

Fulfilled through the prophets



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Matthew's use of *plērōō* to contextualise the Hebrew prophets validates his thesis that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham (1:1).¹ To demonstrate this concept, this article examines seven of Matthew's fulfilment statements (1:22; 2:15; 2:17–18; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 21:4–5) introduced by a varied formula of *fulfilled through the prophet(s)*. The article emphasises the Christological element of Matthew's thesis, focusing on Jesus as the Messiah. This is accomplished by means of a critical review of seven fulfilment statements, identifying their Christological context to support Matthew's thesis.

Introduction

Matthew² immediately sets the context of his work around Jesus, the Messiah, stating a cultural heritage that contextualises this thesis statement by the *son of* identification with David and Abraham. Matthew will use literary devices such as time markers (*kai egenetō hōte etelesēn* and *apo tote ērxeto*), subject markers (*logia*, the object of *kai egenetō hōte etelesēn*), and fulfilment statements built on the concept of *plērōō* to support his thesis (McCuiston, Warner & Viljoen 2013:48–67). The *plērōō* concept provides the cultural heritage for Matthew's mixed audience and the focus of this article.

Powell (2009:44–45) makes an interesting observation regarding a literary approach to Matthew. He notes that this method is like a mirror reflecting the contemporary setting for the audiences for which it was written. From the perspective of Matthew's Gospel, this mirror has the potential of reflecting two cultures – Hebrew and Greek. Did Matthew write only for his Christian community or was his work intended for universal appeal or acceptance to support the advancement of the Gospel to all cultures and communities? Following the leading of the apostle Paul, Matthew's Gospel was to the Jew first (10:5–6; 15:24). The evidence is realised with the emphasis on the law and pre-rabbinic (Pharisaical) logic. However, Matthew does not exclude the Gentiles. His repeated allusion to the non-Jewish cultures (2:1–10; 8:10–12; 15:21–28) opens the door for their inclusion, which is also inferred in the parable of the wedding feast in 22:1–10 and stated plainly in Jesus' rejection of the religious leaders (21:43).

The assertion of this article is that Matthew's Jewish background was intended to give the Hellenistic Jew and Gentile audience a sense of the heritage of Christianity and the extent and impact that the Jewish covenant, Messiah, and kingdom has on the world. The fulfilment concept is an appropriate way to accomplish this task. God uses the sacred writings and history of a small, insignificant nation, who is controlled by Rome and who has probably just lost their cultic worship centre (Temple), to bring together two groups who are culturally and religiously divided. *Plērōō* is a primary tool used by Matthew to establish this heritage. This literary device enhances the drama of the Jesus story. Thus, it is necessary to provide the meaning and background of *plērōō* before moving into the Jewish culture that provides the subject matter for the word.

Plērōō

Looking at the development and usage of the term, it is evident that this word group can have a variety of implications, depending on what it is referencing as needing fulfilling. Kirk (1983:77) proposes that the fulfilment concept in Matthew is historically realised in Jesus continuing the story of Israel (Wright 2009:105–106, 117–118). This idea supports the assumption that Matthew's intent is to tie his audience to the Jewish heritage. Kirk (1983:78) contends that the formula quotations provide the window through which Matthew's Jesus is seen in the Old Testament (OT) context. Further, Kirk (1983:87) does not find Stendahl's (1954:200–201) *perser* or

1. References in the text containing only the chapter and verse numbers without the name of the Bible book, are referring to the Gospel of Matthew.

2. The name, *Matthew*, is used to designate the author or editor of the first Gospel in the New Testament canon.

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Luz's (2007:156–164) proposals satisfactory as they do not provide a conceptual framework for understanding Matthew's notion of *plērōō*. Rather he disconnects them from their predictive role, attempting to find a broader base for the use of the OT. One possible solution he discusses is typology, which he thinks is closer to Matthew's use in that it does not depend on prophecy. Rather than prophecy there are reoccurring patterns, similar to Blomberg's (2002:17–33) double fulfilment, indicating sovereign involvement. Allison (1993:185) illustrates this by stating that Jesus is the Moses-like Messiah delivering the law on a mountain like Sinai. Nolland (2005:123) comments that the Matthean account of Jesus coming out of Egypt establishes an Israel typology. This idea had become the language of messianic expectation (Nolland 2005:123, n. 160). Kirk (1983:91) concludes that the law and the prophets provide the *shape* of Israel, past, present, and future. In this sense, Jesus becomes the fullest expression of Israel as the messianic hope, giving a new shape to the covenant community. Hamilton (2008:243) explains typology using the reference to Hosea 11:1 and Jesus' family coming out of Egypt. He contrasts Israel being brought out of Egypt but failing in the desert to Jesus' return from Egypt and success over Satan. In typology, future readers can read the history as history but find in their current milieu a realisation of the essence of that history. Thus, the contention is that Matthew intends to connect his audience with the history by seeing it living in Jesus.

