massacre of the children of Bethlehem.

Jeremiah wrote his prophecies for a Judahite audience reeling with the possibility or reality of conquer and exile by the Assyrians or Babylonians. These people watched as the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered and carried off by the Assyrians, and indeed, they stand at the gate for them too. With the fall of Israel, however, comes theological reflection; Israel sinned against God, which has brought about their misfortune. However, does this mean God has abandoned them entirely? Will God abandon the tribe of Judah? While the divine may be impartially just, human kinship comes with sympathy, which Jeremiah metaphorizes as Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, weeping for the lost in Ramah. The prophet intends, however, to preach coming peace! The weeping of Rachel is mirrored in God's own heart, who is "deeply moved" and who will thus "have mercy on [Ephraim]." <sup>102</sup>

In Matthew, King Herod orders the destruction of all the infants of Bethlehem in a last-ditch effort to eliminate the threat of a Messianic claimant to his throne following the betrayal of the wise men. In this context, the quotation of Jeremiah is somewhat jarring on a few different counts. Firstly, it is clear that Rachel in Jeremiah's image isn't weeping for literal children under a certain age, but for those descendants of hers being taken into exile.

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<sup>102</sup> Jer 31:20.



Secondly, Rachel is the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, while Bethlehem is a town allotted to the tribe of Judah, the son of Leah. Thirdly, Ramah is located in northern Israel, a good distance away from Bethlehem. Thus, the descendants she weeps for in Jeremiah are clearly not those to whom Matthew seeks to apply it.

Several factors may explain, however, why Matthew cites this passage and helps explain its force in his Gospel. The exile which is mourned in Jeremiah is associated throughout the OT with the destruction of infants. They are particularly said to be “dashed to pieces” in 2 Kings 8:12, Isaiah 13:16, Hosea 13:16, and Nahum 3:10, and Psalm 137:9 proclaims blessings on those who would do the same to the Babylonians, who carried away the Judahites. Whether or not Jeremiah has Rachel weeping for literal infants in particular, their destruction exists as a motif throughout references to the exile.

Rachel also has a connection to Bethlehem not mentioned in the Jeremiah passage. Genesis 35:19-20 tells the story of Rachel dying after giving birth to Benjamin. After that, Jacob buries her “on the road to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.” Micah 5:2, which is also cited in Matthew 2, refers to Bethlehem likewise as “Bethlehem Ephrathah.” Some traditions, including Jeremiah, are understood to place the tomb of Rachel further north in the territory of Benjamin, and Ramah is indeed a city in that territory. However, the Bethlehem tradition is undoubtedly very old, appearing in all manuscripts of Genesis extant, and Stendahl lists major LXX variants of Jeremiah 31:15 which in fact do not

translate Ramah as the name of a place.<sup>103</sup> While Matthew does not cite any of these variants, it is very likely he was aware of the tradition behind them and cited a translation containing Ramah as a name because it was the translation he possessed.

These details, requiring detailed and specific knowledge of both the text quoted and many other texts and extra-biblical associations, indicate that Matthew was not thoughtless in citing this prophecy of Jeremiah. What, then, did he intend to say with it? Jeremiah 31 contains a famous passage from vv. 31–34 which proclaim that God “will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah”<sup>104</sup> which is cited in the Letter to the Hebrews and perhaps forms the basis of a theology of a new covenant initiated by Jesus throughout the NT (itself possibly translated as “The New Covenant”). Matthew, then, may be beginning to frame an “echo” of Jeremiah’s theology of the new covenant in his own Gospel, as Hays argues.<sup>105</sup> More pointedly, however, Jeremiah 31:15–22 form a single oracle separate from the new covenant prophecy later in the chapter. V. 16 proclaims that Rachel’s children will return to their own country, and v. 21 calls Israel to return to her cities. Matthew places his quotation of this oracle directly before the story of the family of Jesus’ return to Judea, even though it had been referenced before. Matthew appears again to be paralleling the return of Jesus’ family to their homes with the prophesied return in a far more particular way than an echo, again constructing a narrative, and not only thematic,

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<sup>103</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 102.

<sup>104</sup> Jer 31:31, translation mine.

<sup>105</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 116.

parallel. However, there is no prediction in these texts which Matthew might imagine Jesus realizes.

