MIDRASH
AND
SCRIPTURE FULFILLMENT

Dr. Ian A. Fair
2026

Content

Bibliography 3
Midrash and Types of Scripture Fulfillment 4
Scriptural Fulfillment 6
Fulfillment Terminology 11
Isaiah 7:14: The Sign: “Virgin - Within Three Years” 23

Bibliography

Donald Hagner
Robert Gundry

Midrash and Types of Scripture Fulfillment

Donald Hagner, Robert Gundry, E. P. Sanders, Jacop Neusner, and others have explored the role Midrash plays in NT hermeneutics, notably in Matthew's unique use of the word *fulfilled* at length.

"*In the NT era,* ***midrash designated the exposition of Scripture*** *and had nothing to do with the assimilation of historical and nonhistorical elements*.[1]"

As noted above, Midrash is a style of interpreting Scripture, of demonstrating some form of prophetic fulfillment, not defining the historical nature of the tex.

Four types of fulfillment systems surface in the study of how New Testament writers use Old Testament texts to support their claims regarding Jesus' legitimacy.

In the NT era, Midrash designated the exposition of Scripture and had nothing to do with the assimilation of historical and nonhistorical elements.

Models or approaches to understanding the fulfillment of prophetic texts.

Predictive prophecies
Typological prophecies
Analogical prophecies
Midrashic prophecies

In our study we will note certain cross-references to teachings and narratives in the other gospels, enriching our understanding of *how* Jesus *relates* to *all* and *religious* peoples.

Unique prophetic texts identified by Gundry and others in Matthew's Gospel.

Gundry and others have identified ten "prophetic" texts in Matthew's Gospel that are covered by Matthew's fulfillment process, most likely in a *Midrashic* model of finding new emphases in Old Testament texts that refer to Jesus.

1. Matthew 1:22-23 - The virgin birth of Jesus fulfills Isaiah 7:14.
2. Matthew 2:15 - Jesus' return from Egypt fulfills Hosea 11:1.
3. Matthew 2:17-18 - The massacre of the infants fulfills Jeremiah 31:15.
4. Matthew 2:23 - Jesus being called a Nazarene fulfills the prophets' words.
5. Matthew 4:14-16 - Jesus' ministry in Galilee fulfills Isaiah 9:1-2.
6. Matthew 8:17 - Jesus healing the sick fulfills Isaiah 53:4.
7. Matthew 12:17-21 - Jesus' gentle and humble nature fulfills Isaiah 42:1-4.
8. Matthew 13:35 - Jesus speaking in parables fulfills Psalm 78:2.
9. Matthew 21:4-5 - Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey fulfills Zechariah 9:9.
10. Matthew 27:9-10 - The thirty pieces of silver used to betray Jesus fulfills Zechariah 11:12-13

Other quotations employing the word γέγραπται, "*it is written*," in the introductory formula can also stress fulfillment, as in 2:5; 11:10; and 26:31. Also to be noted is the general fulfillment formula without any actual quotation in 26:56 (cf. 26:54) with reference to the events of the passion narrative: ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν, "in order that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Types of Prophetic Utterances

Predictive prophecies

Certain OT texts *predict* that certain events relating to Jesus would occur.

Micah 5:2/Matt 2, predicted that the new king, Jesus, would be born in Bethlehem. Jesus' birth fulfilled this prophecies.

[1] Charles Quarles, JETS 39/3, September 1996, 457–464

Isa 7:13, 14, a young woman, alma, virgin, Parthenos (Septuagint) will give birth to a child, Isaiah wrote that this took place in Ahaz's day, Isa 7:15-17.

However, Matthew saw a *Typological* or *Midrashic* fulfillment and proclaimed that Jesus would be born of a virgin!

Typological prophecies

Jesus on the cross was a type of Mosaic serpent on a stick in the wilderness.

Analogical prophecies

Christiaan baptism is analogous to Israel passing through the Red Sea and being saved by the power of God, Exod 14, 1 Cor 10:2.

Christian baptism is analogous to Noah and his family being saved by water, 1 Pet 3:20.

Midrashic prophecies

Midrash was a valuable typological prophetic process adopted by most writers in the New Testament who had great faith in the scheme of redemption and saw Jesus and the church Midrashically fulfilling God's scheme of redemption.

Scriptural Fulfillment

The Relationship between New Testament Fulfillment Texts and Old Testament "Prophetic" Texts

Examples of *Midrash*

Dr. Ian A. Fair

Some Definitions

In this brief introduction to Midrash, I am primarily explaining how New Testament writers used some Old Testament texts to make a specific point mostly explaining how certain Old Testament texts enlighten their point or had a deeper meaning and application. Fundamental to their understanding was that there was something in the Old Testament text that at the time of writing was not clearly seen, understood, or the major point of the writer. The use of Midrash also demonstrated that the New Testament writer recognized that the Old Testament had a deeper meaning, history, and significance, although at the Old Testament time this was not clearly or fully understood.

The point is that this style of using Old Testament texts was well known in Judaism in a wide variety of contexts.

I will below demonstrate several texts that make this point.

A point to bear in mind was that when writers of the New Testament texts were using the Old Testament texts they were doing so under the inspiration and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Scholarly comments on Midrash

Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen. Handbook of Biblical Criticism, Fourth Edition, p. 127, "Midrash (pl. midrashim; fr. Heb: darash: to search, inquire). Midrash is the rabbinic term for the exegesis or interpretation of scripture. It may refer to a particular instance of scriptural interpretation, or, more precisely, to a literary work of scriptural commentary. (See, e.g., 2 Chr 24:27 and 13:22 in the Jerusalem Bible; cf. RSV.) A midrash may be either halakic (legal, procedural) or haggadic (nonlegal, illustrative, etc.) in content; exegetical, homiletical, or narrative in form. However, it is always commentary on scripture, i.e., on a fixed text regarded by the interpreter as the revealed word of God. The dating and more precise definition of midrashim are debated. Some employ the term broadly to include early Jewish exegesis of scripture from the postexilic period onward, thereby allowing for the possibility of midrashic activity in the HB itself (e.g., Chronicles). Others reserve the term for the exegesis of scripture produced by and characteristic of rabbinic Judaism. Examples of midrashim in the broader sense include the midrash of the Passover Haggadah (see the Encyclopaedia Judaica, ad loc.), the several "pesharim" or commentaries in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Wisdom of Solomon (chs. 11–19), 1 Cor 10, and perhaps John 6. See HALAKAH; HILLEL."

Herman C. Waetjen, Baker's Dictionary of Theology

"Midrash derives "from the Hebrew *daras* meaning to examaine, a midrash is sumultaneously a Jewish-rabbinic commentary aand a method of scriptural exposition into the meaning of the text."

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

"The underlying Hebrew verb means to inquire or study, and accordingly the noun could signify "a result of research, a study." Alternatively*, it may mean "commentary" in the sense of a presentation of history from a certain angle of thought*

Anchor Bible Dictionary

*"*It has been common to define midrash in terms of its function or purpose. Slonimsky (1956: 235) found the essence of midrash in its "feeding of the life-impulse when harassed and threatened by tragic circumstances." Sanders (1972: xiv) wrote that "when one studies how an ancient tradition functions in relation to the needs of the community, he is studying midrash." Bloch (*DBSup* 5/29: 1263–80; cf. Wright 1967: 19–20) has offered several functional definitions of midrash; the major characteristic she attributes to midrash is its attempt to make a biblical text contemporary and relevant. Wright (1967: 67) has stressed the literary form of midrash and wrote, "the basic midrashic structure … is merely that one begins with a text of Scripture and proceeds to comment on it in some way." However, Gertner (1962b: 268–69) drew a distinction between covert midrash—in which neither the text, nor the midrashic idea, nor the midrashic technique is defined or mentioned—and overt midrash—in which the verse, idea, and most often the technique are explicitly stated. Finally, Sanders (1972: xiv) argued that "any definition of midrash which limits its scope to the citation and use of an actual biblical passage is deficient."

Given the varieties of functions attributed to midrash, the fact that many have ignored the possibility of midrash's being a scholarly, holy game (Heineman 1954: 2; Frankel 1956: 29; Porton 1979: 131), and the possibility that anything might be midrash if we do not require a clear connection between the comment and the verse, midrash is best defined as follows:

Midrash is a type of literature, oral or written, which has its starting point in a fixed canonical text, considered the revealed word of God by the *midrashist* and his audience, and in which this original verse is explicitly cited or clearly alluded to" (Porton 1979: 112; 1981: 62; cf. Childs 1972: 49) …

Rabbinic midrash must be seen as an essential element in the rabbinic worldview. For the rabbis, the Torah was their link between this world and God. A rabbi was a rabbi because he alone knew the totality of revelation, and the written and oral versions of the Torah, and *it was his task, as a rabbi, to study and to actualize the Torah's content*. For the rabbis, midrash was, above all, a religious, God-centered, activity. The Bible contained all the secrets of the universe, and it was the source of all knowledge and wisdom; the Torah was the complete public revelation of the One, Only, and Perfect God to His people. The Bible was the ultimate guide for human action, the final arbiter between right and wrong, true and false. Every element of the text—every letter, every verse, every phrase—was written as it was for a specific reason and purpose, and it was the rabbis' task to discover the reason and to explicate the purpose. Furthermore, the Bible formed an integrated and interrelated whole, and it was one of the major rabbinic goals to demonstrate the unity of purpose and the singleness of intent of the Bible. *However, the rabbis realized that the Bible spoke to different people, even to different rabbis, in different ways; therefore, the rabbinic masters accepted the possibility of multiple interpretations of biblical passages. As long as a rabbi approached the text as a legitimate member of the rabbinic class, his explanation of the Bible had to be taken seriously, and the comment itself became part of the ongoing process of the rabbinic explication of revelation* (Neusner 1972: 44–128; Porton 1985: 1–3).

