

THE MESSIANIC 'SON OF DAVID' IN MATTHEW

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*Introduction: Messianism in Recent Study*

Any discussion of the relationship between the presentation of Jesus in the Gospels and the term 'Messiah' must come to terms with a number of developments in recent studies of this term. A series of detailed investigations of the origins and use of messianism in Second Temple Judaism has resulted in numerous advances in understanding, including two major conclusions that can serve to encapsulate the relationship of Christian and Jewish uses of 'Messiah'. First of all, greater attention is being paid to the rich variety of messianic expectations in texts that are available to us. J.H. Charlesworth offers the following observations regarding the numerous Jewish texts available to us from the period in which the New Testament was written:

1. Most of the Jewish texts contain no reference to 'a' or 'the' Messiah or to 'a' or 'the' Christ.
2. The texts that do contain references to 'the Messiah', 'Christ' or 'Anointed one' do not reveal a coherent picture.
3. Hence we have no evidence for the assertion that the Jews during Jesus' time were looking for the coming of 'the' or 'a' Messiah, and there was no paradigm, or checklist, by which to discern if a man was the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

This variety has led some scholars, such as Jacob Neusner, to speak of 'Judaisms' and their 'Messiahs'. Concurring, Anthony Saldarini writes:

1. J.H. Charlesworth, 'From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 3-35 (14).

The understanding of Jesus as Messiah was probably the earliest and most central heavenly role attributed to Jesus by his followers. But the interpretation of this title is fraught with dangers and misunderstandings. Christian interpreters have often attributed to first century Judaism a univocal belief in an eschatological, political, or nationalistic Messiah. In reality, not all Jews believed in an afterlife or an apocalyptic ending to the world. Of those who did, some expected a 'messianic' figure and some did not. Of those who expected such a figure, that figure varied greatly in name, roles, and relationship to God.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the rightful recognition of such variety should not be allowed to obscure what William Horbury has called 'the coherence of messianism', in which he referred to a larger matrix of texts that frequently cross referenced each other, often subtly shaped one another through the work of ongoing translations and exegesis, and which were discussed and debated by means of a shared set of interpretive strategies.<sup>3</sup> This was true even if conclusions about the exact shape of the messianic paradigms sometimes differed. In other words, the variety of Jewish expectations about a Messiah of some kind should not be pressed too far. John Collins contends that a number of commonalities can be found within a widely held expectation about the coming of an eschatological figure of some type (such as Davidic king, ideal priest, specially endowed prophet, or an enthroned heavenly figure). While neither a 'normative' Judaism nor a normative 'messianism' can be found for this era, Collins suggests that a Davidic expectation was the most prevalent of the several messianic sub-types and appears to have been quite commonly held.<sup>4</sup>

Taken together, these two considerations offer us a background against which Jesus' messianic identity in a text such as Matthew's Gospel can be better understood. In what follows, it will be our objective to discover what renewed attention to the variety and complexity of Jewish messianology may offer us by way of reading Matthew's Gospel. Since

2. Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish Christian Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 167-68.

3. William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998). See also the comment of Craig Evans, 'David in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (eds.), *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (JSPSup, 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 183-97 (194 n. 15).

4. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 12.

Matthew, of all the four Gospels, seems to reflect the most explicit concern for presenting Jesus in relationship to Judaism, it would appear to be the most promising place to begin.

### 1. *Messiah and 'Son of David'*

For a first-century author to identify Jesus as a Messiah or a Son of David when addressing an audience made up at least in part of Christians who had grown up in Judaism was not as easy as it sounds.<sup>5</sup> On any cursory examination, few of the various expectations regarding the Messiah in this period meshed very well with the story Matthew would tell. Several groups within Judaism appeared to hold varying views of the role that a messianic figure might play in Yahweh's decisive deliverance of his people, while other texts ignored the role of 'Messiah' completely. Virtually no texts of the time referred to the death of the Messiah, and those that did lacked any hint of a resurrected Messiah.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps most problematic of all is the fact that 'Messiahs' connected with the Davidic line were often portrayed in connection with a political restoration of territorial Israel, something which was decidedly absent from Matthew's account. Given these considerations, we might expect that Matthew would minimize Jesus' Davidic credentials within the development of his fuller Christology, yet the opposite is true. While Matthew retains the Markan emphasis on Jesus as 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God', he also offers his readers a more intensely 'messianic' depiction of Jesus as well. Unless we wish to attribute to Matthew a gross ignorance of his own traditions, the fact that this was a viable option for this Gospel author might indicate that first-century messianic expectation, and its Davidic stream in particular, allowed for this. In order to illustrate this, a brief survey of this term will serve us well.

#### a. *The Background for 'Messiah' in the Hebrew Bible*

Although there is no space here to go into a detailed analysis of the terminology and history that lies behind our use of the term 'Messiah', a

5. As argued by many, including Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish Christian Community*, pp. 1-164; see also Jack Dean Kingsbury, 'Matthew, Gospel according to', in Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 502-506 (503).

6. Cf. *4 Ezra* 7.29, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983), I, p. 537.

brief survey of the Davidic stream in messianic expectation is in order.<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of clarity, and following the suggestion of Richard Horsley, the focus will be on selected texts that either (a) actually include the Hebrew term ‘Messiah’ and its equivalents or (b) use a social-historical form established elsewhere as clearly associated with ‘Messiah’.<sup>8</sup>

In Old Testament usage, the action of anointing conferred divine approval on a leader, most frequently a king, but also a prophet or high priest. In royal anointing, the act was part of enthronement ritual and represented legitimate authority. When used as a noun, the term referred again most frequently to Israelite kings, but, with the exception of Saul, only to David or his successors in the Davidic line. The term is also applied to the Persian king Cyrus in Isa. 45.1, and here the term seems to presuppose the Davidic tradition and suggest that Cyrus will carry out the role of a Davidic king as Israel’s deliverer at Yahweh’s pleasure, during a time when political realities mitigated against an Israelite king doing so.

The Davidic associations with ‘Messiah’ developed on the basis of Yahweh’s promise to David of an enduring throne which would be occupied, apparently in perpetuity, by one of his sons (2 Sam. 7.12-14). On the basis of this covenantal assurance, this Davidic heir to the throne would enjoy the place of ‘a son’ in relation to Yahweh, his divine father (Ps. 2). The persistence of this hope can be seen in its repetition throughout the books of 1 and 2 Kings, which conclude the deuteronomistic history. In this account, frequent references to Yahweh’s faithfulness to a number of kings in David’s line make this clear.<sup>9</sup>

7. For further background, see F. Hesse, ‘*χρίω*’, *TDNT*, X, pp. 1322-25; Tremper Longman, III, ‘The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and the Writings’, in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming); George J. Brooke, ‘Kingship and Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in John Day (ed.), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup, 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 434-55; John J. Collins, ‘Jesus, Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema (eds.), *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), pp. 100-19.

8. ‘Messianic Movements in Judaism’, in David Noel Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary* CD ROM (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

9. 2 Kgs 18.3; 19.34; 20.5

It is after the downfall of the Davidic royal house that the development of what comes to be called 'messianic' expectation becomes more nuanced. By way of definition, three important general qualifications are to be noted. First, while the coming inauguration of Yahweh's kingdom is closely tied to the reemergence of Israel as a nation (e.g. Isa. 61.1-7; Jer. 33.1-7; Ezek. 48), not all texts that speak of a future restoration of the nation of Israel refer to a 'Messiah' or to an eschatological deliverer figure or emphasize an active role for such a figure. It was quite possible, therefore, to picture the decisive activity of Israel's God in history with minimal attention to such an intermediary agent.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, while there were other passages in which clear reference is made to an 'anointed' royal figure of Davidic lineage, in only one case (Dan. 9.25) is the actual term 'the Messiah' used in the Hebrew Bible, and here with great ambiguity.<sup>11</sup> In order to fully understand the development of this expectation, we are therefore reliant on a number of other passages that do mention a specific eschatological deliverer, but do so without the explicit use of the term 'Messiah'.<sup>12</sup>

Historical circumstances begin to disassociate this hope more and more from actual historical figures and place it within the realm of divine eschatological intervention.<sup>13</sup> Against the broader background of the kingship of Yahweh, a number of Psalms feature a number of explicit references to the enduring quality of the Davidic covenant which, in later troubled times, came to be read as a foundation for hope that the dynasty would reemerge.<sup>14</sup> In the prophets, this hope is prominently expressed in Jeremiah (23.5-6 and 33.14-26, which emphasize the enduring quality of Yahweh's promise), Ezekiel (34.23-24; 37.24-28, though the Davidic shepherd figure is noticeably absent from chs. 40-48) and Isaiah (9.1-2; 11.1-16), as well as briefer and sometimes more cryptic comments by Amos, Hosea and Micah. Following the Exile, the later

10. Isa. 55-66, Ezek. 40-48.

11. As long noted by exegetes, as early as, e.g., James Crichton, 'Messiah', in James Orr (ed.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), III, p. 2039.