Matthew's use of *plērōō*

Matthew uses some form of the word *plērōō* 16 times, yet no single theme applies to all of them. Additionally not all of the uses support Matthew's thesis of Jesus as Messiah. Thus it is necessary to classify the uses. The first classification is the non-thematic uses that do not fall within the Matthean context (1:1). These (2:23; 5:33; 13:14, 35; 26:54, 56; 27:9) provide no apparent support for Matthew's primary intent of connecting to the Hebrew context and are outside the focus of this article. The second is the thematic use of *plērōō* within the larger context of the book (3:15; 5:17). While both of these effectively connect with Matthew's theme, they also identify more precisely with and support a specific thematic context pertaining to the law. The final group uses *plērōō* in a thematic formula (1:22; 2:15; 2:17–18; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 21:4–5). Hübner (1990:108) marks the distinction between contextual and fulfilment statements in Matthew. The latter's use of a formulaic distinguishes these passages as OT in context. Introduced by *hina* or *hopōs*, these are tied to prophets, sometimes by name and sometimes not.

The thematic statements

Matthew's thesis rests firmly on the conviction that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, Son of David and Abraham. As noted, there are many ways that the author supports this. This article's primary focus is on the seven statements used in a thematic formula intended to bond Matthew's mixed audience to the Jewish prophets. This cultural connection confirms the Christological context to support the thesis.

God with us (1:21–23)

Kaleo [call] plays a significant role in Matthew's Gospel. In 19 of the 26 times that the verb is used, there is an explicit or implicit emphasis, divided between naming and election. The former connects to the first *plērōō* statement of 1:22. '*kalesousin to onoma autou lēsoun*' translates as *you will call the name of Him Jesus*. The actual name of Jesus holds the place of importance as Matthew will demonstrate in the next verse. However, Matthew is specific to say 'call the name' (*onoma*). The development of the term *onoma* indicates that naming gives special designation to the object named. There is a universal belief that the name of an object, human being or of an angelic being is more than a label. A name is an indispensable part of the personality. 'One might say that a man is constituted of body, soul and name' (Hans Bietenhard 1964:243). Luz (2007:95) is certainly correct to call this both a high point and Christological messianic statement speaking of Jesus in a Jewish context. For Luz (2007:95), the term *laos* used in 1:21 is a reference to the genealogy and Israel also indicating Jesus' messiahship. Nolland (2005:98) notes that it is a heaven-given name, an OT practice (Gn 16:11; 17:5, 15, 19; Is 8:3; Hs 1:4, 6, 9; cf. Is 7:3, 14).

Matthew references Isaiah in this first fulfilment statement. Isaiah is a favourite with four of the seven passages from this prophet – (Mt 1:23 ~ Is 7:14; 4:14–16 ~ 9:1; 12:17–21 ~ 42:1–4; 8:17 ~ 53:4). According to Freeman (1999:191), Isaiah 7:14 falls under the judgement portion of the book, pointing to his emphasis on redemption (chs 40–66). Relying on the LXX, Matthew reminds his readers that Isaiah speaks *for the Lord* (Blomberg 2001:59; Nolland 2005:100). *Immanuel*, translated for those not familiar with the term (*lākem*), suggests a general hope for a Davidic ruler. In the OT context, this heir would replace Ahaz (Clendenen 2007:212–213). However, Brown (1973:15–20) reminds his readers that the OT writers did not foresee the details of Jesus' life. Their concern was their own *Sitz im Leben* and the near future impact of their predictions. Blomberg's (2002:19) double fulfilment takes this one step further. It is not just the literal fulfilment of some historical event within the prophet's experience; rather it is the case that when passages such as Isaiah 7:14 are read within context, they reveal possibilities that cannot be satisfied by any single OT age event.

Brown (1993:28–29) suggests that the possible reasons for Matthew's birth account may be apologetic against those still following John the Baptist (cf. Ac 19:1–7) or he may be contesting the teachings of the Docetists. However, he considers the most reasonable suggestion is to answer the Jewish claim of Jesus' illegitimacy. Matthew offers an explanation, allowing for the irregularity of Jesus' birth while defending the purity of Mary and the purity of the child (1993:29). He continues by showing that due to the later date of the Gospels and the questions raised about the nature of Jesus, Matthew's position on the birth pictured the accepted orthodoxy regarding Jesus' physical and metaphysical nature. Matthew involves his and later communities into this defence by changing the second person singular future

(*kleseis*) to the third person plural future (*kalesousin*) (Luz 2007:96). They would call him Immanuel.