Summary comments on the use of the word *midrash* in Scripture

Apart from these instances in Chronicles, the other usage of importance for the OT is its meaning as a procedure or product of interpretation of the biblical text, which was eventually incorporated into the Jewish commentaries called *Midrashim*. In the literature of Qumran, *midrash* appears in the general sense of "interpretation of the Law." But in later rabbinic literature it became a technical term for a collection of traditional teachings of the rabbis arranged in order of chapter and verse of biblical books.

The overall aim of these studies was to apply the ancient text to contemporary circumstances in a variety of ways.

Midrash is an early Jewish interpretation of or commentary on a Biblical text, clarifying or expounding a point of law or developing or illustrating a moral principle.

Midrash is an interpretive act, seeking the answers to religious questions (both practical and theological) by plumbing the meaning of the words of the *Torah*. (In the Bible, the root d-r-sh is used to mean inquiring into any matter, including occasionally to seek out God's word

Midrash responds to contemporary New Testament situations and infuses new theological meanings into the text, making typological connections between new realities and the Old Testament text.

Two New Testament Examples of *Midrash*

Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:14-21

In his inaugural sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, Peter stood up and preached a sermon on the divinity and lordship of Jesus. His opening point was that those speaking in tongues were not drunk as some were charging, but that their charismatic experience of speaking in tongues, languages, was a by the power of the Holy Spirit which was in turn a "fulfillment" of prophecy. He cited Joel 2:28, but notice his words set in bold in **Acts 2:17 below**.

"*Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.* [15] *For* ***these men are not drunk****, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day;* [16] *but* ***this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel****:* [17] *'****And in the last days*** *it shall be, God declares, that* ***I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh****, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;* [18] *yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days* ***I will pour out my Spirit****; and* ***they shall prophesy****.* [19] *And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;* [20] *the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day.* [21] *And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*.'"

Now, let's go to Joel 2:27 ff and notice what Joel actually wrote!

"You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD*, am your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.* [28] *"And* ***it shall come to pass afterward****, that* ***I will pour out my spirit on all flesh****; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.* [29] *Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit.*

[30] *"And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.* [31] *The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the* LORD *comes.* [32] *And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the* LORD *shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the* LORD *has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the* LORD *calls*."

The point to note is that *Joel actually said that God would pour out his spirit on all flesh* ***afterward***! He did not say ***in the last days*****,** *which is what Peter said in his sermon as he quoted Joel*! *Peter is drawing on Joel to make a point, a good point*, that God would pour out is spirit, which he had just done! Joel interpreted afterward as in the last days, a good example of midrash in which Peter, obviously under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, interpreted ***afterward*** as ***in the last days***! *Peter was seeing something that Joel did not see or mean to convey*. His point was that their strange experience actually had Old Testament history and backing!

By interpreting Joel's afterwards as in the last days Peter in good Jewish interpretive style was clarifying what Jowl predicted without knowing how that would be fulfilled! **Classic midrashic interpretation of an Old Testament prophecy in a new inspired message!**

Psalm 22 and Matthew 27:45, 46,

These two texts have been taken out of context *to make a theological point* that Scripture does not directly say or teach!

In fact, the heart of Jesus' outcry, quoting David's Psalm 22, has been misapplied by a deductive approach where a point is being made that was not hidden or intended by David in his Psalm!

Matt 27:45,46 is for all Christians a well-known text. "*At the sixth hour just before he died Jesus cried out: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.* [46] *And about the ninth hour* ***Jesus cried with a loud voice****, "Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?" that is, "****My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me****?"* [47] *And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Elijah*."

This cry of Jesus certainly highlights the ***agony faced by Jesus in his crucifixion***, but it obviously focuses on the enormity of the agony and cruelty of a Roman crucifixion! Even the divine Son of God feared the physical and emotional suffering that was involved in his death. ***The enormity of what his death meant in God's plan of salvation, the sins of the world were on his mind! He certainly must have felt alone****, his disciples had forsaken him!* Jesus had just prayed in the Garden that he might escape this emotional, spiritual, and physical suffering, **Matt 26:38-39**, "*Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."* [39] *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father,* ***if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt***."

Jesus, in both his *divine nature* and *human nature* knew full well what a Roman crucifixion would be like! So what did he do? He drew on David and his **Psalm 22** where David had cried out to God in desperation, but never losing the sight of the fact God was his strength. Savior, and helper!!

We need to examine the text Jesus is obviously quoting, **Psalm 22**. It is a long text or Psalm which in its original setting is attributed to David, *faced by his struggles with those that sought his life*.

Notice how the Psalm progresses from ***despair****, to* ***faith****, to* ***strength***.

You should be assured that Jesus knew that Psalm by heart, and hod most likely worded the Psalm on earlier occasions of loneliness and trouble!

Remember, this is David's psalm and cry for help!

"To the choirmaster: according to The Hind of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.
[1] ***My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me***?
Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? [2] O my God, I cry by day,
but *thou dost not answer*;
and by night, but find no rest. [3] Yet thou art holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel. [4] *In thee our fathers trusted*;
they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. [5] *To thee they cried, and were saved*;
in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.

Drop down to verse 19 and see how David continued his outcry to God!
[19]***But*** thou, O LORD, ***be not far off***!
O thou my help, hasten to my aid!
[20] Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
[21] ***Save me from the mouth of the lion***,

my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen!

Notice the shift in emphasis in verse 22!
[22] I will tell of thy name to my brethren;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee:
[23] *You who fear the LORD, praise him*!
all you sons of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!
[24] *For he has not despised or abhorred*
the affliction of the afflicted;
and ***he has not hid his face from him****,*
but has heard, when he cried to him."

For David, this was not a cry of despair fearing that God had deserted him! It was a cry of faith and trust in God who delivers the faithful!

Jesus knew that Psalm well! He knew what David meant and what God had done in response. ***Jesus knew that God would not desert him in his moment of suffering.***

We should not read the New Testament back into the Psalm of David and its context and theology, but *should read the Old Testament meaning from that Psalm into Jesus and the New Testament*.

That Psalm when it was written was all about David, not Jesus. But in a *Midrashic* use *Jesus claimed that Psalm for himself*.

Jesus was praying for faith, courage, and strength in the face of his terrible death and suffering, but also in view of the atoning significance of that death.

In another sense, Psalm 22 was not Christocentric[2]. It was David, his circumstances and God centered! *David and his personal ordeal and faith are the center of that Psalm*. *But the Psalm is Christotelic in the sense that Jesus saw that it had personal implications*.

This Psalm of David is not *a prophetic statement of God forsaking Jesus because he was bearing the enormity if Human sin*. It was for David, for Jesus, and for us a Psalm of encouragement. The writer of Hebrews recognized this, Heb 13:5, "***I will never leave you or fail you!***"

[2] I will in another place discuss the difference between *Christocentric* and *Christotelic*.

Fulfillment Terminology

There are several ways in which the term *fulfillment* is used in Scripture:

1. **Predictive fulfillment**.
   Predictive prophecy is fairly straightforward; Micah 5:2 is a good example of predictive prophecy. Here a specific predictive prophecy is directly and specifically fulfilled with the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.
   The *prediction that a virgin* would give birth to a royal son (Isa 7:14) was historically fulfilled at Isa 7:14-9:7 as a proof of fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.
   Matthew drew on the literal predictive historical fulfillment of Isaiah 7-9 and used this as a background to demonstrating God's power to fulfill his promises. Matthew, at Matt 1:23, drew on the predictive prophecy/fulfillment of Isa 7 to midrashically refer to Jesus' birth of a virgin as a sign from God that a son in the line of David had been born. God had promised that the kingship of David's tribal line would never pass away, but would be fulfilled in the future. Jesus' virgin birth was a miraculous confirmation of a divinely powered virgin birth, using the virgin birth of Isa 7-9 as the basis of his proof of Jesus messianic Davidic reign.
2. **Typological fulfillment**.
   Where the New Testament writer/theologian finds parallel types of thought between the Old and New Testaments. The so-called Messianic Psalms use a typological form of fulfillment application. We will shortly illustrate this from Psalm 2, 22, and When Matthew referenced Isaiah's prophecy of Isa 7:14, he surely must have considered this a *typological midrashic fulfillment.* It strains the imagination to think that Matthew didn't know Isaiah's prophecy had been fulfilled long ago, so we must assume Matthew meant this second fulfillment to be typological. The "virgin birth" son of King Ahaz, in Isaiah, becomes a "type" of the birth of Jesus.
3. **Analogical fulfillment**.
   At Rom 4 and Gal 3 Paul uses certain instances or references in the Old Testament in an analogy to make his point. In Gal 4:21 ff Paul draws an analogy between Hagar and Sarai, Mount Sinai and the law and Sarah and Jerusalem representing the freedom we have in Christ.
4. **Midrashic fulfillment**.
   We have briefly discussed this type of "fulfillment" above under the term Midrash on occasion where the New Testament writer/theologian saw deeper truths in Old Testament texts as in Joel 2:28 ad Acts 2:17. Isaiah 7:14 and Matt 3:23, the virgin birth fulfillment typology. We will examine this type of fulfillment below under Isa 7:14.
   Note the comment under typological fulfillment above, "When Matthew referenced Isaiah's prophecy of Isa 7:14, he surely must have considered this a *typological midrashic fulfillment.* It strains the imagination to think that Matthew didn't know Isaiah's prophecy had been fulfilled long ago, so we must assume Matthew meant this second fulfillment to be typological. The "virgin birth" son of King Ahaz, in Isaiah, becomes a "type" of the birth of Jesus.