12. For a helpful study on defining 'Messiah' in relation to selected prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible, see Mark J. Boda, 'Figuring the Future: The Prophets and Messiah', in Porter (ed.), *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*.

13. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), pp. 155-61.

14. Cf. Pss. 2, 80, 89, 132.

prophetic books of Haggai and Zechariah appear to present the possibility of a restored Davidic line in the figure of Zerubbabel, and a situation in which both a priestly and royal figure together carry out the task of messianic leadership, though the former seems to act in subordination to that of the latter.<sup>15</sup>

b. *Traditions Surrounding David*

It is against this wider background that Matthew's own development of Jesus as a Davidic, messianic figure can best be understood, both in terms of continuity with this broader tradition and in a reinterpretation of many of its traditional elements. Here it is helpful to notice the rich texture of the Davidic tradition in Second Temple Judaism. It is widely recognized that, in several texts, the Davidic Messiah figure carried overtly nationalistic, political and perhaps even revolutionary connotations within the wider Jewish expectation.<sup>16</sup> In wider Jewish circles, a number of texts attest that this type of militant expectation did exist.

*Psalms of Solomon 17 and Qumran*

The text from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, *Psalms of Solomon* 17, witnesses to the hope that God's kingship would be reestablished by means of 'the son of David', who would act as God's military agent in removing the corrupt, illegitimate powers under which Jerusalem had fallen in the turbulent century before the Christian era, in order to restore righteousness and justice in Israel.<sup>17</sup> The text draws heavily on the exalted language of Isaiah 11,<sup>18</sup> and the influence of Psalm 2 and other psalms can be detected as well. It speaks of one who will 'shatter in

15. Mark J. Boda, 'Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1.7–6.15', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 4 (2001), Article 10.

16. Craig Evans observes, 'The traditional notion of the expectation of a militant messiah who, like David of old, would lead Israel to a military victory over her enemies, especially the Romans, seems well established. It could be for this reason that Jesus does not exploit the Davidic element in his understanding of messianism. Although known as the son of David (cf. Mark 10.46, 47; Rom 1.3)—a datum not likely invented by the early Church, but grounded in a genealogical fact...Jesus makes little of it.' See Evans, 'David', p. 195.

17. Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, 49; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 377.

18. The superlative language of the context suggests no ordinary Davidic successor is in view; Isa. 9.6-7.

pieces unrighteous rulers', 'smash the arrogance of sinners like a potter's vessel', and 'destroy the lawless by the word of his mouth'.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, both the introduction and the conclusion of the chapter stress the primacy of God's eternal kingship and the dependence of this Messiah on divine power and rule rather than mere military might,<sup>20</sup> a qualification that is also prominent in a number of accounts associated with David in the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>21</sup> The messianic son of David who carries out these actions is depicted as morally pure and righteous, and is said to gather a holy, sanctified nation of Israel and receive the tribute of the Gentiles who will one day visit Jerusalem and come to see the glory of God. There is also stress on the Messiah's ability to teach the Gentiles and instruct Israel in righteousness and holiness.<sup>22</sup> Military power and national restoration are thus part of a larger set of concerns and should not necessarily be made the sole hallmark of the Davidic template.

There are similar hopes expressed in the Qumran scrolls around the same period.<sup>23</sup> The 'Branch of David' would arise in the last days and lead a campaign to defeat Israel's enemies once and for all. In addition to the often militant imagery, the Davidic Messiah's dependence on other leadership figures in the community and especially on the power and intervention of God are also dominant features.<sup>24</sup> In fact, in several texts, there is evidence that two Messiahs were expected, with the priestly figure seemingly taking precedence over his royal counterpart.

19. Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study*, pp. 346-47.

20. *Pss. Sol.* 17.1, 2, 34, 39, 45, 46.

21. Cf. 2 Sam. 17.45-47 and Ps. 18.49-50, where it is linked with both obedience and the perpetuity of the Davidic covenant; 1 Chron. 12.19-22, 18.13, but see also David's census which contravenes this in 2 Chron. 21.1-15.

22. *Pss. Sol.* 17.24-26.

23. Cf. 4Q161 8-10 iii 22-25; 4Q174 3 i 7-13, 18; 4 ii 1; 4Q175 1.12; and also 4Q285 5 5 where the portrait of the Davidic Messiah's role is consistent with the depiction of the ideal king in the *Temple Scroll* 11Q19 56-59. All references are from Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: Harper, 1996). Note also the helpful summary comment by Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, p. 68: 'This concept of the Davidic messiah as the warrior king who would destroy the enemies of Israel and institute an era of unending peace constitutes the common core of Jewish messianism around the turn of the era'.

24. Brooke, 'Kingship and Messianism', pp. 54-55.

*David as Exemplar of Faith*

Evidence of a wide range of associations with the messianic ‘son of David’ is prevalent more widely in Judaism as well. A recent study by Gary Knoppers has argued that writers as early as the author of Chronicles were interested in David not just as idealized royal hero and military leader, but equally as an ordinary figure of piety who modeled repentance, confession and intercession throughout his life.<sup>25</sup> Brian Nolan’s study has drawn important attention to another set of traditions surrounding the figure of David in which he was regarded as an exemplar of personal faith and devotion to Yahweh.<sup>26</sup> Arguing for the existence of what amounted to a hagiography surrounding David in Second Temple Jewish literature, Nolan has shown that, in first-century Judaism, the figure of David was regarded as ‘not only a model of piety and fidelity to the Lord who loved him, but as the man who spoke in the Spirit of the ways of God to man’.<sup>27</sup>

*David the Prophet and Exorcist*

In his study of Qumran texts, Craig Evans has noticed evidence of a range of ways in which the Davidic tradition was appropriated in early Judaism of this era.<sup>28</sup> Overlapping with references to the Davidic covenant and dynastic traditions which have been discussed earlier, one can also locate both descriptions of the historical figure David, as well as praise for the virtues of David the man in relation to Yahweh. Here a number of qualities are emphasized in the life of David, including his trust<sup>29</sup> in God over mere military might, his repudiation of evil,<sup>30</sup> and his persistent hope that God would vindicate him.<sup>31</sup> Reference is also made

25. Gary N. Knoppers, ‘Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles’, *Bib* 76.4 (1996), pp. 449-70.

26. Brian Nolan, *The Royal Son of God* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 159-69.

27. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God*, p. 169. Evidence includes 2 Sam. 22; Sir. 47.1-22; Wis. 7-9; the Qumran Psalms Scroll 11QPs; Ps. 151; and references in Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities* and Josephus.

28. Evans, ‘David’, pp. 183-97.

29. 1QM 11.1-2, which stresses David’s trust in the power of Yahweh, not in the weapons of war.

30. 11Q5 19.14, Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 450.

31. Alluding to Ps. 26.1, although the theme appears throughout the Psalter. See, e.g., Ps. 13.5; 17.2; 18.20; 20.6; 22.19; 23.5; 25.2; 27.13; 28.7.



to his acts of kindness and mercy.<sup>32</sup> One of the apocryphal psalms attributed to David accentuates his piety and dependence on Yahweh for deliverance from Satan.<sup>33</sup> Even more interesting is the portrait of David we find in 11Q5 27.2-11 as a Spirit-empowered prophet and exorcist:

Now David the son of Jesse was wise and shone like the light of the sun, a scribe and man of discernment, blameless in all his ways before God and man. The LORD gave him a brilliant and discerning spirit, so that he wrote: psalms, three thousand six hundred; songs to sing before the altar accompanying the daily perpetual burnt offering, for all the days of the year, three hundred and sixty four; for the Sabbath offerings, fifty two songs; and for the New Moon offerings, all the festal days, and the Day of Atonement, thirty songs. The total of all the songs that he composed was four hundred and forty six, not including four songs for charming the demon possessed with music... All these he composed through prophecy given him by the most High.<sup>34</sup>

Another of the apocryphal psalms attributes an incantation against demons in the name of the Lord to David as well as accrediting Solomon with a similar text for the exorcism of demonic spirits.<sup>35</sup> These various traditions were doubtless well known in Matthew's day, and were part of the rich variety of associations in early Judaism with the figure of David. Moreover, the lines between 'the historical David', David as a moral and spiritual exemplar, and David the messianic prototype may not always have been as sharply drawn in these texts as modern scholars might like.<sup>36</sup> In short, it seems quite possible that an author such as Matthew might well have had at hand a rich cluster of David traditions and associations, as the discussion which follows will attempt to illustrate.