Ultimately, it would seem that Matthew's intent was to use Scripture to validate that Jesus' presence surpasses the mere physical lineage, endorsing his relationship to David and Abraham. Vital as this is, Matthew has moved Jesus to the higher plain by his declaration that God is among us. Imperato (2008:19) contends that the virgin birth trumps the Davidic bloodline. This heritage is a validation of sonship that is to be repeated at the baptism, temptation, and with Peter's confession (16:16). Of the 66 times the expression *son of* is used, Son of Man is used 31 times and Son of David 10 times. This supports the teaching regarding Jesus' divine nature. Firstly, as Jesus (emphasis on his historicity) he will save his people, which has both covenant and Christological emphasis. Next, Davies and Allison (1988a:210) translate Jesus to mean 'Yahweh is salvation', making God the *He* in 'He will save his people'. Elsewhere Matthew uses *saves* (*sōsei*) in association with Jesus. The salvific implication and use of Immanuel make implicit Matthew's pre-Nicene declaration of Jesus' relationship with the Father. Further, the concept of 'his people' is a precursor to Jesus' statement that his mission was only to Israel (15:24). At this point Matthew chooses not to include any concepts regarding Jesus in a position to reign over this house he saves. That will come later. Finally, God with *us* becomes significant for his community because many may not be Jews. Jesus is the universal saviour.

I called my Son (2:15)

Matthew's next *plērōō* statement continues the son motif with the allusion to one of the most significant events in Israel's history – the Exodus. The problem with this passage is that Matthew has Jesus fulfilling a historical event. Howard (1986:315–320) list four commonly offered solutions to understanding Matthew's use of Hosea. Firstly, there is predictive prophecy where the passage in Hosea is viewed as looking to a future fulfilment. Commonly this is based on the use of the future perfect for call, which is problematical in that it is linguistically and contextually difficult. The second solution is to understand Hosea as an example of *sensus plenior*, or the deeper meaning. In this the external message relates to the Exodus. However, hidden, waiting to be revealed is a deeper understanding. Howard's concern regards inspiration. Objectivity is at risk: how can one know if they have reached the fullest depth of meaning? Additionally *plērōō* needs not be limited to prophetic fulfilment or finding deeper meanings. The third solution maintains that Matthew used an exegetical technique called Midrash-Pesher that was similar to that used at Qumran. Again problems exist. There is a distinctive absence of the Matthean formula (*hina plērōthē*). According to Howard (1986:318–319) this may be due to the perception that Qumran thought they lived in the last days to which all prophecy looked. As a result, all exegesis was presumed to pertain to their community. In their exegesis, the Qumran community did a line by line study. This is hardly Matthew's technique in

2:15. The final solution offered is typology. In this Hosea somehow typifies some element of Jesus' life. As with *sensus plenior*, the exegete can never be sure that all of the realised types have been identified. For example since there is no messianic content or allusion in Hosea, some may find it difficult to associate with Matthew's very distinctive messianic ideal. The first three solutions do present problems in dealing with Matthew. However, typology may not be as problematical as Howard would lead the reader to think. Bruce's (1996:1214) definition that earlier phases or events are recapped or fulfilled by a later one may contribute to the discussion. Matthew could be said to be reiterating the Exodus event with the new Moses. Typology can use a different character in a similar event in the historical past and satisfy a similar meaning. However, there may be a better solution than any of these four.

Blomberg (2001:67) correctly states that Hosea's statement was not predictive. Rather it was part of the collective memory of Israel, of God's love. Kingsbury (1975:16) understands Matthew's concept of *plērōō* to have been inaugurated by Jesus' coming (*ēlthon*, 5:17; 9:13; 10:34–35) that ended prophecy and initiated fulfilment (cf. 11:13). Thus *plērōō* is not necessarily tied to completing a prophecy as much as bringing to completion or satisfaction God's intentions begun with Israel. In this way Matthew's use can be termed analogical correspondence (Blomberg 2001:67; Howard 1986:322). For Matthew there is a historical parallel of events of God's two sons, Israel and Jesus, and their migration through Egypt. Matthew connected two events in which he saw Jesus as the One who 'actualizes and completes all that God intended for the nation' (Howard 1986:322). Gundry (1982:34) uses the terms *recapitulated* and *anticipated*. For Blomberg (2001:67) these events cannot be coincidental. God has initiated a covenant in each. In fact, of all the *plērōō* statements, none has more of a direct tie to the covenant than this one. The covenant motif is evident in the Hosea passage where the son is called beloved (*āhab*). The Hebrew term signifies more than just affection. It points to love that elects. Calling and election are covenant elements evident in the OT. Matthew's use of these concepts attaches his new community umbilically to the parent idea of the Abrahamic covenant.