We have several Psalms that are used Midrashically to refer to Jesus' Royal Sonship and "Kingship"

The New Testament writers often quoted from the Psalms, especially in regard to Jesus since several Psalms are "royal" psalms and Jesus was a "royal" king in God's kingdom. These Psalms are a good place to begin when investigating how the New Testament uses the Old Testament especially in regard to Jesus as a "fulfillment" of "royal" messianic expectations.

Note that each of the Psalms cited, as is the case with all Psalms, have their own historical setting, many times in the context of David's own sufferings and hopes. The Psalms are liturgical poems set in the context of the worship and praise of God.

Psalm 2: A Royal Psalm of David

Commentary by Peter C. Craigie
Psalms 1–50. Word Biblical Commentary
Craigie was a distinguished conservative British scholar who died in 1985.

Form/Structure/Setting

In general terms, the psalm is a *royal psalm* and must be interpreted in association with the Hebrew monarchy. More specifically, Ps 2 is a *coronation psalm*; such a classification depends primarily upon the content of the psalm, rather than any characteristic form which distinguishes it from other royal psalms. A coronation involved the setting of a crown upon the new king's head, the formal presentation of a document to the new king, and his proclamation and anointing (cf. 2 Kgs 11:12); in the interpretation (below), the ceremonial details are drawn out more fully. *The identification of the psalm with the coronation of a Davidic king is clarified by the parallels between this psalm and the promises given to David in the oracle of Nathan* (2 Sam 7:8–16; see further Rogerson and McKay, *Psalms 1–50*, 19).

The psalm consists of four sections of approximately equivalent length. (1) Foreign nations and their rulers express rebellion against God and his king (2:1–3). (2) God mocks the might of kings by announcing the installation of a king of his own choosing in Zion (2:4–6). (3) The Davidic king speaks and declares the words of God contained in his kingly deed (2:7–9). (4) The nations and their kings are warned of God's wrath and of the consequences of his anger and pleasure (2:10–12). *Although it is possible that the whole psalm should be viewed as containing the words spoken by the Davidic king (so Eaton, Kingship and the Psalms, 111), it is perhaps better to note the change of speakers throughout the psalm.* From a literary perspective, the psalmist or poet presents a variety of persons, each of whom speaks. First, he presents foreign nations and kings (2:1–2) who speak their words of arrogance (2:3). Second, he presents the Lord (2:4–5) who speaks concerning the chosen king (2:6). Third, he presents the words of the king, who in turn proclaims the divine words of royal proclamation (2:7–9). Fourth, he addresses his own words of advice to the foreign nations and their rulers. Thus, the whole psalm has a dramatic character. From a liturgical perspective, it is possible that the different sections of the psalm were spoken by different persons during the course of the coronation ceremony. The congregation, or its priestly and prophetic leaders, may have spoken the opening verses (2:1–6). Then the king may have responded (2:7–9), followed by a congregational or priestly conclusion (2:10–12). The scant nature of the evidence, however, makes any such analysis uncertain; it is equally uncertain whether the psalm may reflect the coronation liturgy of the temple or a later ceremony in the palace.

The psalm is effective and dramatic in its literary style. The poet has used fairly short lines, which highlight the drama of the moment which the psalm reflects. *Parallelism and chiasmus are*

both commonly used poetic devices throughout the psalm (see the textual and philological notes), which contribute to its literary quality. The structure of the psalm as a whole is also distinctive, reflecting movement and completeness; beginning with the tumultuous nations, the poet then turns to God and his king, before concluding (chiastically) with the nations again, now subdued rather than tumultuous. And the sound of the psalm is also effective. In vv 3–5, the poet plays on the sound /o/, producing an effect which is like rhyme (unusual in Hebrew poetry). The sound appears first in the arrogant words of the earthly rulers (v 3); but then the same sound of arrogance is converted into a sound anticipating *woe* in the words introducing God's response (vv 4b, 5). Thus through a variety of artistic devices, the poet has crafted a psalm of power and elegance, worthy of the drama of its theme.[3]

… *Foreign nations and rulers* (2:1–3). The coronation of a king marks the accession of a person to a position of power and authority; for the Davidic kings, that power and authority were received from God and exercised under his dominion. It is against this background of divine and regal authority that the opening words of the psalm must be read. The nations of the world, their warriors and rulers, are gathering together in an act of rebellion against God and the king. Although it is possible to seek an historical background to the rebellious nations (e.g. in the reign of King Solomon), the psalmist is not necessarily referring to any particular event in history. The language reflects primarily all—or any—nations that do not acknowledge the primacy of Israel's God, and therefore of Israel's king. Thus, the verses contain a reflection of the opposite to a theological ideal. The ideal was that of a world in which all nations and kings recognized the kingship of God and his appointed sovereign; the reality was seen anew in each coronation, that such was not the case. Foreign nations would act violently against Israel's king and in so doing would be rebelling against divine rule. Hence the opening verses of the psalm introduce a note of immediacy and drama which permeates the entire psalm. A new king was coming to the throne, but he would rule in a world characterized by the violence and danger of foreign powers. In such a world, human strength would be insufficient; divine aid would be needed.

The human king is here identified as God's *anointed*. The royal title is derived from the fact that the king on his coronation is anointed (1 Kgs 1:45), an act symbolizing that he was set aside from other persons to perform a particular service. Although the word rendered "anointed" is the form from which comes the English title *Messiah* (derived from the Hebrew), the presence of the word in 2:2 does not necessarily mean that the psalm was initially *messianic*. Here, the reference of the term in the context of the psalm's initial use is simply to the *human* king, for whom the coronation was conducted (cf. Filipiak, *Collectanea Theologica* 43 [1973] 49–65). It was only from a more distant perspective in history that the messianic implications of the psalm could be discerned (see *Explanation*, below).

God announces his king (2:4–6). *The scene now shifts from the earthly rulers and their arrogant words to the heavenly Ruler and his words evoking terror. The contrast is striking; God is the Enthroned One, literally "the one sitting" (on his throne) in heaven.* The mockery and anger of God's words are prompted by the rebellion and arrogance of the earthly kings, and the very utterance of his words instills terror in those to whom they are addressed. Throughout these opening six verses, the entire scene is strictly imaginary; that is, imaginary nations (though they are rooted in the reality of constant historical experience) rebel and God responds. Yet this dramatic imagery serves to give international and cosmic significance to the first climax of the psalm, namely v 6. God terrifies the earthly rulers, not with any direct threat, but simply with an announcement that he has established his king in Zion.

---

[3] Craigie, P. C. *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentary, pp. 64–65.

When the liturgical dimension of the psalm is recalled, namely its use in a coronation ceremony, the words of v 6 take on further significance. Verse 2 implies that the anointing has already taken place, and v 6 indicates that the candidate was now officially king. His office as king was one of divine appointment; God had installed him. The king was installed "upon Zion;" Zion, in David's time, was the hill in the southeastern section of the city of Jerusalem (not to be confused with later popular tradition which located Mount Zion in the southwest), where the former Jebusite city had been located. But for practical purposes, the term Zion is virtually synonymous with Jerusalem, and whether the installation took place in the palace or temple cannot be ascertained (though parts of the coronation ceremony probably took place in both localities).[4]

… The divine words which the king declares are words pertaining to the royal covenant. At the heart of the covenant is the concept of *sonship*; the human partner in the covenant is *son* of the covenant God, who is *father*. *This covenant principle of sonship is a part of the Sinai Covenant between God and Israel*. The covenant God cares for Israel as a father cares for his son (Deut 1:31) and God disciplines Israel as a father disciplines a son (Deut 8:5). The focus of the Sinai covenant is the relationship between God and nation; in the covenant with the house of David, the focus is narrowed to a relationship between God and the king, but the concept of sonship is still integral to this covenant. *Thus God, through words spoken by Nathan, declared of David: "I will be his father and he shall be my son"* (2 Sam 7:14); *David, in return, could say to God: "You are my father"* (Ps 89:26).