32. Evans, 'David', pp. 188-89. See also Nolan, *The Royal Son of God*, pp. 160-69, for a description of the hagiography which came to surround the figure of David in Judaism.

33. 11Q5 19.15-17.

34. See Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 452.

35. Cf. 11Q11, Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 453-54. Further attestation can be found in the Qumran text of Ps. 91 (4QPs<sup>b</sup>) and in the 11Q Apocryphal Psalm (11QP<sup>s</sup>Ap<sup>a</sup> = 11Q5-6), a text connected with exorcism in both rabbinic and early Christian tradition. Cf. Martin Abegg, Jr, Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), p. 541.

36. Evans, 'David', pp. 187-91.

## 2. Matthew's Presentation of 'Messiah'

### a. Introduction and Birth Narrative

Matthew's attention to messianic issues begins in his introduction, where he sets the stage for the rest of the narrative by highlighting the identity of Jesus for his readers. Matthew's innovative approach to the messianic tradition becomes apparent almost at once.<sup>37</sup> The subject of his opening genealogy, Jesus, is twice called 'the Christ' (1.16, 17) and his role as bringer of Israel's salvation is specifically associated with forgiveness of sins (1.21). When the origins of Mary's pregnancy are revealed to Joseph, language suggestive of divine intervention makes clear the special character of Jesus in relation to God. This notion of the Davidic Messiah as 'son of God' is well attested at Qumran in such texts as 4Q369 and 4Q174.<sup>38</sup> While neither text refers to the necessity of a miraculous birth, they certainly suggest that Matthew's depiction of Jesus' birth by divine intervention would have been intelligible to his readers.

At his birth, the inquiry of the magi identifies Jesus as 'the King of the Jews', in contrast with King Herod, whose claim to the same title is presumably put in some question as a result, and whose death by chapter's end seems to confirm this. The birth of Jesus is explicitly connected with a prophecy in Micah (5.2) concerning the small but important town of Bethlehem in Ephrathah and hints strongly at ties to the Davidic line, which were already mentioned more overtly in the genealogy.<sup>39</sup> The

37. 'In introducing Jesus as Messiah, son of David, and son of Abraham in the first sentence of the gospel, the author taps the core of his Jewish tradition. He develops these descriptions of Jesus throughout the narrative and uses them to make Jesus' identity, relationship to God, activities and goals intelligible to his audience. In no case does he simply assimilate Jesus to a traditional role or category. Rather, the use of each designation in the narrative suggests modifications and hidden possibilities in the Jewish tradition, which Matthew exploits to develop Jesus as a special intermediary sent by God.' Cf. Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish Christian Community*, p. 171. This is not to suggest that Matthew imposes a messianic outlook on his sources. Both Mark and Q exhibit evidence of their own distinctive messianic coloring, which in Matthew's case, Matthew extenuates and sharpens. See Edward P. Meadors, 'The "Messianic" Implications of the Q Material', *JBL* 118.2 (1999), pp. 253-77.

38. While the Qumran texts 4Q369 (Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 329) and 4Q174 (p. 227) do not expressly indicate that a miraculous birth was expected of a Messiah, they refer to a Messiah in terms of divine sonship.

39. The fuller context of Micah's prophecy (4.3-5) is as much about the Messiah as it is about Bethlehem. It reads: 'He will stand and shepherd his flock in the

reference in Micah also connects Jesus to the royal clan of Judah<sup>40</sup> and employs the typical Old Testament image of the royal shepherd, which Matthew again will highlight when Jesus later observes the plight of the crowds, 'harassed and helpless' like sheep without a shepherd (9.36).<sup>41</sup>

As narrator, Matthew also employs the explicit title 'the Messiah' for Jesus in several other locations where it is absent in both Mark and Luke, suggesting its significance.<sup>42</sup> These occasions include the warning to the disciples after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (16.20), the question about David's son in the temple (22.41), and the warning to the disciples shortly after that they have but one rabbi or teacher, who is the Messiah (23.10).

#### b. *Jesus as Messianic Prophet*

Matthew's presentation of Jesus as a Messiah is not limited to the explicit use of such a title, however, as other messianic elements also present themselves.<sup>43</sup> As in Luke, Matthew's three temptations center on his messianic identity as 'son of God'. However, in Matthew's order, the last temptation deals with his refusal to bow down to Satan in order to receive universal kingship. Immediately after this, Jesus begins to preach of the coming messianic kingdom. When Matthew cites Isaiah (9.1, 2) in connection with Jesus' decision to leave Nazareth and live in Capernaum, there is likely an intended fulfillment reference to Galilee as the location for Jesus' home. Beyond this, the reference within the larger context of the citation in Isaiah 9, which concerns the prophesied

strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace.'

40. There is a long tradition of messianic interpretation associated with the blessing of Jacob in Gen. 49.10. See, e.g., 4Q252 5, in Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 277; also, James L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1997), pp. 279-88.

41. I am indebted to Howard Marshall for pointing out this connection in his paper, 'Jesus as Messiah in Mark and Matthew', in Porter (ed.), *Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, p. 8 [manuscript].

42. Marshall, 'Jesus as Messiah', p. 8, citing Mt. 16.20; 12.23; 15.22; 20.30-31; 21.9, 15.

43. Cf. also W.D. Davies, 'The Jewish Sources of Jesus' Messianism', in Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah*, pp. 494-511.

Davidic figure who will effect the restoration of all of Israel, should not be overlooked.<sup>44</sup>

In any event, the contrast between the kingdom offered by Satan and the one Jesus now sets out to establish is made clear, as crowds from a wide geographic area flock to hear his teaching and many receive relief from a variety of illnesses and afflictions, including demon possession. Jesus' identity as a 'Davidic Messiah' and 'son of God' is thus linked with an emphasis on Jesus as a healing prophet and a teacher that appears throughout the Gospel (11.21-24; 23.13-19),<sup>45</sup> and even in Jesus' own words (Mt 16.14; 21.11, 46). In an example that illustrates Matthew's emphasis on Jesus' character as a messianic prophet,<sup>46</sup> Jesus replies to John's question about whether he is the 'one to come' with a response that conflates several texts (Ps. 146.7-9; Isa. 35.5-6 and 61.1) in its description of the eschatological signs of the provision of healing for the sick and good news for the poor.<sup>47</sup> It appears that for Matthew, at least, there is no inherent conflict between presenting Jesus as a Davidic Messiah and as a messianic prophet. There is also an implied conflict between Jesus and Satan that will reoccur throughout the narrative.

44. As Jesus inaugurates his messianic kingdom by healing numerous people from across Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, Matthew may here make implicit reference to geographic parameters largely equivalent to that of David's united kingdom, which had been split into three provinces by the Roman authorities after the death of Herod. For the background to this question, see John Mauchline, 'Implicit Signs of a Persistent Belief in the Davidic Empire', *VT* 20 (1970), pp. 287-303. Mauchline pays special attention to the importance of Isa. 8.23-9.1, which Matthew cites as being fulfilled by the fact that Jesus makes his home in Capernaum in 4.15-16. However, it is difficult to gauge whether Matthew intends a reference to this background. Interestingly, the prophecy of Isaiah (9.7) concludes with the following description: 'Of the increase of his government there shall be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.' See also Nolan, *The Royal Son of God*, pp. 174-75.

45. G.F. Hawthorne, 'Jesus as a Prophet', in Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (eds.), *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels CD ROM* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

46. Mt. 11.2-5; see also the parallel in Lk. 7.18-23. In contrast to Luke, Matthew adds that 'John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing' (NRSV).

47. Interestingly, a version of these texts also appears at Qumran in 4Q521, where the raising of the dead is added to the Isaiah list, as it is in Matthew and Luke as well.

### 3. *Jesus as 'Son of David' in Matthew*

As with the term 'the Messiah', 'Son of David' also appears more frequently in Matthew than any of the other Synoptics. Mark employs it four times, twice in his depiction of blind Bartimeus (10.47-48) and once during Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (11.10), where the crowds greet his entry. The two pericopes together suggest that Jesus accepts the title, but wishes to act out his kingly role as one whose royal power is for healing the blind and sick, and whose bearing, unlike common Oriental potentates, is consistent with humility and service.<sup>48</sup>

Mark's fourth use of the title is in Jesus' question to the Pharisees, where he asks them how the scribes can say that the Messiah is the 'Son of David' since David also calls him Lord (Ps. 110.1). As Mark tells it, the intent of the question is consistent with Jewish rabbinical practice, where a teacher would pose two apparently contradictory assertions so that their listeners, by harmonizing them, would see the intended point.<sup>49</sup> While Mark's telling is somewhat cryptic in that no affirmation or response is given, Jesus' acceptance of the Davidic title twice elsewhere in Mark seems to suggest that in this riddle, which he poses to the Jewish leaders, he is not rejecting the title. Rather, he is making the implied claim that since his authority as Messiah comes from God, and he will soon also receive a place of honour at God's right hand and victory over

48. See D.R. Bauer, 'Son of David', in Green and McKnight (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels CD ROM*.