Matthew uses two Christological signals that were as important to Hosea as they are to his community. Israel and Jesus were not just beloved. They were 'my beloved'. Barbieri (1985:2) goes to the heart of the matter by stating that God adopted Israel, but Jesus was his firstborn (Col 1:15). Israel is called *firstborn* in Exodus 4:22. Historically their 'birth' was via the election of Abraham. Matthew has made it clear that via his own Spirit, God has visited humanity in Immanuel. As resurrection faith matures, John can declare that God has given his *monogenē*. Matthew will solidify the son image in the baptismal proclamation. Most certainly this depicts the Christological anticipation of a covenant experience that is comparable to that of the Exodus. This experience promotes happiness (5:1–12) and the law (5:17–20). Moving from 2:15 through 3:17 and 4:1–11, Matthew portrays an unfolding

drama that gradually clarifies sonship relating of Jesus (Nolland 2005:123). From this unfolding drama, Matthew's readers understand the idea within the realm of messianic hopes (Luz 2007:121).

For Matthew's Jewish community this excites the collective memories of the Exodus story told at every Passover. Luz (2007:119) emphasises that there are additional parallels between Moses and Jesus. Whether the Jewish element of his community recalled these in detail or the major story of the Exodus, the cultic pride would swell as they reminisced about their heritage. Even if Hellenised, these memories could not be distorted or concealed by their new perspectives. However, Matthew's Gentile community will not make an immediate connection. They have no ethnic history that equates to the Exodus. They have no covenant promises or faithfulness (*hesed*). As Paul paints them, they were 'separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world' (Eph 2:11). However, they are no longer separated from Christ. Now they have an adopted heritage, having been grafted into the covenant (Rm 11:24). This heritage is why Matthew is not hesitant to include certain elements of Jewish history – elements that provide an opportunity to discuss the historical events that set the stage for God's universal acceptance through his beloved son. In this he has set the context of covenant and Christology to make the history of Israel a real heritage for those grafted into God's cultivated olive tree. On this premise the kingdom of heaven can infiltrate all ethnic groups (28:19). As a son, he can identify with all children everywhere (cf. Eph 3:14).

A voice was heard (2:16–18)

The escape of Joseph's family and the Magi prompted the bitter rampage on Bethlehem and the neighbouring regions. Herod wanted the boy king killed. Approximating Jesus' age, he has all the *tous paidas* [masc. noun; male children] two and under killed. Robertson (1933) puts the number between 15 and 20, which is reasonable for a small town (cf. Hagner 1993:37). As horrible as this was, Josephus did not record it. It is assumed that it was not worth mentioning because it was such a small atrocity compared to some of his other known, violent actions (Barbieri, Jr. 1985:23; Hagner 1993:37; Robertson 1933). Matthew uses this carnage to continue what he started in the previous verse. For Luz (2007:121) the point of this pericope is the conflict between God and Herod. He sees the death of the children as secondary, on the reverse page of the real struggle as if it is not an issue with Matthew (cf. Hagner 1993:37). This conclusion certainly misses the point as Matthew has left the Exodus pericope and quickly scanned history, stopping at a pre-exilic point – another milestone in Jewish history. Huey (2001:274) notes that in Jeremiah's account there is a shift where the prophet 'graphically describes the emotional pain of exile (v. 15), the Lord's compassionate love and promise of deliverance (vv. 16–17, 20–22), and Israel's sorrowful repentance (vv. 18–19)'. Just as Jeremiah shifts to the reality of the coming judgement of God, so Matthew shifts the scene to the

judgement of Herod against the new king of the Jews. Israel's Messiah is in Egypt. It is a time of sorrow. However, Jeremiah's passage is also a message of hope. Reflecting on this, Gundry (1982:210) parallels these two passages stating that the mourning of the Israelite mothers for the exiles was a prelude to their return. In like manner the grief over the slaughter of the innocent in Bethlehem is also a prelude 'to the Messianic future through divine preservation of the infant Messiah'. As in 15, Matthew is refreshing collective memory for his Jewish audience and creating it anew for his non-Jewish element.

If Matthew is connecting his community to this history, then he is also connecting them to the covenant, especially the new covenant that follows the parallel verses in Jeremiah. In 31:37ff. Jeremiah tells Israel and Judah that God will repopulate the land. The Lord sent Israel into exile. Thus it is his responsibility to rebuild the nation (Huey 2001:278). Repentance is mandated by God five times in verses 15–22. Martens (1986:193) understands this to have a double meaning. They are returning home because they have turned to God, which is the essence of the covenant. Matthew uses the term *apollymi* that is commonly translated *lost* or *destroyed* frequently (19 times in 17 verses). Three of them carry the same theme of lostness, indicating the need to return (10:6; 15:24, 18:11). The first two are exclusive to Israel (the lost house) and the last inclusive in that the mission of the Son of man is to seek those lost. It is evident from this that Matthew continues the theme of Jeremiah throughout his book. He wants his community to know that Jesus has sought and found.