The Davidic covenant was eternal, but all covenants were renewed from time to time; the principal form of renewal in the royal covenant took place in the coronation, when a new descendant of the Davidic dynasty ascended to the throne. Thus, the divine words "you are my son" mark a renewal of the relationship between God and David's house in the person of the newly crowned king. "Today" points to the fact that the words were announced on the coronation day, the day on which the divine decree became effective. (The emphasis on *today* also occurs in other types of covenant renewal ceremony; see Deut 26:17 and 30:19). "I have begotten you" is metaphorical language; it means more than simply adoption, which has legal overtones, and implies that a "new birth" of a divine nature took place during the coronation. It is important to stress, nevertheless, that the Davidic king, as son of God, was a *human being*, not a divine being, as was held in certain Near Eastern concepts of kingship. For background material and illustrations pertaining to the concept of sonship and coronation in other Near Eastern civilizations, see O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World. Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. New York: Seabury (1978) 247–68.

The king's sonship carried privileges, but the privileges were to be asked of God (v 8a), who would then willingly grant them. The privileges are expressed in ideal terms as the control of all nations to the ends of the earth (v 8) and power to "break them" and "pulverize them" (v 9), words which refer back to the rebellious nature of the earthly nations (2:1–3). The poetry in v 9 presents this regal authority in a dramatic manner: an "iron rod" is something intrinsically strong, just as a potter's vessel is constitutionally fragile. *This stark contrast between the power of the Davidic king and the fragility of earthly monarchs rested not in the human strength of the Hebrew king, but in the strength of God, the speaker of these words*.[5]

---

[4] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*. Pp. 65–66.

[5] Craigie, p. 67.

Psalm 8: What is Man?

Commentary by Peter C. Craigie
Psalms 1–50. Word Biblical Commentary

"[1] For the musical director. According to the Gittith. A psalm of David.[6]

Form/Structure/Setting

Psalm 8 is a *hymn of praise*, in general terms, though more precisely it may be classified as a *psalm of creation* (see Westermann, *Der Psalter*, 78). Yet it has an originality and distinctiveness which defy any attempt to categorize the psalm with respect to precise forms and substance. Indeed, a number of scholars have noted the apparent mixture of forms within the psalm, claiming the presence of hymnic material, wisdom material and portions similar to the lament (see Schmidt, *TZ* 25 [1969] 1–15; Beyerlin, *ZTK* 73 [1976] 1–22). Yet it is clearly a hymn, and the impossibility of fitting it into a precise mold is indicative in part of the poet's genius and creativity.

The universal nature of the psalm's substance is such that there can be no certainty whether or not the psalm was designed in the first instance for use in the cult, in some specific act of worship. It is certainly most appropriate for use in the cult's mode of worship, though a number of scholars consider it to have been initially noncultic (e.g. Fohrer, *Introduction to the OT*, [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968] 286). If the psalm were initially cultic, it would have been appropriate for use on an occasion such as the Feast of Tabernacles (see Anderson, *Psalms I*, 100), but its theme is so central to the Israelite tradition, that there may have been many other occasions for which this psalm would have been equally appropriate. The alternation between plural and singular ("our governor," v 2; "I see," v 4) would fit quite naturally within the context of communal worship. Although there is uncertainty as to the original relationship between the psalm and the cult, the title (v 1) indicates that the psalm came to be used regularly in the course of Israel's worship in the temple. In Christianity, at a later date, the psalm was traditionally associated with the worship of Ascension Day, in the light of the NT interpretation of the psalm.

It is not possible to specify the date and authorship of the psalm with any certainty. The contents are of such a kind as to offer little help with dating. There are certain affinities between the psalm and Gen I (with respect both to creation in general and the place of mankind within creation), but these similarities do not permit either precise dating or even a firm judgment as to historical sequence. Also, there is a point of similarity between the psalm and Job (Job 7:17; cf. Ps 8:5), but again the parallel does not contribute to dating or sequence. The theme of creation has given rise to a popular view that the psalm must be postexilic, on the assumption that creation-thought developed most fully in Israel during and after the Exile. But such an assumption is surely unwarranted, given the commonality of creation throughout the ancient Near East and the centrality of creation in Israelite thought from a very early period.

The psalm forms a perfect unity, but may be examined in terms of its four component parts. (1) *God's majesty and might* (8:2–3); (2) *mankind's sense of insignificance* (8:4–5); (3) *God's role for mankind* (8:6–9); (4) *concluding praise* (8:10).

… ***Comment***

God's majesty and might (8:2–3). God is addressed by his proper name (**יהוה**, *Yahweh*, or conventionally in English, "Lord,") followed by a title (**אדנינו** "our lord/governor"). In later Judaism, the divine name was held to be so sacred that the title was always used in place of the name; but here, the name is enunciated, and then immediately the psalmist goes on to praise the

[6] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, p. 104.

majesty of the "name" (v 2b). The word "name" here represents not only God, but also God's revelation of himself, and it is critical to an understanding of the theme of revelation in the psalm as a whole (see below, and also Tournay, *RB* 78 [1971] 18–30). Thus God's "name" and God's "majesty" (v 2c) are poetically synonymous, for the majesty of both God's person and creation are revealed to mankind in the divine name and all that it implies. The majestic name of God both permeates the earth and transcends the heavens, thus evoking the words of mortal praise. And as this psalm begins with an exclamation of the majesty of God's name, so too it ends in the same words (v 10), indicating in part that it is the majesty of the divine name which provides the central theme of the psalm and which provides the clue to its fundamental meaning.

The interpretation of v 3 is rendered difficult by virtue of the uncertainty as to its proper translation (see v 3, note a, above). There is a contrast between "babes and sucklings," on the one hand, and the "foe and avenger" on the other; between the contrasted parties is God (v 3c). God uses the mouth of "babes and sucklings," in some manner, to establish (his) "strength," on account of the presence, or existence, of enemies. It is probable that the verse should be interpreted with specific reference to the divine "name" (v 2). Enemies symbolize human strength; they are arrogant in their self-assertion. The essence of the enemies of God is that they do not recognize the name of God or the revelation that came through that name, for if they had come to such full recognition, they would have desisted from their enmity. Babes, on the other hand, symbolize human weakness and humility, but they have a strength greater than that of God's enemies when they take the *name* of God on their lips; that is, in speaking the name, they acknowledge and in some sense understand the majesty and revelation of God which are implicit in that name. Thus God may utilize the weak of this world, even the child, both to establish his strength, reflected in his nature and in his creation, and at the same time "to put at rest" (or quiet) the opposition of enemies. Understood in this manner, v 3 sets the stage for what is to follow. Though the universe is vast and imparts to mankind a sense of smallness and insignificance (vv 4–5), nevertheless God has given to mankind a position of extraordinary strength within the universe (vv 6–9). But that position of strength is not a natural human right (persons who think that enemies), but something God-given and God-revealed through the divine name. The psalmist, who will soon speak of the extraordinary honor and power bestowed upon mankind by God, first establishes in v 3 that it is not human arrogance that asserts such power, but the childlike recognition and enunciation of God's name.

Mankind's sense of insignificance (8:4–5). The spontaneous reaction of a human being, upon seeing the nighttime universe reflected in the stars and moon, is to become aware of his own insignificance. From a poetic perspective, the vastness of the universe is subtly magnified, for the heavens are the work of God's "fingers"! Though God does not have physical dimensions, the poet makes a striking point. In contrast to God, the heavens are tiny, pushed and prodded into shape by the divine digits; but in contrast to the heavens, which seem so vast in the human perception, it is mankind that is tiny. The response to this heavenly panorama is a response which so many humans have felt, whether or not they have encountered Ps 8. In such a vast space, with dimensions beyond human comprehension, "what is man?" (The expression "son of man," v 5b, is simply a poetic synonym of "man" in v 5a). The question of v 5b is phrased in such a manner that it evokes from the person without revelation (the enemies of v 3?) the answer: Nothing! In such vastness, it is inconceivable that human beings have significance or meaning; it is inconceivable that God, if there is a God, could remember each human being or give attention to each person. The poet deliberately creates this sense of despair, first, in order to make the positive answer to the question, when it comes (vv 6–9), all the more powerful. From an objective perspective, human beings are but the tiniest fragments in a giant universe; it is not conceivable that they could have significance

or a central position in that universe. But the name of God, through which revelation comes, indicates that the very opposite is true.

God's role for mankind (8:6–9). God's role for mankind is that of master within the created universe; specifically, the mastery extends over living creatures within the universe. Thus mankind is only a "little less than God" (v 6a); as God, the Creator, is ultimate master, so has he delegated mastery to mankind, the creature. The early versions differ in their interpretations at this point. Many of the earliest versions took the word אלהים (literally, "God, gods") to mean "angels" (so G, *S*, Tg. and Vg), and in some texts that would be an appropriate translation. But other versions (Aquila, Symmachus, and others) translated *God*. The translation *angels* may have been prompted by modesty, for it may have seemed rather extravagant to claim that mankind was only a little less than God. Nevertheless, the translation *God* is almost certainly correct, and the words probably contain an allusion to the image of God in mankind and the God-given role of dominion to be exercised by mankind within the created order. This position is mankind's estate (the verb in v 6a implies a past accomplishment), yet the role is not static, but requires continuous human response and action: hence, "you will crown him with glory and honor" (v 6b).