49. See Robert D. Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son: The Background to Mark's Christology from Concepts of Kingship in the Psalms* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), p. 280; Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 169. For further explanation, see D.H. Juel, 'The Origin of Mark's Christology', in Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah*, pp. 449-60 (453-55), who sees Jesus employing a common rabbinical tactic of creating a scriptural contradiction to score a point with an opponent. Juel cites E. Lövestam's comments in 'Die Davidsohnsfrage', *SEÅ* 27 (1962), pp. 72-82. Juel ('Origin of Mark's Christology', p. 455) points out that 'the implied solution to the problem Jesus has posed—a possible contradiction within the Scriptures—is provided by events the readers know will soon follow. Jesus, the Son of David, rejected by the temple authorities, will be raised from the dead and enthroned at God's right hand. In fact, only if Jesus, the Son of David, has been elevated to that position does the alleged Scriptural contradiction disappear.' For a differing view, cf. R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and the Messiah', in Charlesworth (ed.), *The Messiah*, pp. 461-93.

his opponents, the title 'son of David' is inadequate unless it includes divine Lordship as well.<sup>50</sup>

Matthew follows these four usages of the title, and then adds six further uses. Two of these appear in the genealogy, where Jesus, through his legal father Joseph, is a 'Son of David'.<sup>51</sup> There are four more occurrences of the term, all in the context of healing stories: the healing of the two blind men (9.27); the demon-possessed man who is also blind and mute (12.23); the healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's demon-possessed daughter (15.22); and, finally, in the cries of the children in the temple courts following Jesus' healing of the blind and lame there (21.15).<sup>52</sup>

Several features of these additional occurrences are worth noting. First of all, the title 'Son of David' is closely linked with 'Lord' in three of these four instances. Secondly, the focus in three of the four cases on Jesus' power to heal and cast out demons<sup>53</sup> should be seen in relation to Matthew's heightened emphasis on these kinds of miracles throughout his Gospel.<sup>54</sup> This tendency suggests a possible link with commonly held

50. Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son*, p. 283. In its entirety, Ps. 110.1 reads, 'The LORD says to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"'.

51. Joseph too is addressed as a 'son of David' by the angel who appears to him (1.20). In this context, nothing more than David as a lineal ancestor of Jesus is here in view. By virtue of Joseph's adoption of Jesus, this is now clearly established.

52. See Kim Paffenroth, 'Jesus as Anointing and Healing Son of David', *Bib* 80 (1999), pp. 547-53, who notes that a number of scholars have seen an allusion in this healing to 2 Sam. 5.8 (the account of David's killing of the figuratively 'blind and lame' in his conquest of Jerusalem). Such a reference would support the claim that Jesus' healing of the blind and lame are intended to remind the reader that Jesus is both 'Son of David' yet also, at the same time, more than David himself. This 'greater than' motif is apparent for example in Mt. 12, where in three instances (12.6, 41, 42) the expression is used by Jesus himself. In addition to the 2 Sam. 5 reference, it should be noted that 1QS<sup>a</sup>/1Q28<sup>a</sup>, 'Charter for Israel in the Last Days', makes specific reference to the order of service at the messianic banquet, where members of the community with physical infirmities such as being crippled, lame, blind, deaf, dumb or blemished in the skin are specifically excluded; cf. Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 146.

53. These two actions are closely linked, since many illnesses as well were thought to be caused by demons, albeit indirectly so. See David George Reese, 'Demons', in Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary CD ROM*.

54. Cf. Mt. 4.23-24 and its elaborate description of Jesus' healing power with Mk 1.39. There are seven instances of exorcism in the Gospel in total. Paffenroth notes

Jewish traditions about Solomon, whose special powers to heal disease and cast out demons were earlier noted as quite widely attested at Qumran and elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> They are also described in the words of Josephus:

God also enabled [Solomon] to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers.<sup>56</sup>

The trajectory of this association of Solomon, the 'son of David', with special power over demons can be further traced in *Testament of Solomon*, which is dated variously between the first and third centuries

that, on some occasions, Matthew seems to downplay details of exorcism in his redaction of Mark, though this seems more a matter of minimizing the magical aspects of Mark than an aversion to exorcism of Jesus' power over demons *per se* (cf. Mk 7.31-37 // Mt. 15.30 and Mk 9.14-29 // Mt. 17.14-21). While Matthew may at times redact Mark in a way that pays less attention to exorcism, it nevertheless appears prominently in the Gospel (Paffenroth, 'Jesus as Anointing and Healing Son of David', pp. 548-49). On the significance of this title against the social context of the Mediterranean world, see also Dennis C. Duling, 'The Therapeutic Son of David', *NTS* 24 (1978), pp. 392-410, and more recently, *idem*, 'Matthew's Son of David in Social Scientific Perspective: Kinship, Kingship, Magic, and Miracle', *BTB* 22.3 (1992), pp. 99-116. For a more detailed study of how Matthew depicts Jesus as a messianic healer, see Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (WUNT, 2.170; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). She argues that the author of the first Gospel makes innovative use of a number of messianic traditions, based on his own conviction that Jesus is the Messiah.

55. C. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 285, for a list of references in various scrolls and documents from this era.

56. *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45-46, trans. William Whitson, 'Christian Classics Ethereal Library', on-line. Available at <http://www.ccel.org/>, accessed 29 October 2004. I am indebted here to Davies, 'The Jewish Sources', p. 500. See also J.M. Hull, 'Exorcism in the New Testament', in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), p. 313. See also Edward P. Meadors, 'The "Messianic" Implications of the "Q" Material', *JBL* 118.2 (1999), pp. 253-77, which makes reference in this connection also to Ps. Philo *LAB* 63 and 11QPs 27; also, Rowe, *God's Kingdom and God's Son*, p. 206.

CE.<sup>57</sup> In the background as well may be the figure of David himself, known for his ability to soothe the evil spirit that tormented his predecessor, Saul (1 Sam. 16.14-23).<sup>58</sup> It seems that Jesus' healing activity and particularly his exorcisms, are part of Matthew's characteristic way of expressing Jesus' messianic power, establishing his kingdom by defeating the works of the 'evil one', mentioned twice in both the Sermon on the Mount (5.37; 6.13) and the parable of the sower and its interpretation (13.19, 38; cf. also 13.41), and associated with the intent of his opponents (22.18).

It is quite possible that the militant exploits of the traditional Davidic Messiah are recast in Matthew's Gospel into the conflict between Jesus and 'the evil one' that runs as an undercurrent throughout Matthew's Gospel.<sup>59</sup> A point of debate raised by his opponents on two occasions is whether Jesus is in league with Beelzebul or in conflict with him (9.34; 12.24-28), and by implication whether the title 'Son of David' is deserved. Importantly, Jesus' answer in the second instance explicitly links his power to cast out demons with the work of God's Spirit and the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

This sets the context for two instances where Matthew, in his parallel of Mark's usage, exhibits careful refinement of his source. The first is during the entry into Jerusalem, where Matthew's crowd shouts Hosanna to the 'son of David', adding this title where Mark lacks it. The second occurs when Matthew, following Mark, recounts Jesus' question regarding Psalm 110. By inserting a preliminary question to the Pharisees, in which they themselves agree that the Messiah is the Son of David—a title they have deliberately challenged Jesus' right to accept on two previous occasions—Matthew's Jesus affirms that they have answered correctly. At the same time, he challenges them to recognize what his reader has long been aware of,<sup>60</sup> that their understanding of

57. One account in particular provides an intriguing parallel for the cry of Bartimaeus in Mk 10.47-48 and the two blind men in Mt. 20.30-31. Cf. *T. Sol.* 20.1, though the particular context is not one of exorcism; Dennis C. Duling, 'Testament of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction', in Charlesworth (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I, pp. 935-87, esp. 954-55, 982.

58. Cf. also Josephus, *Ant.* 6.8.2 §§166-168. I am indebted to Matt Lowe at McMaster Divinity College for pointing out this reference.