## §2.3 Matthew 4:14–16//Isaiah 8:23–9:1

### Matthew 4:14–16

NA28: ἵνα πληρωθῆι τὸ ρηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· γῆ Ζαβουλῶν καὶ γῆ Νεφθαλίμ, ὁδὸν θαλάσσης, πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότει φῶς εἶδεν μέγα, καὶ τοῖς καθημένοις ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου φῶς ἀνέτειλεν αὐτοῖς.

NRSV: ...so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

### Isaiah 8:23–9:1<sup>106</sup>

BHS: כִּי לֹא מוֹעֵץ לְאִשְׁרַךְ מוֹצֵק לָהּ כַּעֲתָה הָרְאִישׁוֹן הַקָּל אֶרְצָהּ זְבוּלוֹן וְאֶרְצָהּ נַפְתָּלִי  
וְהָאֲרָצוֹת הַכְּבִידִים דָּרְדְּרוּ הֵם עַבְרַת הַיַּרְדֵּן גְּלִיל הַגּוֹיִם: הָעַם הַהֲלֻכִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ רָאוּ אֹר  
גְּדוֹל יִשְׁבִּי בְּאֶרֶץ צְלֻמוֹת אֹר נִגְהַ עֲלֵיהֶם:

LXX: καὶ οὐκ ἀπορηθήσεται ὁ ἐν στενοχωρία ὢν ἕως καιροῦ. Τοῦτο πρῶτον ποίει, ταχὺ ποίει, χώρα Ζαβουλων, ἡ γῆ Νεφθαλιμ ὁδὸν θαλάσσης καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ τὴν παραλίαν κατοικοῦντες καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, τὰ μέρη τῆς Ἰουδαίας. ὁ λαὸς ὁ

<sup>106</sup> Isa 9:1–2 in NRSV.

πορευόμενος ἐν σκότει, ἴδετε φῶς μέγα· οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν χώρᾳ καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου, φῶς λάμψει ἐφ' ὑμᾶς.

NRSV: But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

Matthew follows the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the desert with the news that John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus immediately prior to the temptation, was arrested, and that Jesus then left Nazareth to live by the Sea of Galilee. The Evangelist states that this move occurred “so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.” This passage is Isaiah 8:23–9:1, and follows the passage detailed in the study of Matthew 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7-8, beginning an outline of the image of an ideal king. Matthew was likely aware of this theme, especially considering his previous citation of Isaiah.

Matthew’s quotation differs in vocabulary from the LXX, but also renders the verbs of the passage as aorists, while the LXX uses the future tense. Stendahl argues that this edit from Matthew stresses that Jesus has “fulfilled” this passage by bringing its content to pass. However, because Hebrew lacks morphological tense (relying on perfective and imperfective aspects expressed morphologically and context to determine tense), either future or past tense is often a valid translation. In this context, the Hebrew verbs are perfect,

so translating them as Greek aorists is perhaps a better translation than what is provided in the LXX, and the NRSV follows the MT in translating into the past tense. Menken also makes this observation concerning tense and adds that Matthew does not change future tense verbs in other passages he presents Jesus as fulfilling, indicating that this change was a correction to the LXX that precedes Matthew.<sup>107</sup>

Hays understands this passage to be not only a proof-text accompanying Jesus beginning his ministry in Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee, but also as a figurative reference to the Gentile ministry of Jesus and the Church.<sup>108</sup> That is a sensible reading, for immediately following this fulfillment quotation in v. 17, Jesus' ministry begins with a single claim before he calls the disciples: the Kingdom of God is at hand. I do not dispute Hays on this point. I would add, however, that in addition to echoing Isaiah to foreshadow the Gentile ministry, Matthew also parallels the text of Isaiah 9 more closely. Matthew also points out in verse 4:24 that many residents of Syria and the Decapolis heard his preaching, which also seems to parallel mention of Syria and the Greeks in Isaiah 9:12 (LXX), ten verses after Matthew's quoted passage<sup>109</sup>. Matthew, then, is not making a statement purely concerning the geography of Jesus' ministry, but concerning its content and audience, not only as a figure of a future Gentile ministry, but the ministry of Jesus in this moment of the narrative

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<sup>107</sup> Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 29.

<sup>108</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 176–177.

<sup>109</sup> The MT does not mention Greeks, but Philistines. Matthew's source likely does not correct for this.