Mankind's mastery is to extend over all created things, but it is specifically living creatures that are singled out in vv 8–9. Both domestic and untamed creatures will fall beneath mankind's mastery, and both fish and birds will be set beneath his dominion. The reference to "whatever passes through the pathways of the sea" (v 9b) may simply be an all-embracing way of describing marine life, but it may indicate that even the monsters of the ocean (whales, or even mythological monsters), which were so much larger than tiny humans, were to fall under human control. The words are reminiscent of the ships and the monstrous Leviathan (Ps 104:25–26) that ply the waterways of the world.

Concluding praise (8:10). The psalm concludes on the same note as that on which it began—the praise of God's "name," for it was the name and the revelation which came through the name that transformed mankind's sense of universal insignificance into an awareness of the divine and significant plan.

Explanation

There are a few psalms in the Psalter which raise in various ways the question of nature's role in Hebrew thought and theology (cf. Pss 19, 104). Psalm 8 addresses that question in a distinctive way, though nature is not the central theme of the psalm.

Nature, or more precisely the created world which is God's handiwork, does not contain in this context any inherent qualities of revelation. The person who reflects upon nature, who perceives the vast universe with its celestial bodies, will certainly be impressed, but the impression will not imprint any truth in the mind with respect to mankind's role in the universe. In fact, the opposite is the case; the honest person's gaze into the vastness of space evokes only a sense of smallness, an awareness of human insignificance. Indeed, in some people, it may evoke a sense of awe, a sense of wonder at the extraordinary nature of the universe, but it contains no explicit revelation within it concerning mankind's place. Thus, the psalmist is not concerned here with presenting nature as a vehicle of revelation; nature rather evokes the necessary sense of nothingness which must precede a specific kind of revelation, namely the revelation of the name of God to mankind and within that, God's revelation of mankind's role within the created world. The role of human beings in the universe, in other words, is not something which can be discerned from reflecting upon nature, or from a kind of natural philosophy; it is something which may only be known on the basis of special and specific revelation.

Psalm 8 is referred to a number of times in the NT. It is used by Jesus in a fashion which brings out more profoundly its initial meaning, but its use in the early church reflects a new kind of

interpretation in the context of the earliest church's christology. Jesus, after cleansing the temple, was criticized by the chief priests and scribes for his apparent acceptance of the behavior of children, who were shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David." The authorities were indignant and expected Jesus to calm this juvenile chorus. But he responded by quoting Ps 8:3: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, you have brought forth perfect praise" (Matt 21:16). In his rebuke to the authorities, he brought out the inherent contrast in the original psalm; the children take the *name* upon their lips (interpreting *Son of David*, from the perspective of the early church, as a messianic title), but the authorities are indignant and complain—in effect, they are the foes and the avengers of the psalm. But, as in the psalm, it is the children who have the truer perception, not the arrogant enemies.

In the early church, the words of the psalm describing mankind's role of dominion in the world (8:6–7) are given christological significance with respect to the dominion of Jesus Christ in his resurrection and exaltation (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:6–8). In one sense, this is quite a new meaning, not evidently implicit in the psalm in its original meaning and context. And yet in another sense, it is a natural development of the thought of the psalm, for the dominion of which the psalmist spoke may have had theological reality, yet it did not always appear to have historical reality in the developing history of the human race. *The historical reality, according to Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is—and will be—fulfilled in the risen Christ*.[7]

Psalm 22: A Liturgy for One Threatened by Death

Commentary by Peter C. Craigie
Psalms 1–50. Word Biblical Commentary

"For the musical director. According to "Doe of the Dawn." A psalm of David."

Form/Structure/Setting

The initial problem in determining the form of Ps 22 lies in the fact that the psalm contains at least three different kinds of material: (a) *lament* (vv 2–22), within which there are elements of (b) *prayer* (vv 12, 20–22), and finally (c) *praise* and *thanksgiving* (vv 23–32). The sharp distinction between the two main sections (vv 2–22 and 23–32) has prompted some scholars to suggest that originally there were two separate psalms which were fused into one; while this view is a possibility with respect to the pre-history of the psalm, it fails to take into account the evident unity of the psalm as it now exists. The mixture of forms and types of language suggests strongly that the text of Ps 22 is the basis of a liturgy, in which the worshiper moves from lament to prayer, and finally to praise and thanksgiving. The psalm should probably be interpreted primarily as an *individual* psalm, though the liturgy sets the problem of the individual in the context of the community as a whole; thus, the liturgy was clearly a communal affair.

The liturgical dimension of the psalm emerges most clearly from an analysis of its structure, which may be set out as follows:

I. *Lament* (vv 2–22b): the sick declares his sorrow.
   1. Forsaken by God and mankind (vv 2–11).
   2. Prayer for help (v 12).
   3. Surrounded by trouble (vv 13–19).
   4. Prayer for deliverance (vv 20–22b).

II. *Response* (v 22c): presupposing an oracle.

III. *Thanksgiving* (vv 23–27): declared by the sufferer.

[7] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, p.105–110.

IV. *Thanksgiving* (vv 28–32): declared by the congregation.[8]

Explanation

To Pascal has been attributed the saying that at the end of life, "one dies alone" ("*on mourra seul*"). *The psalmist begins his lament with an expression of the loneliness of dying; it is loneliness in the absence of God*, compounded by the presence of evil human beings who offer neither companionship nor consolation. Thus, at its beginning, the psalm supplements those other writings in the OT which express profound desolation—the dreadful curse of Job (3:1–26) and the lament of Jeremiah (20:14–18). And like both Job and Jeremiah, the psalmist thinks back to the time of his birth and wonders why life has come to this (22:10–11). *Yet the psalm differs finally from the record of the experiences of Job and Jeremiah by virtue of its liturgical character; the liturgy immediately sets the loneliness of dying into the context of a caring community. And the worshiper, who begins his words in utter desolation, ends by inviting his fellow worshipers to join in the praise of God (22:23). The agent of deliverance from desolation is God himself, but the context in which that deliverance is declared is none other than the community of God's people.*

Though the psalm is not messianic in its original sense or setting (though some scholars would interpret vv 28–32 as a messianic relecture: see Martin Achard, art. cit.), it may be interpreted from a NT perspective as a messianic psalm par excellence. It is clear, from the recorded words of Jesus on the cross, that he identified his own loneliness and suffering with that of the psalmist (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34). And it is clear that the evangelists interpreted the crucifixion in the light of the psalm, utilizing its words in their description of the scene (Matt 27:39; Mark 15:29; cf. Luke 23:35; Ps 22:8). Indeed, the psalm takes on the appearance of anticipatory prophecy; the high priests, scribes and elders employ the modes of words of the psalmist's enemies against Jesus (Ps 22:19; cf. John 19:24; Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34). It is not without reason that the psalm has been called the "Fifth Gospel" account of the crucifixion (Frost, *CJT* 8 [1962] 102–15).

What is most significant about the NT perspective is the self-identification of Jesus with the suffering psalmist, for it provides an insight into one part of the meaning of the crucifixion. The sufferer of Ps 22 is a human being, experiencing the terror of mortality in the absence of God and the presence of enemies. In the suffering of Jesus, we perceive God, in Jesus, entering into and participating in the terror of mortality; he identifies with the suffering and the dying. Because God, in Jesus, has engaged in that desolation, he can offer comfort to those of us who walk now where the psalmist walked. But there is also a remarkable difference between the experience of the suffering psalmist and that of Jesus. The psalm concludes with praise because the sufferer escaped death; Jesus died. Yet the latter half of the psalm (vv 22–32) may also be read from a messianic perspective. The transition at v 22 is now understood not in deliverance from death, as was the case for the psalmist, but in deliverance through death, achieved in the resurrection. And it is that deliverance which is the ground of praise, both for the sufferer (vv 23–27) and for the "great congregation" (vv 28–32).[9]

Psalm 110: God's King and Priest

Allen, L, *Psalms 101–150*

Form/Structure/Setting

[8] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, p. 197–198.
[9] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, p. 202–203.

Ps 110 is a royal psalm. On the basis of the two divine oracles of vv 1, 4, it is commonly held that *it was uttered by a court prophet. The most popular setting of the psalm is a royal coronation at the temple in Jerusalem*. The psalm has been made the basis of elaborate reconstructions of the enthronement ritual, for example by Gaster (*JMUEOS* 21 [1937] 37–44) and Widengren (*Sakrales Königtum,* 49). Wolff ("Psalm 110:4," 312) attempted to locate the recitation of the psalm before the royal investiture by means of the reference to the scepter in v 2. Eaton (*Kingship,* 124) related it to the concluding phase of the enthronement ceremony, looking back in vv 5–6 to a dramatic enactment of the defeat of the king's enemies. However, Kraus ([1989] 347) rightly warned that the psalm represents only one of the many traditions associated with the enthronement.