A light dawned (4:14–17)

Jesus' response to John's imprisonment was to change residences. He leaves Nazareth, moving to Capernaum. Davies and Allison (1988a:380) question Matthew's motives for the interest in the geography. Is it theological or is it a vindication of aspects of Jesus' ministry in the light of Jewish objections? It is noteworthy that Jesus did not choose to settle in Jerusalem, starting directly with the religious leaders and the temple. According to Matthew, Jesus went to the temple during the time of temptation (4:5) and again the week before his death (21:12). Luke brings Jesus back to Nazareth and puts him in the synagogue announcing his fulfilment of Isaiah (4:14–24). Otherwise, Luke matches Matthew. Mark's only visit was during his last week. John, however, has Jesus in the temple often (5:14; 7:14; 8:2, 20, 59; 10:23; 11:56; 18:20). Matthew's lack of interest in the temple indicates that Jesus' interest was people, which can be read in 9:13 and 12:7. Hagner's (1993:72) observation is that the distance from Jerusalem moves Him away from the Pharisees' centre of power. Here Jesus is free to begin his preaching of the kingdom (4:17).

Regarding the geography and the problems associated with it, the various commentaries have handled this in detail. The concern for this work lies in the intent of the fulfilment passage. Davies and Allison (1988a:379) may give the first indication of the intent by the reminder that Isaiah is

Matthew's principle prophet associated with the Gentiles. Is this written in anticipation of the great commission? This is certainly possible and probable. As was discovered in the previous chapter, Isaiah's scope is broad based. The intentionality Matthew demonstrates in his use of this particular passage, is intriguing. There are many passages that would seem to be more fitting than this one. Isaiah 2:2 speaks of all the *ethnē* streaming to Jerusalem. This prediction anticipates a time when the nations come to Jerusalem to be taught by a Davidic Messiah, who is left unnamed (Clendenen 2007:275). The humble servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 49:6 is made to be the light of the nations. The task of serving Israel was too small for such a servant, so a more important responsibility was given him so that he would receive worldwide honour (Smith 2009:348). The *humble servant of Yahweh* designation has an implied association to the blessings of David (Bruce 1968:78).³ Any of these and others could have been used by Matthew. Nonetheless, 9:1 relates in at least two ways that the others may not. Firstly, it introduces the Davidic intent of the preaching of the kingdom of heaven in 4:17. The *terminus a quo* (4:17) does more than create a structure for Matthew. It introduces the hero on a kingdom mission. After the Prologue and *Parados*, he immediately puts the hero into action, accumulating the necessary kingdom components – a constitution and disciples. This latter idea leads to the second way in which 9:1 relates. Eight times after this passage, Matthew will emphasise the concept of light (5:14–16; 6:22–23; 10:27; 17:2). This passage and the others have the shared feature of including the Gentiles. Luz (2007:158) indicates this may be Matthew's intent with this passage. Further, Luz (2007:159) draws from Matthew's version of the Isaiah passage an inference regarding the use of *laos*, which always means Israel. Davies and Allison (1988a:383) find the key to Matthew in verse 15 and the expression *Galilaia tōn ethnōn*. Matthew reworks this phrase giving it a positive makeover. Nolland (2005:173) is not convinced of the validity of this based on the 8th-century context of the original statement. The former would seem to be the better fit with Matthew's perspective. For Matthew, *ethnē* ranges from outsiders to a universalistic perspective. The latter view is focused on the work of Christ (10:18; 12:18, 21; 24:14; 28:19) (Nolland 2005:173–147). Of special interest is Luz's (2007:159) point that Jews sit only in darkness but the Gentiles in death. He questions what Matthew may mean by the light that has dawned, which is the reason for the change of focus in 17. Is it Jesus the person, or Jesus' teaching? Of course, the obvious answer is that it is both as it is impossible to separate the man from the message. Not the action of, but the essence of the content.

Blomberg (2001:88) and Keener (1999:148) separate 16 and 17, with the latter under the heading of the development of the ministry (Blomberg) and calling fishers of people (Keener). Davies and Allison (1988a:387), Luz (2007:160), and Hagner (1993:71, 74) realise that Jesus' preaching of repentance is vital to the understanding. Hagner (1993:74) is correct to call it a turning point in that it is the transition from John's

3.Cf. Bruce (1968:83–99) for an extended treatment regarding the Servant of Yahweh.

preaching of repentance to that of Jesus. The changing emphasis focuses on Jesus. Keener (1999:147) views the quote more like a text used to 'illuminate' Jesus' Galilean ministry. Certainly Blomberg (2001:88) is correct when he states that Matthew has depicted Jesus as the One who comes, satisfying the expectations of Son and Servant. Jesus' baptism introduces him into this mission. He must now find his first disciples and begin to show the light that will shine to both Jew and Gentile.