59. Cf. 5.37; 6.13; 13.19 and 38; and associated with the Jewish leaders in 22.18.

60. As noted by Keener, this is an example of Jesus using a common rabbinic technique known as 'haggadic antimony', in which questions were used to pose an



'Messiah' is nonetheless inadequate, since David calls him Lord. Jesus, quoting Psalm 110, asks, 'If David calls him (that is, the Messiah) Lord, how can he be his son?' On a *prima facie* level, the problem is clear: in a patriarchal context, how can a father address his son as Lord? More to the point for Matthew, however, is the question: what is the relationship of Jesus' identity as the 'Son of David' with his status as 'Lord'?<sup>61</sup> This question, posed by the complex identity of Jesus that Matthew is depicting, finds its clearest answer in the passion account that now follows.

#### 4. *Matthew's Use of Tradition in the Passion Account*

Matthew's account of the passion demonstrates a decidedly innovative use and appropriation of Jewish traditions to fashion a distinctive messianic outlook. In general terms, Matthew follows Mark's basic account with its emphasis on the righteous suffering and undeserved death of Jesus, which incorporates a number of Old Testament references and alludes to other texts such as Wisdom of Solomon. The writer of the first Gospel adds several other unique features that elucidate more fully the contention that Jesus' death is that of one whose obedience and dependence on God results in both a heavenly enthronement and a lasting messianic kingdom.

##### a. *The Tradition of Zechariah 9–14*

Two of Matthew's particular interests in the messianic traditions of Mark<sup>62</sup> are his references to the concluding chapters of Zechariah and the use of the pattern evoked by the figure 'righteous sufferer' in a number of texts in Judaism.<sup>63</sup> Both of these traditions play a significant role in his particular Gospel passion account.

apparent contradiction that needed to be harmonized. See his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 532-33.

61. These two terms are frequently associated in Matthew.

62. This assumes a form of Markan priority as the most plausible model for explaining the relationship between Mark, Matthew and Luke, though the relationship of dependence may be a much more complex matter at both the textual and verbal levels. For a full discussion of messianism in Mark, see Juel, 'Origin', pp. 453-55

63. Matthew's structure is modeled closely on Mark's, who may be following a traditional pattern of his own. George Nicklesburg has proposed the existence of a traditional genre of suffering and vindication stories that can be seen in such Jewish texts as the story of Joseph in Gen. 37–42, Esther, Dan. 3–6, Susanna and 2 Macc. 7 in which the influence of Wis. 2.4-5 and Isa. 52.13–53.12 are apparent; see George

In his use of Zechariah, Matthew copies one quotation from this minor prophet found in Mark (scattering of the disciples, 13.7), and in two other instances, inserts quotations where Mark has only allusions (Jerusalem entry, 9.9 in Mt. 21.5; thirty pieces of silver, 11.12-13).<sup>64</sup> This would suggest that he has noted Mark's awareness of some of the Zechariah texts, and sought to expand the correlation between them to further emphasize the fulfillment of Scripture in particular events. In Matthew's hands, two additional quotations are included as well as other allusions, and there appear to be at least five references to Zechariah 9–14 in all. While Zechariah is not the most common of messianic traditions, its close connection with the Davidic dynasty tradition, its portrait of a humble king, a good but rejected shepherd, and its eschatological, apocalyptic texture appear to have made it attractive to Matthew in his depiction of Jesus' passion. One recent study has even argued that Zecha-

Nicklesburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS, 26; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); and *idem*, 'The Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative', *HTR* 73 (1980), pp. 156-63. For a brief overview of the structure of this genre, see Nicklesburg, *Resurrection*, pp. 56-57. Following Nicklesburg's work, Joel B. Green argues in support of significant literary influence by this pre-canonical literary pattern on the Markan passion account. His findings suggest an even closer parallel between this 'suffering/vindication' genre than perhaps even Nicklesburg himself found. Several components of the genre are accounted for in the ironic actions of Jesus' opponents, while others are anticipated or implied by Mark. See Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus: Tradition and Interpretation in the Passion Narrative* (WUNT, 2.33; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988), pp. 169-74.

64. 'If we accept Markan Gospel priority, it appears that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel for the sequence of events in the Passion account and perhaps found some nascent utilization of Zechariah that encouraged him to utilize Zech 9–14 more fully in his own account. As a result, there is an increase in the number of direct quotations of Zech 9–14 in Matthew's Passion account, to the point of possibly citing one passage twice in two different contexts. Rather than Matthew's Gospel reflecting primarily utilization of a Zecharian source, it appears that Matthew utilized his Markan source but then enhanced this source through specific citation of Zechariah, inspired to do so because of Mark's usage no doubt, but also because it probably supported a number of his messianic perspectives, such as seeing Jesus as king, good shepherd or pierced messiah. As a result, the influence of Zechariah upon the Passion narrative is not so much direct as indirect and mediated through the suggestions of Mark's Gospel.' See Mark J. Boda and Stanley E. Porter, 'Literature to the Third Degree: Prophecy in Zechariah 9–14 and the Passion of Christ', in Robert David and Manuel Jinbanchian (eds.), *Traduire la Bible Hébraïque / Translating the Hebrew Bible* (Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2005), pp. 215-54 (252-53).

riah's importance to Mark and Matthew stemmed from the way this prophetic text depicted the rejection and death of a Davidic Messiah at the hands of Israel's corrupt leadership, the scattering of the 'flock', the eventual cleansing of the faithful community and, finally, the arrival of Yahweh on Mt Zion to enact final judgment of Israel's enemies and provide vindication for his saints.<sup>65</sup> While the relationship between Zechariah 9–14 and the passion narrative should not be overstated to the point of structural dependence,<sup>66</sup> the dilemma of relating Jesus' death to his role as Messiah clearly posed a problem for early Christian authors, and the specific ordeal of the faithful shepherd of Zechariah 11 and 13 clearly provided potential parallels for dealing with this issue. Matthew, of all the Gospels, was most inclined to utilize this particular prophetic resource.<sup>67</sup>

b. *'The Righteous Sufferer'*

A second important set of scriptural resources for Matthew's presentation of the Messiah is found in the texts that depict the plight of the 'Righteous Sufferer'.<sup>68</sup> Two psalms from this thematically-connected set of Old Testament texts that are especially prominent are Psalms 22 and 69. On one occasion Matthew indicates that he is aware of the role they play in the background of Mark's account by adding a quotation where Mark has only more indirect references, such as allusion or verbal

65. This represents an abbreviation of the nine-part scheme of M.C. Black, who argues that this larger scheme has shaped the narrative structure of the Gospels 'at a most fundamental level'. See M.C. Black, 'The Rejected and Slain Messiah who is Coming with his Angels: The Messianic Exegesis of Zechariah 9–14 in the Passion Narratives' (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Atlanta: Emory University, 1990), p. 8.

66. Black argues that the Zechariah narrative is actually the framework for both the Markan passion narrative and John, and thus by extension, the passion narrative of all the Gospels. This direct narrative dependence of the Gospels on Zech. 9–14's narrative has been challenged convincingly by Boda and Porter, 'Literature to the Third Degree' (pp. 245-53), due to a number of serious difficulties.

67. Boda and Porter, 'Literature to the Third Degree', pp. 252-53.

68. See John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), pp. 206-208. For a detailed chart that includes most of the possible verbal parallels, allusions and direct quotations, see Raymond E. Brown, *Death of the Messiah* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994), II, pp. 1453-56.

parallel (Mt. 27.43//Ps. 22.8).<sup>69</sup> On other occasions he reproduces his source material (from Mark) carefully to maintain the parallels that are already there.<sup>70</sup> Both psalms also have first-century Davidic associations within the Psalter, which may suggest Matthew's continued attention to parallels between the 'historical David' and Jesus in his account. In addition, three of Matthew's longer expansions to Mark in his account of the trial are carefully positioned to highlight Jesus' innocence and indicate that his innocent death offers forgiveness and redemption for others.<sup>71</sup>

### 5. *Matthew's Passion Account*

#### a. *Anointing and Last Supper*

The Matthean passion account begins with the anointing of Jesus in the home of Simon the Leper (Mt. 26.1) and ends with the death of Jesus and the events that accompany it (27.54). It is in these final two chapters that his unique construal of Jesus' messianic status becomes most intensely visible to the reader. Following Mark, Matthew's account has included several predictions of what will happen to Jesus when he falls into the hands of his enemies (17.11-13; 20.17-19; 20.24-28) and like Mark, he has connected these with Jesus' predominant title of the Danielic 'son of man'. The story of the woman's anointing and the meeting of Judas with the chief priests begins with a fourth prediction of the son of man's suffering at the hands of others,<sup>72</sup> forming an *inclusio* with the Last Supper that concludes Matthew's depiction of Jesus among his closest associates. Perhaps more importantly, the fourth prediction forms a link with these previous statements, and highlights that Jesus' conception of kingship and messianic action are quite different from those of his disciples, and in sharp contrast also to the path to kingly authority offered by Satan when his ministry began.<sup>73</sup> Jesus' predictions had speci-

69. Cf. Mt. 27.43, where Matthew inserts a quotation from Ps. 22.8. Cf. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 21, although I disagree with the conclusion that Matthew creates narrative on the basis of Ps. 22. Luke apparently does much the same in his account.