## §2.4 Matthew 12:18–21//Isaiah 42:1–4

### Matthew 12:18–21

NA28: ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἰδοὺ ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἠρέτισα, ὁ ἀγαπητός μου εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου· θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ. οὐκ ἐρίσει οὐδὲ κραυγάσει, οὐδὲ ἀκούσει τις ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ. κάλαμον συντετριμμένον οὐ κατεάξει καὶ λίνον τυφόμενον οὐ σβέσει, ἕως ἂν ἐκβάλῃ εἰς νίκος τὴν κρίσιν. καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν.

NRSV: This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope.’

### Isaiah 42:1–4

BHS: הֵן עַבְדִּי אֶתְמַדְדָּבּוּ בְּחִירִי רְצֹנָה נַפְשִׁי נִתְתִּי רוּחִי עָלָיו מִשְׁפָּט לְגוֹיִם יוֹצִיא: לֹא יִצְעַק וְלֹא יִשָּׂא וְלֹא יִשְׁמִיעַ בְּחֹץ קוֹלוֹ: קִנְהָ רְצוֹן לֹא יִשְׁבּוֹר וּפִשְׁתָּה כְּהָה לֹא יִכַּבְּנָה לְאֻמֹּת יוֹצִיא מִשְׁפָּט: לֹא יִכְהָה וְלֹא יִרְוץ עַד־יִשְׁיִם בְּאַרְץ מִשְׁפָּט וּלְתוֹרַתוֹ אֵיִם יִיחִילוּ:

LXX: Ἰακωβ ὁ παῖς μου, ἀντιλήμψομαι αὐτοῦ· Ἰσραηλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου, προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἡ ψυχὴ μου· ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐξοίσει. οὐ κεκράζεται

οὐδὲ ἀνήσει, οὐδὲ ἀκουσθήσεται ἔξω ἢ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ. κάλαμον τεθλασμένον οὐ συντρίψει καὶ λίνον καπνιζόμενον οὐ σβέσει, ἀλλὰ εἰς ἀλήθειαν ἐξοίσει κρίσιν. ἀναλάμψει καὶ οὐ θραυσθήσεται, ἕως ἂν θῆ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κρίσιν· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν.

NRSV: Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Throughout his telling of the deeds and teachings of Jesus, Matthew intersperses quotations, often from Isaiah. The longest of these quotations, indeed, the longest quotation in the Gospel, is a version of Isaiah 42:1-4. In the context of the Gospel, Matthew claims this passage is fulfilled by Jesus commanding those whom he healed to not make him known to others, or in other words, the keep what many scholars call the “messianic secret.” In that context, however, it is odd that Matthew would quote any more than Isaiah 42:2. It seems that Matthew, quoting more, signals something greater behind his citation beyond the most immediate occasion.

Isaiah 42 continues an oracle from chapter 41 which outlines God’s claim of sovereignty over history, particularly in the raising of Israel as a nation, sending enemies against it for straying from his ways, and sending another “from the north” in 41:25, perhaps Cyrus the Persian emperor, who freed the Israelites from exile. No other god could



do this, and so lose a dispute with the God of Israel on this account; they are nothing and their statues are nothing.<sup>110</sup> The identity of the servant is not clear in the MT; based on the beginning of the preceding chapter, in which Israel is referred to as God's servant, chosen, and friend, that the servant named here is the whole nation would be reasonable. The LXX makes this explicit by naming the servant as Jacob, the father of Israel. It may also refer to Cyrus, mentioned immediately before chapter 42. Finally, it could refer to the Messiah, whether that is Jesus or another person.

In Matthew, this quotation is preceded and followed by disputes with the Pharisees, who first question Jesus for seemingly breaking Torah in 12:2, 10, and afterwards argue that he casts out demons by the power of Beelzebub in v. 24. Jesus argues in vv. 25–32 that it would be nonsensical for him to cast out the servants of Satan with satanic power, and states to them that to blaspheme the Holy Spirit in this way is a grave, even unforgiveable sin. “No house divided against itself will stand<sup>111</sup>,” so Jesus must be acting with God's power. Likewise, one should not expect good fruit from bad trees. After this in vv. 37–42, the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign, which he denies, instead upholding the example of the Ninevites who repented at the prophecy of Jonah, and the queen of the South who traveled to hear the wisdom of Solomon, that is, upholding the virtues of Gentiles. The seemingly extraneous portions of Matthews quotation of Isaiah, stating that the servant brings true teaching and has the hope of the nations (rather than coastlands, following the LXX over

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<sup>110</sup> Isa 41:29.