He himself took (8:17)

Following an epic account of faith like none Jesus found with anyone in Israel (8:10), Matthew records a cycle of healing that prompts the *plērōō* statement in 8:17. In the previous *plērōō* statement he brought salvation. Now, the shift is to the servant motif. Jesus immediately demonstrates his right to speak as He has by performing miracles. Firstly, there are healings (8:1–17) – a Leper, Centurion, and generally 'others' among whom is Peter's mother in law. Finally, almost in desperation, he states 'many'. These displays continue with intermittent dialog through 9:35 where the summary implies the authority of Jesus. In the midst of this display of authority (that appropriately follows his display of authority in his teaching), Matthew inserts a *plērōō* statement both to invoke the validation of Scripture and to qualify Jesus' healing capacity. The authority to heal is a display of his messianic calling. Sanders (1985:157) asserts that it is Jesus' intention to verify his mission using the miracles and including sinners who, to this point, have been excluded. Matthew states that the demon possessed and the ill were brought to Jesus. Matthew recorded a similar episode in 4:24 when Jesus' popularity was growing, and many were brought to him for healing. The Greek of 4:24 regarding those brought to Jesus is *tous kakōs echontas* that translates as 'the ones having (*echontas*) the bad (*tous kakōs*)'. This idiomatic expression could be translated 'those who had it bad', as in cases with which the doctors could do nothing (Robertson 1933). In 4:24 Matthew specifies certain conditions that qualify as 'having it bad' (various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics). The phrase appears again in 14:35 but without qualification. In 8:16 there are only two categories of victims, namely demon possessed and those having it bad. Luz (2001:14) makes an excellent point that one reason for this account in verse 16 is to confirm the absolute authority of Jesus, realised in the term *logō*. The verb form is the dative of means or instrument, embracing a root idea of the case. It is typically an actual action that requires an agent to use it (Wallace 1996:162). While Sanders (1985:157) thinks it is erroneous that exorcisms are a sign of the kingdom, Barber, Pitre and Bergsma (2007) do not. They conclude that exorcisms and healings are a Davidic ideal that is confirmed by the term *Son of David* being applied to him when people appeal for healing (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30). As in the Sermon, the power of Jesus' word is evident as the instrument of healing.

Healings serve an Christological purpose as Matthew connects the Isaiah passage directly to Jesus' work. France

(1985:322) reminds his readers that the Isaiah passage does not deal with physical healing alone. The LXX uses the word *harmartias* for the Hebrew, but Nolland (2005:361) and France (1985:322) think this is Matthew's translation and not the LXX as he does not use the word *harmartias* but uses *astheneias* and *nosous*. However, France (1985:322) maintains that this is the intent of the Isaiah passage since the terms *transgressions* and *iniquities* are used in the context of 53:4, where it may be realised in the term *asthenēma*. The word group which holds the idea of *weakness* or *powerlessness* of various kinds, is used 80 times in the New Testament (NT). Of these almost 40 times it suggests sickness (Zmijewski 1990:70). While Isaiah's intentions are assumed, Jesus clarifies how Matthew's community understands it. In 9:5–6 Jesus asks: 'Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Get up, and walk?' But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...' – then he said to the paralytic: 'Get up, pick up your bed and go home'. Davies and Allison (1988b:92–93) approach the logic of Jesus' contrast of healing and forgiveness by stating that the healing is the harder of the two to accomplish. It is easy enough to pronounce forgiveness. Nonetheless, Jesus performed the more difficult of the two by healing the paralytic. If he can heal, then his critics may wonder if he can also forgive.

Blomberg (2001:144–145) encourages the readers of Matthew to be careful of neo-orthodoxy that will use this passage (and others) to attach the idea of atonement to Matthew's intentions. However, as he points out, the focus is on the cure of diseases, not forgiveness. While atonement may be in the background, and Matthew's community now understands the vicarious attribute of Jesus' death, Matthew is using Isaiah to validate Jesus' healing ministry as a sign of his authority. The death is not in sight at this time. Matthew is still building his character, preparing him for the climax and the unexpected turn of events in the resurrection.

My chosen servant (12:17–21)

In his longest OT quote, Matthew indicates that there is a significant shift in the development of this drama. It is somewhat subdued but nonetheless, it is there. Luz (2001:191) seems to struggle to find the 'bridge' that he feels connects verse 16 and the quotation. He states that the bridge is narrow and the quotation is a 'reach'. However, Luz is correct that Matthew has placed this passage here for a reason. The paradigm shift that is happening in the narrative is the separation of Jesus from Israel. This parting would certainly explain the use of this prophecy. The problem is that Luz has attached this to the wrong verse. He connects it to verse 16 and the command to silence. The thought is tied to verse 19 and the silence of the servant. More properly, this should be attached to verse 14 and the Pharisees separation from Jesus. They have tested him, and he did not fail. It is time for them to devise a plan that will destroy Jesus. In this a schematic by Menken (2004:64) illustrates the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees. The catalyst for this is the decision by the Pharisees based on his answer.