70. See Mt. 27.34 // Mk 15.23 // Ps. 69.21; Mt. 27.35 // Mk 15.24 // Ps. 22.18; Mt. 27.39 // Mk 15.29 // Ps. 22.7; Mt. 27.46 // Mk 15.34 // Ps. 22.1.

71. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 45-48.

72. This is not found in Mark or Luke: cf. Mt. 26.2; Mk 13.1-2.

73. Mt. 4.8-9.

fied that he would be handed over to the chief priests and elders to endure suffering and mistreatment, only to be raised and vindicated after three days. His response to the request of the mother of Zebedee's sons had made it clear that this suffering was not a contradiction of his messianic task, but precisely the manner in which it would take place.

During the final communal Passover meal that Jesus ate with his followers, he announces that the bread they eat represents his body, and the wine symbolizes his 'blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'.<sup>74</sup> Following this meal, which Jesus shares with his disciples on the evening of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples sing the appropriate hymn and go out to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus predicts their desertion, quoting Zech. 13.7,<sup>75</sup> concerning the striking of the faithful shepherd,<sup>76</sup> and the accompanying scattering of the 'little ones' of the flock. The larger context in Zechariah implies that the time of suffering at the hands of his enemies is

74. An expansion to Mark which is indicative of Matthew's awareness of Isa. 53.12 ('the sin of many: πολλοί, LXX) as the background for Jesus' actions. See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 216.

75. The exact wording alters Zech. 13.7 slightly, since in the prophet a sword is commanded to strike the shepherd, whereas in Matthew and Mark, God himself strikes the shepherd. Brown raises the possibility that this quotation may have been influenced by Isa. 53.4, 10; *Death of the Messiah*, I, p. 130. See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 219-20, for further discussion of the influence of Zech. 9-14 on the synoptic passion story.

76. The shepherd motif is integral to several passages, one of which refers to a Davidic ruler who will safeguard Yahweh's 'sheep', Israel (cf. Ezek. 34.20-24; 37.24). In Zechariah, the shepherd motif is developed in Yahweh's instruction that Zechariah himself act as the shepherd of Judah, only to be rejected by the flock (Zech. 11.1-14). The chapter concludes with Yahweh raising up a worthless shepherd who harms, devours and ultimately deserts the flock, only to be punished by God (11.17). There are hints in the previous chapter that Yahweh himself intends to replace the corrupt shepherds of Israel and carry out the task of shepherd himself (10.3). In any case, Zech. 13.7 may well be intended to describe punishment for this 'worthless shepherd', but both Matthew and Mark quote it as describing the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, the caring shepherd, whose disciples will now be left without their leader. (While Matthew—unlike John—has no prolonged treatment of Jesus as the good shepherd, he does identify Jesus in this way in 9.36 in a brief but poignant reference, which echoes the true prophet Micaiah in 1 Kgs 22.17.) Cf. Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 621, 635; also Mt. 26.15, 27.9, 10 where the allusion to '30 pieces of silver' going to buy a potter's field incorporates a reference to Zech. 11.13.

at hand, but that God will prevail on Israel's behalf and establish his universal kingship (Zech. 13.8-9; 14.3-9).

Even more striking, however, is the convergence of the geographical location of Jesus' movement from Jerusalem (26.30) across the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives, with a parallel episode in the life of David. Using the same verb that describes David's journey from Jerusalem,<sup>77</sup> as he goes up to the Mount of Olives for a time of distraught prayer during the revolt of Absalom and Ahithophel, his trusted advisor, Matthew sets the stage for Jesus' time of prayer and betrayal by one of his closest followers. When, in a uniquely Matthean episode, Judas later hangs himself (27.15), the echoes of Ahithophel's suicide (2 Sam. 17.23) are unmistakable.<sup>78</sup> Jesus' prediction of the desertion of even Peter provides the somber transition to Matthew's next scene, where Matthew (like Mark) places greater emphasis on Jesus' suffering in the Garden than Luke and John do.<sup>79</sup>

While in Gethsemane, Jesus confides to his disciples that he is grieved to the point of death, using words that again evoke the suffering righteous figure of the Psalms.<sup>80</sup> As his repeated use of fulfillment statements

77. Gr. εἰσέρχασθαι, 2 Sam. 15.16 LXX. This discussion is indebted to the material in Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, I, pp. 122-30.

78. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, I, p. 125. For further background in the events of David's life, see Michael Goulder, *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)* (JSOTSup, 102; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 41-50. Goulder posits the existence of a 'Passion of David' account in 2 Sam. 15.7-17.29. He reads the Pss. 51-72 against the background of an annual Israelite liturgical reenactment of David's journey during Absalom's revolt as a communal ritual of penitence. While this thesis has not met with wide acceptance and seems overly speculative, it does demonstrate the way in which specific events and concrete geographic places in the life of David could be evoked by allusions to particular psalms.

79. See Burton H. Throckmorton (ed.), *Gospel Parallels* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), p. 188. Luke 22 has no parallel for Mt. 26.37-38/Mk 14.33-34, which describes Jesus' distress and grief over what is ahead and presents Jesus as an exemplar for quiet trust who twice instructs his disciples to pray so that they not come into the time of trial. John's portrayal places emphasis on Jesus' calm foreknowledge of events and utter composure in the episode (Jn 18.4, 8-9, 11, 20-23, 32).

80. Both Raymond Brown (*Death of the Messiah*, I, pp. 154-55) and Burton Throckmorton (*Gospel Parallels*, p. 188) suggest an echo with Ps. 42.5, 6 in the words of Mt. 26.38. Brown adds the possibility that Sir. 37.2, 'Is it not sorrow like that for death itself, when a dear friend turns into an enemy?', may be part of the allusion. He also cites Ps. 31.10-11 as a possible parallel, which is interesting with respect to Lk. 23.46, where Jesus quotes Ps. 31.5, and notes such Psalms as 10, 13,

illustrates,<sup>81</sup> Matthew of all the Gospel writers is the most concerned with the unfolding of the divine plan in Jesus' life since its beginnings, and his account of the passion reinforces this repeatedly.<sup>82</sup>

b. *The Trial*

The scene in Matthew then shifts to the gathering of scribes and elders at the home of Caiaphas the high priest, who eventually confronts Jesus with a question about whether he is 'the Messiah, the Son of God', presenting a linkage of Messiah with Son of God unique to Matthew in the Gospels.<sup>83</sup> While the tone is derisive, the irony is all the richer for it. Here Jesus' own opponent unwittingly identifies him as the promised deliverer of Israel in words that reach back to the coronation litany of Psalm 2 and the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7.<sup>84</sup>

Jesus affirms Caiaphas's description, but also goes on to recast his own messianic identity in terms of the exalted 'son of man', by combining Dan. 7.13, 14 with Ps. 110.1 in a warning of coming judgment.<sup>85</sup> The high priest's response is immediate and quickly followed by a verdict of death. Matthew heightens the irony even further by adding that those who struck Jesus (26.68) mockingly called him 'Messiah'.

15, 22 and 39, which all deal with the suffering of one who trusts Yahweh for deliverance in a time of oppression by evil. All of these Psalms come from the Davidic portion of the Psalter, but whether they were associated with the person of David during this time is difficult to ascertain.

81. Although the exact wording in this formulaic introduction is only used in Mt. 1.22, which suggests to Brown that a broad, sweeping *inclusio* from Jesus' birth to the manner of his arrest and death is being constructed by Matthew (*Death of the Messiah*, I, p. 288).

82. The statement is repeated in 26.56 and is followed by the fleeing of the disciples; numerous other instances of fulfillment are integrated into the passion account by Matthew, as we will discover.

83. Matthew here has rephrased Mark's the 'Son of the Blessed One'. While it does not affect the meaning, it does serve to resonate with the centurion's comment in 27.54, which essentially concludes his description of the passion.