Some scholars, notably A. Bentzen (*King and Messiah* [London: Lutterworth Press, 1955] 23–25) and Johnson (*Sacral Kingship,* 130–32), have *associated the psalm with an annual New Year festival. The psalm is thought to relate to a ritual combat*. The military language has encouraged at least three scholars to link the psalm with a real battle. Del Medico (*ZAW* 69 [1957] 169) associated the psalm with a prebattle ritual as a promise of victory. Dahood (112) and Horton (*Melchizedek Tradition,* 34) judged that it celebrates a victory already won. The ambivalent time perspective of Ps 110 is clearly a factor that complicates its evaluation.

A group of scholars has refused to associate the psalm with any activity of the human Davidic king, regarding it as eschatological and messianic from the outset. Representatives of this position are Kissane (*ITQ* 21 [1954] 106), M. Rehm (*Königliche Messias,* 329–31), and Kidner (392).

… A thorough evaluation of all these different efforts to classify the primary purpose of the psalm is obviously not possible here, and any attempt must appear subjective and selective. *Christian scholars would agree concerning the hermeneutical value of the psalm as a messianic promise. One respects the worthy motives of those who seek to restrict the psalm to a messianic intent from the beginning. Yet it hardly accords with the pattern of historical and theological development discernible in the royal psalms in general and with the ancient cultural and historical royal references within Ps 110*. The issue of the priesthood in v 4 is a strong factor that predisposes the choice of a preexilic date and also probably that of a purely eschatological interpretation. *If v 4 can be harmonized with the Davidic monarchy, the way is mainly open toward a preexilic setting*. Association of the psalm with enthronement may be forcing the evidence of its content. The divine oracles of vv 1 and 4 certainly appear to belong to such a context, but the psalm as a whole may not intend to issue them but to simply echo them (cf. 2 Sam 3:18; 5:2). W. van der Meer ("Psalm 110," 222–23) has observed that a reference to swearing (v 4) is frequently used to refer back to a past utterance, for example in Josh 14:9; Judg 21:1; 1 Kgs 1:17, and that two other royal psalms, Pss 89 and 132, look back to earlier oracles. The military amplification of the oracles in vv 2, (3), 5, 6 is strangely uniform—strangely because v 4 has no obviously military reference. The link between v 4 and vv 5–6 may well be the capture of Jerusalem. Was the psalm composed to celebrate David's earlier conquest of Jerusalem and succession to Jebusite kingship (cf. 2 Sam 12:30)? Subsequently the psalm could have been used by succeeding kings in a context of national enthronement and also in any other cultic settings in which the king's relation to Yahweh was celebrated.

…***Comment***

Heading (110:1aα). *Unless the heading points simply to the royal nature of the psalm, it may refer to its origin in David's reign*. The first line of the psalm indicates that the king is addressed (cf. 1 Sam 22:12; 26:18; 1 Kgs 1:13).

... ***Explanation***

The psalm broaches themes that powerfully overshadow the Israelite king and enfold him in their massive embrace. They express much of the high theology of Judean kingship. But, like Saul's armor, they give an impression of being too big for the recipient, especially as the Davidic

monarchy wore on and wore out. Doubtless each king received them by faith and bequeathed them to his successor with the hope that the divine promise of v 1 would eventually come true. *With the eclipse of the Davidic dynasty the psalm lived on as an expression of faith in God's ultimate fulfillment of king-centered purposes for Israel and as a cultic counterpart to eschatological oracles of kingship in the prophetic books*. Like the other royal psalms, it became in the postexilic canonical Psalter a witness to the restoration of the dynasty, guaranteed by God's "forever," and so a witness to Israel's messianic hope. The novelty of the *NT* is simply its claim that Jesus is the messianic king promised in the royal psalms.

Ps 110:1 holds the record for being the OT text most often cited or alluded to in the NT; it appears a score of times. D. M. Hay judged that a prime reason for the popularity of v 1 in the *NT* was that the session image affirmed supreme exaltation without calling into question the glory of God the Father. *It permitted Christians to confess faith in the absoluteness of Jesus* before they had resolved such problems as ditheism or subordinationism. "Over against expressions like 'Jesus is Lord' this image intrinsically affirmed a continuing relationship between the exalted Christ and God, precluding any possibility of conceiving Christ as a new deity dethroning an older one" (*Glory at the Right Hand,* 159–60). *Usage of this text may reflect a polemical purpose to support the Christian view that the coming of the Messiah falls into two stages, over against the messianic expectation of Judaism, and to explain the resultant interim period in scriptural terms*. Significantly reference to Ps 110:1 is set in polemical contexts at Mark 14:62 in Jesus' answer to the high priest and at Acts 7:55–56 after Stephen's speech to the high priest. Both texts combine Ps 110:1 with the eschatological Dan 7:13, implying that the fulfillment of the former text is a prelude to that of the latter one.

The text became a prime testimony in the theological process of exegeting the person and work of Jesus. *A number of NT texts, such as Rom 8:34; Col 3:1; Eph 1:20; 1 Pet 3:18–22, appear to attest its presence in a confessional christological tradition that traced the suffering, resurrection, and ascension of Christ in a comprehensive formula*. An understanding of the heading of the psalm in terms of Davidic authorship features twice in argumentation, at Mark 12:35–37 (and parallels) and Acts 2:33. This understanding, already as old in principle as the redactional characterization of the block of Davidic psalms in Pss 3–71 as "the prayers of David son of Jesse" in Ps 72:20, accords with what R. N. Longenecker has called the "circumstantial" or "descriptive" type of interpretation, based on ancient cultural norms, to be found in the *NT*, as distinct from the normative kind of exegesis practiced today (*TynBul* 21 [1970] 36–38; *Biblical Exegesis,* 193–98). Another striking, but in this case dominant, aspect of hermeneutical interpretation in the *NT* is the heavenly location of Jesus' session at God's right hand. Many texts carefully spell out this sense: they are Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34; 7:55–56; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 1 Pet 3:22. *The psalm primarily bears witness to the immanent presence of God in Jerusalem. It thus accords with the Jewish eschatological expectation that the house of David would be reestablished in Israel's capital, in a futuristic echo of Solomon's sitting on God's throne* according to 1 Chr 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chr 9:8. The *NT*, doubtless making use of the transcendentalizing of deity in Judaism and perhaps also reflecting such an existing understanding of the text in some Jewish circles, insists on the heavenly participation of the risen Jesus in the divine presence. Where the transcendent God is, Jesus now is.

W. R. G. Loader has reconstructed the development of the *NT* significance of the text (*NTS* 24 [1977–78] 199–217). *Its initial interpretation was in terms of Jesus' enthronement to be the messianic judge to come at the imminent end time (Mark 14:61–62). Second, it was applied in Acts 2:33–35; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:15–25 to his interim status and function on the church's behalf, especially as intercessor.* Like Bathsheba at David's right hand (1 Kgs 2:19–22), he had God's ear. *The Letter to the Hebrews develops Jesus' intercessory role with respect to the priestly*

endowment of Ps 110:4. Third, Ps 110:1 was interpreted in terms of Jesus' present position of power, both in a legal capacity and even in some sense an effective one (1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20–22; 1 Pet 3:22; and I would add Rev 3:21). M. Gourges (*À la droite de Dieu,* 209–31), after doing careful exegetical work, has given a comprehensive analysis of the theological significance of Ps 110:1 in the *NT*. Among his rich finds are the following. *The risen Jesus has been raised to direct proximity to the transcendent God and so participates in the divine sphere. He shares in the divine prerogative of lordship. He has been authenticated as the messianic king who died and rose again by the will of God and will come again*. The spiritual message for Christians is manifold. First, no adversity can now overwhelm believers (Rom 8:34–39). Second, Christian moral lives are to take their cue from Christ's heavenly session (Col 3:1–3). Third, persecution that involves suffering and even death are not God's last word, for Jesus or for his followers (Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 3:18–22). Above all, the destiny of believers is assured. From one perspective, believers' spiritual status is to be already seated with Christ (Eph 2:6); from another, he is "a forerunner on our behalf" in entering the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 6:20).

In the light of the revelation of Jesus, Ps 110 took on a fresh perspective of meaning as a witness to God's new Christ-centered order for the world. Its double value as royal and messianic in the Psalter laid a solid foundation for later theological development. [10]

[10] Allen, L, *Psalms 101–150*, pp. 108-120.

Isaiah 7:14: The Sign: "A Virgin Birth - Within Three Years"[11]

J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah*, Word Biblical Commentary

The narrative expressly indicates a second word and a second occasion. The purpose continues that of the previous episode. Ahaz is being encouraged to remain firm in his policy of loyalty to Assyria and resistance to Aram and Israel.

… ***Explanation***

Yahweh commissions Isaiah with a further mission to Ahaz. He is authorized to offer Ahaz a sign (אות) to bolster his faith and direct his decision. The story develops along two lines. The first shows that Ahaz is incapable of serious spiritual interaction with God or his prophet. His policy is to avoid religious or spiritual contact because it might lead him to a cultic or religious mistake. Perhaps he is thinking of his grandfather's mistake when he tried to exercise priestly office in the Temple (2 Chr 26:16). He knows just enough to know that approaching the Lord risks being accused of manipulating him. He knows the laws about not "testing" (נסה) God and quotes them as a reason to avoid "inquiring" of Yahweh.