Blomberg (2001:489) rightly notes that Sabbath violation plays no role in the trial of Jesus. Nor did they play a central role in Jesus' death, since he was accused of blasphemy and not breaking Sabbath laws. France (1985:209) summarises this well by pointing out that a single infringement of scribal regulations does not justify killing Jesus. What it does do is to provide the key to understanding Matthew's shift in the drama and the fact that the Pharisees only represent the movement. They were the intersection of common Judaism and rabbinic Judaism. Their separation leaves a vacuum that Matthew fills with the Isaiah passage, introducing the beloved servant. Thus Matthew 12:12–21 complements the Matthean theme and interests. It fits well with his need to demonstrate the nature of Jesus (Davies & Allison 1988b:324).

Isaiah's chosen servant is a common idiom for Israel (1 Chr 16:13; Ps 105:6, 26; 41:8–9). At times the association is via the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nonetheless it is signifying Israel and the Abrahamic covenant. David is also used in reference to the idea of the chosen servant (1 Ki 3:8; 11:34; Ps 78:70; 89:3). Obviously, Isaiah's covenant context is vital to this quotation. Matthew follows the LXX, using the term *pais*, which can mean either *son* or *servant*. This term makes the application to Jesus stronger as he is both (Hagner 1993:338). Additionally, this strengthens Jesus' connection to Israel as they were also called *sons* (Ex 4:22; Dt 14:1; Hs 11:1). The opening line moves to a text similar to the language of 3:17, 'beloved son in whom I am pleased' (Davies & Allison 1988b:324; France 1985:210; Hagner 1993:338). The reference to the Spirit *ep auton* extends this further. Matthew uses this expression in 3:16 relating to the actions of the Spirit coming from heaven. The parallel between these two are striking. Hagner (1993:338) reminds the reader that the presence of the Spirit *ep auton* was for the purpose of equipping Jesus for ministry. Luke spells this out, using Isaiah 61 where the specific purpose of the anointing is *euangelisasthai*. Matthew connects the anointing to *angellei* with *kai*. This connection indicates the unity of the two in the servant's life. There is one other connection that is missed by the commentators – the object of *angellei*. The word used is *krisin* that Luz (2001:193–194) states 'probably' means judgement. He notes that judgement for the Gentiles will be positive but the judgement of 12:41–42 is negative. Rissi (1990:318) records that Matthew uses the term 12 of the 47 times it is used in the NT. The decision of the judge or the OT sense of justice is normal. The judgement motif ties directly to Matthew's introduction of Jesus as righteousness. He is righteousness when he sanctified the waters of baptism by insisting that it was *fitting* (*prepōn*) for John to baptise Him (McCuestion, Warner & Viljoen 2014:1–8). More appropriately he introduced righteousness into the world, making it accessible through baptism. Specifically Matthew using Isaiah made the Gentiles the direct object. Jesus proclaims righteousness *tois ethnesin*, satisfying the Abrahamic covenant of promise. Luz (2001:194) is correct in making this a positive relationship with the *ethnē*, since in the name of Jesus, all Gentiles will hope. It is a verb, not a noun. Thus, hoping is active.

Behold! Your king is coming (21:4–5)

The final Christological fulfilment statement is cast in the pericope of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The paradigm shift of chapter 12 is about to bring the confrontation that will lead to his death. Firstly, the king must make his entry into the holy city. This *plērōō* statement is injected not as Jesus enters and the question is asked 'who is this?' (21:10), nor is it placed in context of the religious leaders who contest the adulation (21:16). Rather Matthew places the OT confirmation of the king's conquest of Jerusalem at the time he chooses to ride into Jerusalem. This major shift moves toward the unexpected that is seen throughout the rest of the book as Matthew prepares his Jesus for the dramatic reversal. As anticipated from the way Matthew builds his story, Jesus must die. He has seemingly opposed the religious order, comes humbly into Jerusalem, and is confronted and crucified. The unexpected reversal of the resurrection is intended to send the audience reeling. While Matthew's audience already knew the end of the story, this in no way weakens his dramatic conclusion that results in a commission to take this story to the world.

While the accepted text does not name the prophet, several witnesses (M^{mg} 42 it^{a,c,h}, cop^{bo ms} Hilary) do by adding *Zachariou* before or after *προφήτου*. Still other witnesses (vg^{4 mss} cop^{bo ms} eth) provide the name of Isaiah (Metzger 1994:44). This is because Matthew seems to combine text from both prophets. The first line comes from Isaiah 62:11 and the rest of the quotation is from Zechariah 9:9.