84. These passages were linked in the Qumran midrash on the last days, 4Q174 3 i 10-18, Wise *et al.*, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 228. See Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish Christian Community*, p. 173. Son of God also is associated with one who is righteous and obeys God faithfully, *Pss. Sol.* 13.9, 17.26-27 Wis. 2.16-18; and a man vindicated by God at the last judgment (Wis. 5.1-6).

85. Cf. N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 524-28.

Matthew's unique account of Judas's death<sup>86</sup> is part of his thematic concern that the death of Jesus involves the shedding of innocent blood, a motif expressed by Judas's own words (27.4;<sup>87</sup> cf. also 27.19, 24).<sup>88</sup> The creative conflation of Zech. 11.13 and Jer. 18.2-3 and 32.6-15 that concludes the Judas episode, attributed to Jeremiah, simultaneously suggests a number of implications. The reference to the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas (cf. Zech. 11.12-13) recalls its use in Mt. 26.15 to suggest the relatively cheap valuation of Israel's good shepherd. While Judas's attempt to return the money to the temple treasury (as Zechariah was instructed to do in Zech. 11.13) is rebuffed by the chief priests and elders, Matthew sees in the purchase of the potter's field that Scripture is nevertheless fulfilled.<sup>89</sup>

It is difficult to work out Matthew's intentions fully in this complex and heavily reworked prophetic quotation, but two further observations can be made. Matthew's interest in Judas's action and his tragic end heighten the degree of Jesus' betrayal, and intensify his portrayal as a righteous, innocent figure who suffers unjustly at the hands of malicious and hostile opponents.<sup>90</sup> Secondly, by attributing this final formulaic ful-

86. An account he alone offers in the Gospels, and quite different from the one presented in Acts 1.18-19. Though both Matthew and Acts do agree that the name of the field purchased is 'the Field of Blood'.

87. For reference, see Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 281.

88. See Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 45-48; Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 657.

89. Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 657; Brown, *Death of the Messiah* (I, pp. 646, 652) notes that even the naming of the field which they purchase unwittingly emphasizes Jesus' innocence and the complicity of his opponents.

90. This reinforces a number of earlier instances, which have been already noted in Matthew's passion narrative. Cf. Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthaean Redaction* (JSNTSup, 68; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), p. 77: 'In 27.9-10 Matthew sees in what is probably the most perfidious act of the opposition to the messiah in his Gospel—Jesus' betrayal by one of his closest disciples—not only the fulfillment of prophecy in general but also a link to the words of Jeremiah in particular... Without question, the fulfillment quotation provides the climax and focal point for Matthew's narrative: the messiah is sold for the price of a slave, with Judas's belated attempt to redress the wrong demonstrating both a recognition of his own guilt and the complicity of those who refuse what they themselves acknowledge to be "the price of blood". In this way Matthew demonstrates Jesus' innocence at the expense of the other participants' guilt and



fulfillment statement to Jeremiah, Matthew hints at a parallel to this Old Testament prophetic figure who was similarly rejected by the Jewish leaders of his own time when he brought a message of warning and impending judgment for the nation. These unfolding events of Jesus' death also carry an implication of judgment on Israel's leaders for their unwillingness to accept their Messiah.<sup>91</sup> As in the infancy story, Israel's larger story as a people in relation to God is again closely connected to the specific events of the life of Jesus as the suffering Messiah.

The repeated mention of Jesus' silence in response to Pilate's questions continues this attention to the figure of the 'righteous sufferer', which is central to Matthew's account of Jesus as the suffering Messiah.<sup>92</sup> For a second time, Matthew draws special attention to Jesus' innocence of the charges through the plea of Pilate's wife. While deliberating over the motives of the Jewish leaders' jealousy, word comes of a dream that she has had: 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him' (Mt. 27.19).<sup>93</sup> The third explicit recognition of Jesus' innocence<sup>94</sup> comes in the crowd's call for Jesus to be crucified and Pilate's response, washing his hands in a dramatic disavowal of their decision.<sup>95</sup> It shifts the focus of the narrative to the people gathered there who accept responsibility for Jesus' innocent death,<sup>96</sup> in fulfillment of Jesus' prediction in 23.35.<sup>97</sup>

responsibility. And all this is seen to be fulfilled in the words ascribed deliberately, albeit enigmatically, to the prophet Jeremiah.'

91. As was the case also in Mt. 2, where Herod and the oblivious chief priest and scribes fail to welcome Jesus, while the Magi from the East come in worship, with the result of 2.16-18, the murder of the innocent male children of Bethlehem. For a helpful discussion of the parallels between the first and last of Matthew's fulfillment quotations, see Knowles, *Jeremiah*, pp. 34-52, 78-81.

92. In his passion account, it is particularly the attribute of undeserved suffering that in some way is atoning for the sins of others that is of importance. See also the list of 'Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer' provided by Carroll and Green (*Death of Jesus*, pp. 207-209), which appear to have been employed in a variety of ways throughout the Passion Narrative of the four Gospels, and thus frequently in Matthew as well.

93. The fact that this Gentile woman speaks in defense of Jesus should not go unnoticed, given Matthew's insistence that the gospel is available to all.

94. Expressly by Judas in 27.4 and implied in 27.14. See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, I, pp. 805-807.

95. For Old Testament background, see Ps. 26.6; 73.13; Deut. 21.1-9.

96. The innocence of Jesus is a particular concern of Matthew as Carroll and Green argue (*Death of Jesus*, p. 55), citing Isa. 53.11: 'It is plain that Matthew's pas-

c. *The Death of the Messiah*

Matthew's description of Jesus' crucifixion incorporates allusions to Ps. 69.21 in the offering of wine to drink, and two allusions to Psalm 22 in the division of Jesus' clothing by lot and the shaking heads of the passers-by. As well, those who repeat the statement of the two witnesses in 26.61, later joined by the chief priests and elders, using the titles 'king of Israel' and 'Son of God', do so in a ridiculing mockery (cf. 27.40). But within the narrative, they also unwittingly bear witness to what Matthew's entire Gospel has been demonstrating as the heart of Jesus' mission. The second of these taunts ('He trusts in God, let God deliver him if he wants to, for he said, "I am God's Son"') is here quoted directly (in contrast with Mark's allusion), suggesting a further expansion and development of the connection between the Righteous One of Ps. 22.8 and the details of Jesus' situation here (27.43).<sup>98</sup> To Matthew's audience, the whole scene is again, as it was in the trial, rich in irony. One could note here as well the *titulus* over Jesus' head, which correctly identifies him as Israel's king, although the title is used without a real recognition of what this means. By contrast, the readers and hearers of Matthew by now know the meaning quite well.<sup>99</sup> As one commentator

sion account tells of the undeserved death of a righteous man... The cross of the Just One finds meaning within the larger saving activity of God. The Matthean passion narrative displays a magisterial Jesus, who never swerves from his commitment to "fulfill all righteousness" (3.15; 5.17-20) yet as king-Messiah accepts a servant's death for the benefit of others.'

97. As John Heil has noted, in *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 76. See also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, I, pp. 830-39. That later abuses of this passage to justify mistreatment of Jews at Christian hands are without support in Matthew can be seen from Mt. 26.68. Matthew simultaneously balances both aspects of judgment and salvation in his account. For further comment about how Matthew's apparent anti-Judaism can be understood without extending it into present relationships between Jews and Christians, see Daniel Harrington, 'Retrieving the Jewishness of Jesus', in Bryan E. Le Beau, Leonard Greenspoon and Dennis Hamm (eds.), *The Historical Jesus through Catholic and Jewish Eyes* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 67-84 (76-83).

98. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 211.

99. So Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 54: 'As we have seen, the Matthean passion narrative portrays the death of Jesus as the death of the "King of the Jews [Israel]". The characterization of Jesus earlier in the story enables the reader to make sense of the enigma of a coronation through crucifixion. For like any authentic king, he seeks the well being (that is, salvation) of his subjects. But much more, he does so

has observed, 'The reader sees the irony here precisely because Jesus proves he is worthy of belief as the true king of Israel with power to save himself and others by remaining on the cross and refusing to save himself from a death that is God's will'.<sup>100</sup> The enemies of the righteous man in Wis. 2.12-20, use remarkably similar language.<sup>101</sup>

Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life.

For if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him,

And deliver him from the hands of his adversaries.