<sup>111</sup> Matt 12:25.

the MT), may then be paralleled by Matthew with Jesus' description of these episodes, in addition to Hays's assertion that they foreshadow the Gentile mission.<sup>112</sup>

Also particularly interesting is the context for these disputations with the Pharisees. Isaiah in 41:21–29 brings the servant into a longer discussion where God poetically disputes those who ascribe power and worship to other gods. God castigates the worshippers of other gods by pointing out that they have not predicted anything which has come to pass, while God has guided history and given true predictions. Here in Matthew, Jesus disputes with the Pharisees who ascribe his power to cast out demons to another demon. Jesus, in a sense, argues that the Pharisees have committed a pagan's abomination<sup>113</sup> in ascribing divine power to something other than God by accusing him. These are all precise parallelisms dependent on unwritten context and reference to the quoted text.

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<sup>112</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 179–181.

<sup>113</sup> Isa 41:24.

## §2.5 Matthew 21:4–5//Zechariah 9:9

### Matthew 21:4–5

NA28: τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· εἶπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται σοι πραῦς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὄνον καὶ ἐπὶ πῶλον υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου.

NRSV: This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

### Zechariah 9:9

BHS: גִּילִי מְאֹד בַּת-צִיּוֹן הֲרִיעִי בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה מִלְכְּךָ יָבוֹא לָךְ צַדִּיק וְנוֹשֵׁעַ הוּא עָנִי וְרָכַב עַל-חֲמֹר וְעַל-עֵר בֶּן-אֲתָנֹת:

LXX: Χαῖρε σφόδρα, θύγατερ Σιων· κήρυσσε, θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται σοι, δίκαιος καὶ σώζων αὐτός, πραῦς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον.

NRSV: Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

As Jesus prepares to enter the city of Jerusalem and make a public statement that he is the Messiah, he orders the disciples to bring him a donkey and its colt to him, on which he will ride into the city to great clamor. Matthew adds that this was done to fulfill Zechariah 9:9.

This quotation is fascinating among the text cases due to its proximity to a narrative shared by all three Synoptic Gospels. It has also attracted a great many questions. Of particular note is that Matthew changes the story from Mark by adding a “foal of a donkey” in addition to the first donkey, seemingly to better conform the story to the literal words of Zechariah, even though it is far more likely the prophet is being poetic and not talking about two donkeys. Stendahl, however, thinks this is connected to Jewish exegetical tradition and is not an error on Matthew’s part,<sup>114</sup> though Hays understands it to be an amusing after-effect of Matthew’s fastidious desire to supplement Markan narratives with OT quotations.<sup>115</sup> Menken provides a compelling, almost Haysian reading which sees the two donkeys as paralleling 2 Samuel 16:1–4, where King David is offered two donkeys “for the house of the king to ride on” near the Mount of Olives.<sup>116</sup> This last interpretation satisfies me, but again, more seems to be going on with Matthew’s use of the quotation, which can be best seen by referring to a great section of Zechariah.

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<sup>114</sup> Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 119.

<sup>115</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospel*, 106.

<sup>116</sup> Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 111.

The greater context of this passage, which is part of a section of Zechariah consisting of chapters 9-11, reflects a coming rule which dispels sin from Judah, and subjugates the nations under God's sovereignty. Matthew seems to parallel a few things mentioned in this section of Zechariah: firstly, Zechariah mentions in 9:16 that God will heal the sons of Zion, who will be like the gems of a crown, while in Matthew Jesus heals the "blind and the lame" in the Temple, after which they praise him as the heir of David, glorifying him as a ruler as might a crown, in Matthew 21:14; secondly, Matthew records an enigmatic event, an expansion of a similar event in Mark, which depicts Jesus cursing a fig tree that did not have fruit for him to eat. This cursing perhaps parallels an image in Zechariah 11:1-2: "Open your doors, O Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars! Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, for the glorious trees are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has been felled!" Finally, Zechariah 11:4-5 decries those who buy and sell flocks marked for slaughter, likely a metaphor for the Israelites. Matthew also contains the driving out of the money changers, who sold doves for sacrifices, in 21:12.

In these ways, Jesus' deeds in Jerusalem take their shape in Matthew from Zechariah. Note again that this fulfillment passage is unique among our test cases for being the one narrative of Matthew present in the other three canonical gospels. Many of these parallels, from Jesus riding on a donkey to driving out the money changers, are not unique to Matthew. However, the statement that Jesus healed people in the Temple is a Matthean addition, and Matthew also rewrites the fig tree curse which Mark splits into two separate but related episodes. And of course, Matthew also famously implies that Jesus rides both a donkey and its colt into Jerusalem, where Mark only mentions the donkey. In all these ways

that Matthew differs from Mark, it appears he does so to parallel Zechariah 9-11 more strongly.