Luz (2005:7, n. 34) maintains that Matthew does not know Zechariah since in 27:9 he attributes the *plērōō* statement to Jeremiah rather than Zechariah. Hagner (1995:592) attributes this to either the writers poor memory in which he mixes two passages or liturgical use in his community. Davies and Allison (1988b:118) further questions if the reference to the rejoicing of the daughters of Zion was inappropriate due to the hostility of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. Hagner (1995:592) maintains that Matthew's form indicates that they parallel each other, referring to the residents of Jerusalem (according to Davies & Allison 1988b:119). There is no negative connotation in either term. Nonetheless, the primary intent by Matthew seems to be centred on the word *humble* (*praijtes*; Davies & Allison 1988b:119–120; France 1985:302; Hagner 1995:594; Luz 2005:7). It would seem that Matthew's intent here is to put Jesus in the position of a servant in the context of announcing him as Jerusalem's king. Matthew has made it clear that as the Son of Man, his purpose is to serve, not to be served (20:28). The allusion to Jesus as the humble servant is an important theme of Matthew (4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21) that comes to a climax here.

Twice prior to this event, Jesus has spoken to this quality of gentleness. In the Beatitudes he congratulates those who are gentle because of their promised inheritance. In 11:29 Jesus makes a statement regarding his nature (essence from *esse*, present active participle of *eimi*). He states *praijs eimi*. The only difference from John's 'I am' statements is the absence of

the emphatic *egō eimi*, *I am*. What is Jesus saying about himself? Nolland's (2005:477) contribution is helpful. In Greek ethics gentleness (*praijtēs*) is a well-regulated control of anger. However, in his treatment of 5:5, he gives the most probable usage in relationship to the disciple. Basing his conclusions on Jewish Greek usage (LXX; Ps. 36[37]:11; Is. 61:1), Nolland (2005:201) concludes that rather than gentle, the better understanding is that gentleness expects God to rescue the 'gentle one' because they cannot help themselves due to their powerlessness and inability to forward their cause. He continues that the intention may be to inject a sense of humility before God (2005:201, n. 42). This quality is evident in 27:14 when 'Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge – to the great amazement of the governor'. The writer of the book of Hebrews (2:9) expresses this well:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Summary and conclusion

Matthew builds his drama on the escalation in the tone of the prophetic messages used to validate the Matthean thesis. Beginning with the statement that God is with us and reaching the crescendo of the arrival of the king, Matthew has identified the covenant, Christological and kingdom ideal for Jesus. The contextual and formulaic statements open with a messianic statement that God is with us (1:22). Next Matthew makes the connection to the OT heritage with a covenant related association of Jesus with the Exodus (2:15). He quickly recalls the grief of the exile, again connecting Jesus to the covenant and the messianic hope of Israel (2:17–18). Next Matthew introduces into his drama a fulfilment concept that qualifies the messianic Jesus of the covenant. With this one (3:15) he points to the nature (essence) of Jesus as the One whose rightness validates the rite of baptism for his followers. The natural outcome is Matthew's first statement of fulfilment that includes the Gentiles (4:14–16). When the larger audience has been established, Matthew puts Jesus in front of them to fulfil the law. He does this in such a way as to involve his whole audience, Jew or Gentile, satisfying the very essence of the law (5:17). Jesus' greater law is realised in Matthew's servant who expected and demonstrated compassion (*hesed*), enforcing the idea that compassion comes before sacrifices and offerings (9:13; 12:7). The dynamic way in which he does this is to take upon himself human frailty and sickness (8:17). Since he can heal, he is able to forgive (cf. 9:6). Recalling the baptism of 3:17, Matthew takes his readers closer to the purpose of Jesus' death with a strong emphasis or possibly reminder that the Gentiles will now have hope. If they have hope, surely Israel will be saved. Finally the humble servant enters Jerusalem to face death (21:4–5). Jesus' *kenosis* put him in a weakened condition where his total dependence (obedience, Heb 5:8) was honored by the ascent to the right hand of the Father.

What should today's student, scholar, or the church take away from this? Matthew's intentions were to validate his

thesis that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham (1:1). He describes Jesus in a real setting, with real people. He developed the drama by showing Jesus' nature, especially in conflict with the common understanding of his people and their religious leaders. He elevated the messianic hope to the reality found only in Jesus and realised ultimately in his church, the collective group of disciples who are dedicated to him. His validation of Jesus took many forms, but the *plērōō* statements stand out as the most effective in that they involve the accepted revelation of God to his chosen people. By using this revelation, Matthew has reconnected his Jewish audience, whether Orthodox or Hellenised, as well as offered an enticement to the Gentile segment, giving them a connection via Jesus. Matthew has faithfully built a foundation on which the two can become one (Eph 2:15–16), which may be why Matthew was such an effective evangelistic tool for Thomas in India (McCuistion *et al.* 2013:13). Matthew took Jesus universal. A small town Jew of humble origins led the world captive, taking them to the very throne of God.

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