Even the bandits being crucified with Jesus participate in this cumulative and intensifying description of mocking and abuse, completing the abandonment and isolation that began with the desertion of his disciples. One further scene will follow in Matthew's account of Jesus' death.<sup>102</sup>

The darkness that comes over the land marks an abrupt shift and suggests a divine action with reference to eschatological judgment.<sup>103</sup> With Jesus' final cry and last breath, three further dramatic signs are recorded in Matthew.<sup>104</sup> The rending of the temple curtain is a dramatic validation of Jesus' authority to challenge the Jewish temple leaders and an affirmation of his claim to be able to rebuild the temple; however his accusers may have misquoted him. Like the temple curtain, the rocks are also split, which in turn allows the tombs to be opened. The raising of bodies of saints who had fallen asleep recalls the words of Dan. 12.1-2,<sup>105</sup> and puts the lie to the accusation of 27.52-53. By not saving

with the compassion and self sacrifice of a lowly servant.' Though it may have appeared innovative, this close linking of kingship with the wellbeing of the nation and its relationship with Israel's God is as old as 2 Sam. 7, and resonates with the kingly portrait of such texts as Ps. 72.

100. Heil, *Death and Resurrection*, p. 81; Heil's larger discussion in pp. 77-82 is also helpful here. See also Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 318.

101. So Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 682.

102. Cf. Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 169-74.

103. Amos 8.9; see also Schnackenburg, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 289; Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 685.

104. Cf. Heil, *Death and Resurrection*, p. 83, with reference to Amos 9.

105. It may also suggest Ezek. 37 and the resurrection of the nation; if so, then there is an additional example here of how Jesus' life is closely related to the story of Israel as a nation. Carroll and Green also suggest that Joel 2.10 (eschatological darkness and earthquakes) may also be part of the background; cf. *Death of Jesus*, p. 49. For a recent proposal that the dramatic signs are not intended eschatologically, see

himself, he has saved others.<sup>106</sup> Within some strands of Jewish expectation, the raising of the saints is a harbinger of the expected final resurrection at the coming of Messiah.<sup>107</sup> This passion narrative offers a portrayal of Jesus as the obedient, kingly, Son of David, whose crucifixion delivers the people he has been anointed to save.<sup>108</sup> When the centurion and those who were with him respond with the acclamation that ‘truly, this man was God’s Son’, Matthew’s presentation of Jesus’ death at last concludes by using this description for the first time to denote an authentic acknowledgment of his identity rather than a mocking taunt.

d. *The Vindication of the Messiah*

There are also indications that Matthew is aware of Mark’s use of Psalm 22 and related texts in the conclusion of his account. Joel Marcus has argued that a number of the Righteous Sufferer Psalms were interpreted within an eschatological context during this time. Marcus points out as well that such later texts in this tradition as Wis. 2.12-20 and 5.1-7, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Apocalypse of Baruch* together introduce the theme that the Righteous Sufferer will experience vindication and glorification at the close of the age.<sup>109</sup> Similar evidence can be found in citations of Psalm 22, 37, 41 and 42 in a number of other Qumran texts.<sup>110</sup> Consistent with the apocalyptic signs that accompanied Jesus’ death, Matthew’s conclusion further develops how the righteous sufferer has been vindicated in this way. Jesus’ own resurrection appearance to the two women (27.9-

Ronald L. Troxel, ‘Matt 27.51-4 Reconsidered: Its Role in the Passion Narrative, Meaning and Origin’, *NTS* 48.1 (2002), pp. 31-47. Troxel’s arguments rightly emphasize the function of these signs to highlight the centurion’s conclusion, though I do not find his rejection of eschatological significance convincing.

106. Keener, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 686; Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 48-49.

107. Though Matthew is clear in his use of ‘many bodies of the saints’ to suggest that all of this, as dramatic as it is, will be only anticipatory in character. Cf. *4 Ezra* 7.32: ‘And the dead shall give up those who are asleep in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgement...’

108. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, p. 210; contra Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, II, p. 1461.

109. Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).

110. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, pp. 177-79.

10) indicates that his cause has been heard and he has been vindicated by his being raised from the dead. The misguided plotting of the chief priests, whose accusations and taunts unwittingly identified him, now continues in vain. Matthew's concluding scene in Galilee further extends his attention to Jesus as a vindicated Righteous One. Just as Matthew introduced his Gospel with attention to Jesus' kingship, he now returns to portray a Messiah king whose suffering has transformed the character of his rule.

The worship of the disciples upon seeing Jesus, together with his announcement that all authority on heaven and earth have now been given to him (28.18), suggest a convergence of several themes. First, the all-encompassing authority that Jesus has been given suggests a divine status paralleled with that of Yahweh in Ps. 22.27-29, who receives the worship and homage of all the nations. Secondly, this cosmic authority echoes the final temptation of Satan, and implies that now at last, through his death and resurrection, Jesus has received the rule of a Messianic king. Finally, in these concluding verses the messianic and Davidic themes seem to coalesce with another prominent Matthean identity of Jesus as 'Son of Man', a heavenly figure given the authority to judge and rule the nations on behalf of Yahweh while enthroned with Him (e.g. 12.41; 16.13, 27; 17.9, 22; 20.18, 28; 25.31; 27.64).

### *Conclusion*

If Matthew's intentions have been correctly understood, several potential implications may well follow. First, it appears that Matthew's Gospel shows at least some awareness of the contradictions posed by Jesus' actual messianic identity and career on the one hand, and the popular expectations of a messianic political liberator on the other.<sup>111</sup> But rather than downplay this 'gap', Matthew's Gospel instead emphasizes Jesus'

111. Collins has put it this way: 'There is indeed a gap between the non-militant, non-royal career of Jesus as reported in the Gospels, and his death and subsequent vindication as king-messiah, and it may not be possible to bridge it' ('Jesus, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls', p. 116). He accounts for the fact that Jesus was crucified as a Messiah by suggesting either that the Romans mistakenly confused Jesus as a royal figure, or that Christians recast his messianic identity in terms of the Danielic Son of Man and pushed it into the future when he would return on the clouds of heaven. However, based on arguments presented to this point, his view of a Davidic Messiah as exclusively political, militant and violent may be overly rigid (p. 119).

messianic identity and does so by presenting a reinterpretation of the Davidic tradition that highlights Jesus' kingly/prophetic works of healing, exorcism and innocent death. Through these activities and ordeals, Jesus the 'son of David' demonstrates his deeper and fuller identity—what Matthew refers to as the 'Son of God'.

Secondly, this presentation illustrates that the relationship between messianology and Christology needs to be carefully delineated. While the findings of much recent research in the area of Second Temple messianism have provided needed correctives to a straight-line, one-for-one correspondence between Second Temple messianic paradigms and early Christian claims that Jesus was 'the Messiah',<sup>112</sup> a clear relationship between these two is nevertheless quite evident. While the relationship is more complex and nuanced than has been traditionally understood, it is visible and significant. Writing as a follower of Jesus the Messiah, but re-appropriating a variety of traditions within the parameters of Judaism, Matthew has given a new but intelligible configuration to the messianic paradigm.

Finally, given the persistence of concepts such as enthronement<sup>113</sup> and kingship in a number of other New Testament writings, it seems that further studies of how New Testament writers moved from messianology to Christology may shed important light on the relationship between these central concepts, which are shared by both Judaism and early Christian writings. Anthony Saldarini, a commentator on the Gospel of Matthew, once offered an observation about the central concerns of the first Gospel that puts it very well:

112. As rightly pointed out by authors such as Charlesworth, in 'From Messianology to Christology', p. 6: 'Many books on Christology and New Testament theology perpetuate without demonstration the following invalid assumptions: (1) one can move smoothly from Jewish messianology to Christian Christology. (2) What the Jews expected was fulfilled in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who is then transparently the Messiah, Jesus Christ. (3) Jesus' followers were convinced of his messiahship because they saw how he fulfilled the portrait of the Messiah. Early Jewish literature, however, cannot be mined to produce anything like a checklist of what the Messiah shall do.' For a recent example of an approach that attempts to construct a uniform template from the messianic expectations in the Old Testament, see Desmond T. Alexander, 'Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings: Their Importance for Biblical Theology', *TynBul* 49.2 (1998), pp. 192-209.

113. See, e.g., Tomi Eskola's extensive study, *Messiah and Throne* (WUNT, 2.142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

After nineteen centuries of interpretation of Matthew, centuries which separate us from the original context of Matthew, it is difficult to say what he said about Jesus without adding the reflections of later centuries or losing the resonances of the first century. All the categories and titles Matthew uses to explain Jesus were native to Judaism in the first century and were immediately comprehensible to his Jewish community. None of them is precise and univocal in its meaning, but all are part of the rich tradition of Israel based on the Bible and developed in the literature of the Second Temple period. The claims that Jesus is Messiah, Son of David, Son of God, and Lord anchor Matthew's presentation of Jesus as a powerful representative of God who came to teach and heal; not only Israel but all who would believe in Jesus and accept God.<sup>114</sup>

114. Saldarini, *Matthew's Jewish Christian Community*, p. 192.