## §2.6 Assessment

At the beginning of the exegetical case studies, I outlined the following proposal: when Matthew quotes a passage of the OT, this is a reference not only to the cited passage, but to its surrounding narrative as well; this gives us license to juxtapose both the greater context of the cited passage in its specific details with the greater narrative in which the passage is cited in the Gospel. In doing so, precise parallels can be drawn between the details of the two passages. The purpose of these quotations and their parallels are not to show Jesus as the realization of predictions made by the prophets, but to demonstrate that the story of Jesus is consonant and coherent with the story of the OT as a whole.

Many observations found within my analysis support this proposal. In all of these passages, Matthew implicitly parallels the narrative surrounding the quotations to the greater context of the passages he cites from; for instance, Matthew parallels King Herod the Great and his association with the Romans to King Ahaz and his relationship to the Assyrians following his quotation of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23.

In some of the passages, it is clear that Matthew is not quoting the OT in order to present Jesus as realizing a prediction. Matthew's quotation of Jeremiah 31:15 in Matthew 2:18 does not refer to a prediction at all, and if it did, Jesus is not directly involved enough to be the one to realize it. In quoted passages such as Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23 which could be considered predictions, it seems highly unlikely that Matthew, utilizing the greater context and meaning of the quoted passage, would ignore said context selectively to shoehorn Jesus into it as its intended referent.

In every passage, Matthew certainly does far more than proof-text, to the point that it almost seems superfluous to consider it an element of his method at all. The paradigm of prediction and coming to pass, therefore, is not a common theme between the fulfillment-formula quotations in Matthew. The only common theme is that the quotations buttress a greater palace of allusions to their greater contexts. The possible rhetorical force of these quotations does not need to lie, then, in the assumption of prediction-occurrence paradigm. Instead, it is sufficiently valuable to demonstrate that the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus are consonant and coherent with the OT narratives and teachings through the use of parallels. Thus, the hypothesis with which I began the analysis holds where previous theories have not.



## Conclusion

The Gospel of Matthew is saturated throughout with quotations, allusions, and echoes of OT Scripture. At times, our ideas concerning these references and Matthew's intent behind them are more inherited than studied. However, some eminent minds have studied Matthew and his OT references extensively. I have summarized the views of six scholars who have treated these from the middle of the twentieth century to today, which came to often very different views of the material: Stendahl, Lindars, Gundry, McConnell, Menken, and Hays.

Placing myself in their line of inquiry, I identified three key categories under which my criticisms of these authors fell. First, I affirmed that Matthew was aware of the context surrounding the texts he quotes in his Gospel, rather than ignorant of it. Second, I feel that some previous works based their interpretations of the quotations in the Gospel based on speculations of its context, rather than first dealing with the Gospel as a text in relationship to OT texts. Lastly, I think that all the reviewed authors maintained an unfounded assumption that the concept of the fulfillment of prophecy in Matthew is defined by the assertion that Jesus carries out events predicted by the prophets.

Considering these criticisms, I proposed my own hypothesis pertaining to a small section of the greater conversation. I hypothesized that Matthew used the "fulfillment-formula" quotations to place his Gospel narrative beside the full context of the quoted passage, which he uses to shape the Gospel narrative in imitation of OT prophecies and narratives, and that his parallelism is the primary meaning of "fulfillment" in Matthew as it

pertains to Matthew. I argued for this thesis by analyzing five of the fulfillment-formula quotations and illustrating what parallels between Matthew and the various OT texts quoted I found as a result of following the quotations to their source. In the end, the hypothesis led to concrete exegetical results which further elaborated the meaning of the Gospel of Matthew, particularly as it relates itself to OT Scripture.

My thesis, being as limited as it is, can only point to the silhouette of a larger and more comprehensive theory or theories. However, this meek research is a step in a tantalizing direction. Do other NT texts utilize OT Scripture in this way, or in similar, yet distinct ways? What does this method of exegesis and the theology attached illuminate about the relationship of early Christianity to Second Temple Judaism? These questions and many more, I believe, can benefit from my analysis offered here. It is my hope that my method and findings find uses which I cannot even imagine; it is then, I think, that they are truly proven.

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