Isaiah refuses to see it that way. He warns the king about "wearying" (לאה) God with his empty excuses. The records show that within his reign Ahaz actually designed and built an altar of Damascene style specifically to "inquire before." He also was very active in rearranging the Temple and its worship. The editors of Kings judge his motivation to have been political and pagan (cf. 2 Kgs 16:10–18). The accumulation of testimony is that Ahaz was religious enough, but that his real gods were idols. The word and picture are typical for the book of Isaiah. The Vision portrays God as vocal and active—but his people at every stage as unresponsive, unwilling, disobedient. "Wearying" fits the picture very well for Israel as well as for Ahaz.

The mass of bibliographic references alone which deal with 7:14 make it necessary to deal with the verse in a special section. This is done in a series of excursuses, each with a selected bibliography. The limits of space prevent a full review of the research.

Excursus: The ʿAlmah (7:14)[12]

Two questions must be asked. First what does עלמה mean? The Greek translators staked out the possible meanings: LXX ἡ παρθένος, followed by Vg *virgo* "the virgin." Other Greek versions translate η νεανις "the young woman." Both are possible translations of the word. The definite article is important. Not just anyone, but "the" or "that" virgin or young woman is meant.

OT usage is instructive. Gen 24:43 speaks of an unmarried young woman, apparently eligible for marriage. Exod 2:8 refers to Miriam, the baby Moses' sister. Ps 68:26 (25) in the plural speaks of tambourine players in the Temple. Brunet (*Essai*, 41–2) notes the relation to the plural used in the superscription of Ps 46:1 and in 1 Chr 15:20 with the apparent meaning "for sopranos or women's voices."

Cant 1:3 and 6:8 use עלמה to speak of the beloved; Prov 30:19 "the way of a man with an עלמה" is followed in the next verse with "the way of the adulterous woman." This leads Brunet (*Essai*, 49) to conclude that עלמה has dishonorable meanings as well as the honorable references to Miriam and Rebecca. This dishonorable reference is connected in Proverbs and in a related word עלומים in Isa 54:4 to sterility.

[11] Watts, J. D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*, Word Biblical Commentary, p. 9).
[12] Watts, J. D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*, p. 97–98.

This word study suggests that עלמה had two different and contrasting semantic implications which provide an invitation to *double entendre*. The one implies the spotless candidate for marriage. The other implies a type of available sexual partner not condoned by Yahwistic norms or the Law. The common meaning signifies one who is sexually mature. It is difficult to find a word in English that is capable of the same range of meaning. "Virgin" is too narrow, while "young woman" is too broad.

The second question is: to whom does the prophet refer? Interpreters continue to differ in answering. The traditional answer of the Christian community points to Mary, the mother of Jesus (cf. *Excursus: Isa 7:14 and the Virgin Birth*). But the context in its primary meaning requires a sign that will be fulfilled in the immediate future ("before the boy knows … the land will be laid waste," v 16).

In seeking an answer it is important to determine the nature of the sign. Is it a positive promise of blessing? Or does it reflect Isaiah's impatience with Ahaz and have the same ironic or sarcastic tone which appears in the following oracles? The answer probably depends upon which of the two meanings of עלמה is understood to be operative here.

The answers which interpreters have given to this question are legion. Wildberger (290–91) and Brunet (*Essai*, 55–100) have made exhaustive surveys of these opinions. These range from the view that "the virgin" is identified with Mary, mother of Jesus, to the one that "the virgin" is the cult figure of the bride in the ritual sacred marriage, a cult prostitute, chosen to fill the role with all its mythological overtones. Other views which tend toward "the marriageable young woman" identify her as the young queen or a consort of the king, the prophet's wife, an unidentified young woman in the crowd, or a collective sense of all those who will be brides in this year. In these, the meaning of the prophecy turns on the time span until the child is born and on the mood of the times reflected in the choice of names.

Wildberger (291) is surely right when he says, "If we have difficulty in solving the mystery of the עלמה, that does not mean that the prophecy was a riddle for those who heard the prophecy (or originally read the book). It is not characteristic of prophetic oracles that they cannot be understood." M. Buber (*Glaube der Propheten* [Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1950], 201) noted that the עלמה had to be someone known to the king. Steinmann (90) identifies her as a princess who has just entered the household of Ahaz, possibly Abia, the daughter of Zechariah, a friend of the prophet (cf. 2 Kgs 18:2), who would become the mother of Hezekiah.

It is entirely possible in large royal households that the mother would give the child its name. Some have objected that Hezekiah must have been older by this time for him to assume the throne when he did. But the chronologies of this period are very uncertain, so no sure statement can be made. The view that the child to be born is a royal heir, and that his mother belongs to the king's household does justice to the evidence, fits the context, and provides the potential of messianic intention that is needed.[13]

ISAIAH 7:14 IN CONTEXT

… What then is the meaning of the verse and the sign? לכן "therefore" relates to v 13 in which God shows his impatience with Ahaz's timidity and vacillation. So the Lord himself will give them, the House of David, a sign. The position of the royal house and its succession (vv 4–9) is established.

[13] Watts, J. D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*, pp. 98–99.

The announcement is of a birth. The Queen (העלמה) is either pregnant or soon will be. She will bear a son, potential heir to all the promises to David. She will name him Immanuel. The sign is specifically a birth (the assurance of an heir to the throne) and a name (the assurance of God's faithfulness to his promise to be "with" the sons of David).

The announcement is continued with the description of the child's well-being in v 15 and the explanation in v 16 which comes full circle to relate the whole to the events of vv 1–2 and the prophecy "It will not happen!" of vv 4–9.[14]

Isaiah 7:14 and the Virgin Birth of Jesus

No record exists of special attention given to 7:14 in pre-Christian Judaism. The ambiguity inherent in the word העלמה is reflected in the divergence of Greek translations. LXX translates ἡ παρθένος "the virgin." ΄A, Σ, and Θ use η νεανις "the young woman." But no record exists of any debate on these issues in pre-Christian times.

Matthew (1:22–23) finds in the LXX rendition of 7:14 a coincidental convergence of this sentence in Scripture with the events he is recounting and interprets it as prophecy and fulfillment. He quotes the LXX almost verbatim, with only the variation καλέσουσιν "they will call" for καλέσεις "you (sg) will call." The translation ἡ παργένος "the virgin" suits Matthew's intention perfectly. If one supposes a divine intention in this connection, part of God's work was done through the Greek translator. The translation of the other Greek Versions, while accurate enough in context, does not serve Matthew's purpose. Only a part of the prophecy was literally fulfilled. The Incarnate Son is named by divine command "Jesus," not Immanuel. And no effort is made to relate his childhood to fulfillment of the prophecy concerning Rezin and Pekah. *With Matthew the verse took on heightened significance and importance, becoming a central issue in Jewish-Christian polemic about Messiah and Jesus.*

Christological interpretation focused on the words "a virgin shall conceive" and the child's name, Immanuel. Both were used to develop the doctrine of the incarnation. The divinity of Jesus was expressed in the name and the Virgin Birth became the classical means of explaining "how" the incarnation took place.

Several things contributed to connecting Isa 7:14 with the gospel events. *The messianic hope burned particularly bright in the Jewish community of the first century*. Distance in time separated them from the issues of the eighth-century prophecy and the fifth-century book. Another factor lay in the special relevance which the Vision of Isaiah had for the Jewish and Christian communities of the first century. It provided the "world view" of God's plan for that period which supported the synagogue and Temple. Its teaching of God's plan for that age was very congenial to the Gospel and the church in details (such as Messianic teachings) as well as the general direction (antipathy to sacrifice and monarchy). Jesus' and the church's understandings of the Messiah are directly in line with that of the Vision, although the book does not develop such a view or program.

A second factor facilitated the use of Isa 7:14 in Matthew. A hermeneutical method was in general use which allowed verses to be separated from their contexts. Verses or individual words were understood to have esoteric meanings whose significance could be revealed to an inspired teacher or writer. Thus the entire Scripture was viewed as a prophecy intended to interpret the moment in which the reader lived. Verses were abstracted from both the historical and literary setting in which they originally appeared. They were then identified with an event or a doctrine which was altogether extraneous to the original context or intention. This kind of interpretation

[14] Watts, J. D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*, pp. 95-104.

presumes a view of inspiration and of history in which God moves in all ages mysteriously to plant his secrets so that later ages may put the puzzle together and thus reveal his purposes and the direction of his intention. (Cf. Midrash, Ian A. Fair).

In the case of 7:14 the relation to christology was secret no longer. The verse continued to play an important role in Christian teaching and preaching. However, there were those who protested its translation in the way that this interpretation demanded. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian translated העלמה by ἡ νεᾶνις "the young woman" in their translations of the Old Testament (cf. J. Ziegler, *Septuaginta* xiv *Isaias* [1939], 147). Justin Martyr met the objection of Trypho (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 67) that the passage should be translated ἰδοῦ ἡ νεᾶνις ἐν γαστρὶ λήψεται καὶ τέξεται υἱόν "Behold! The young woman shall conceive and bear a son." (Cf. E. J. Young, *Studies in Isaiah*, 144.)

However, the line of Christian interpretation of 7:14 in accordance with Matthew continued through the Fathers (both Greek and Latin), the Reformers, and on to current conservative scholars such as E. J. Young. It presumes a christological interpretation of the Old Testament. העלמה is to be translated "the virgin" and is a prediction of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Equally, Immanuel is the name for Jesus.

This kind of interpretation is subject to the criticism that it ignores the rightful demands of contextual and historical exegesis which call for a meaning related to the end of the Syro-Ephraimite War in terms of v 16. Christological implications may more profitably be discussed in the commentary on Matthew than in the one on Isaiah.

But a consideration of christological significance must also note the way the Vision calls to a faith that serves rather than conquers, that is humble rather than triumphal, and that accepts suffering rather than seeking vengeance. This is supported by the demonstration that God is thoroughly capable of achieving his goals by miraculous means (2:2–4; 9:1–6 [2–7]; 11:1–16; 35:1–10; 65:17–66:24) as well as by the manipulation of historical forces (7:17; 10:5–11; 13:1–5; 24:1–3; 45:1–7; 63:1–6). Thus the announcement of God's sign to Ahaz in his hour of despair is a fitting reference to illuminate the birth of a lowly infant in stable straw whom God had destined to save the world not by force of arms but by meek acceptance of humiliation and death. That God chooses to accomplish his primary goals in such ways is the message of Isaiah as it is of the Gospels.[15]

Isaiah 7:14 and Matt 1:23: The Virgin Birth of Jesus

Hagner, D. A. *Matthew 1–13*, Word Biblical Commentary

Introduction:

The question of the historicity of chaps. 1–2 is very often posed in terms of history and theology conceived of as polar opposites, as though what is theological cannot be historical and vice versa. That is, one has here *either* theology *or* history. The idea of a historical core with theological elaboration is hardly considered. *Yet that may very well be the case here in what is admittedly material of a special character. Matthew has taken his historical traditions and set them forth in such a way as to underline matters of fundamental theological importance. Thus he grounds his narrative upon several OT quotations and provides a strong sense of fulfillment*. The literary genre of these chapters, as we shall see, is that of midrashic haggadah, designed to bring out the deeper meaning of the present by showing its theological continuity with the past. Matthew's procedure is to set the scene theologically by identifying the who (*quis*) and the how

[15] Watts, J. D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*, pp. 103–104.

(*quomodo*) in chap. 1, and the where (*ubi*) and whence (*unde*) in chap. 2 (Stendahl, "Quis," and Brown, *Birth*). To some extent Matthew may have apologetic or polemical concerns here, but in the main these chapters are a statement of the theological significance that may be perceived even in the preliminaries (see Van Elderen, "Significance," on theological aspects of chap. 1). In this instance the prolegomena articulate the gospel before the main narrative.[16]

Matt 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14

The words of Isa 7:14, ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, "behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son*," have their own historical context and primary level of meaning. The prophet there promises as a sign to King Ahaz and the House of David the birth of a royal son (perhaps Hezekiah) during whose infancy the two kings dreaded by Ahaz (i.e. of Syria and Israel) would suffer ruin. Fulfillment is thus required in the immediate future. While all this may seem relatively uncomplicated and of not very great significance, a deeper meaning in the promise was apparent to Jews of later centuries* (on the *sensus plenior* of the fulfillment quotations, see *Introduction*). Two things in particular were responsible for the later perception of this secondary level of meaning: the name given to the child, "Emmanuel" (עִמָּנוּ אֵל, lit. "God with us"; cf. Isa 8:8, 10), and the surrounding passages, which speak of the dawn of the promised golden age with the judgment of the wicked and the blessing of the righteous (e.g. Isa 2:2–4; 9:2–7; 11:1–16). This was the ultimate sense in which God's presence was to be manifested in Israel. *The promised son of Isa 7:14 thus became readily identifiable as that son of David who would bring the expected kingdom of security, righteousness, and justice. Accordingly, probably sometime in the third century B.C. the Greek translators of Isa 7:14 apparently regarded the passage as having a deeper meaning, as yet unrealized.* In agreement with this interpretation, they chose to translate the Hebrew word עַלְמָה, *ʿalmâ*; (which means "young woman," who may or may not be a virgin), with the Greek word παρθένος (specifically "virgin") rather than νεᾶνις ("young woman," used by the later Jewish translations of Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus) in order to stress the supernatural associations brought to mind by the identity and work of this son. Such an interpretation of the word is congruent with the larger picture. *Matthew, unquestionably delighted with the agreement between the tradition about Jesus' birth and the words of Isaiah, not only prefaces the quotation with a formula of fulfillment but even conforms the wording of the surrounding narrative to that of the quotation* (see *Form/Structure/Setting* §D).

This quotation, unlike the other formula quotations of Matthew, is in verbatim agreement with the LXX text (LXX according to B, has λήμψεται for ἕξει). The one slight difference is Matthew's καλέσουσιν ("they shall call") for LXX's καλέσεις ("you shall call"). This is probably Matthew's alteration of the text rather than a variant (Matthew has "she"), made in order to avoid the conflict between the command to Joseph to name the child Jesus and the statement of Isaiah that the child shall be named Emmanuel.

There is no problem in referring the names Jesus and Emmanuel to the same person. This may well be the reason Matthew spells out the meaning of the name Emmanuel, μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός, "God with us" (LXX Isa 8:8, 10). Indeed, this is not a personal name but rather a name that is descriptive of the task this person will perform. Bringing the presence of God to man, he brings the promised salvation—which, as Matthew has already explained, is also the meaning of the name Jesus (v 21b). "They" who will call him Emmanuel are those who understand and accept the work he has come to do. Matthew probably intends the words of Jesus at the end of his Gospel—"Behold I am with

[16] Hagner, D. A. *Matthew 1–13*, p. 2.

you always, until the end of the age" (28:20)—to correspond to the meaning of Emmanuel. Jesus is God, among his people to accomplish their salvation (see Fenton, "Matthew," 80–82).

… ***Explanation***

The story of the birth of Jesus is filled with the surprise and excitement that one might expect when God begins to act in fulfillment of the promise and preparation of the past. In particular, it portrays the wonderful mixing of the miraculous and the ordinary, the divine and the human. The surprising turn in v 16 finds its explanation in the remarkable birth of a son to a virgin—this by the agency of the Holy Spirit, in the accomplishment of God's saving purposes for his people. *The focus of attention is, of course, not on the birth itself but on the significance of the child, on the role he will play in fulfilling God's will—as is seen particularly in the importance of the naming in the passage, as well as in the content of the names themselves, Jesus and Emmanuel*. The one who is born embodies both God's presence and his saving efficacy. As we have been prepared to understand from the genealogy, the history of God's people has now reached its long-awaited goal. *The person of whom Isaiah (among others) wrote is now entering history and the era of fulfillment has now begun. The evangelist, as he tells the story contained in the tradition he received, is thus also its interpreter, centering the narrative around the quotation of Isa 7:14, using its phraseology and prefacing it with an introductory formula that stresses fulfillment*.

The story is thus both simple and profound, told with enthusiasm and restraint. Joseph appears as a very real person, confronted with an understandable dilemma. Yet this righteous man, of such little significance to the narrative on the one hand and such great significance on the other (bestowing Davidic descent upon Jesus), receives a revelation to which he is submissive and obedient. Not only is there an artistry in the way the evangelist has set forth his traditional material, using stylized formats and the OT quotation, but there is a poetry, too, about his narrative. *And evident throughout his midrashic haggadah, as we have described it above, is his concern that the theological import of his story come alive to the reader*.[17]

Excursus on Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23

Ian A. Fair

In one significant way Matthew's Gospel is unique in is bedding his message in the concept that Jesus was a fulfillment of Jewish prophetic utterance and Jewish expectation. He was writing to affirm that Jesus was God's chosen Messiah and that he had come to inaugurate God's kingdom on earth.

From the manner in which he cites his Old Testament texts it is obvious that he adopts a midrashic genre in citing his texts, reading into them theological insights not regularly recognized.[18]

Definition:

1. By Christocentric theology we mean that Christ is the center and ground of all theological thinking.
2. Christocentric thinking means that theological thought emanates from the principle that Christ is the center and fulcrum of what God has been doing in his creation to restore it to its former

[17] Hagner, D. A. *Matthew 1–13*, pp. 14–22.

[18] Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, and *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, Leiden: Brill, 1967 (his doctoral dissertation); Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew*, 1993.

glory. In Oscar Cullmann's terminology Christ is the center, or fulcrum, of God's history of redemption.

3. In Carl Barth's terminology Christ is the Word of God and as such is the center of the Bible message. The Bible contains the Word of God in the sense that it contains the message of Christ who is God's message to the world. God's word or message comes to us through Christ in the sense that Christ is the message of God for fallen man.
4. In terms of ecclesiology (the church) Christ is the origin, center of the meaning, and function of church. Christ is what the church is all about or in other words the church is all about Christ and church ministry is all about Christ.