

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**C1417 – May 7, 2014 – Matthew 1 & 2**  
**The Genealogical & Prophetic Evidence Of The King**

We're moving rapidly through the Gospel of Matthew and I realize the challenge of this book. Matthew is extremely difficult and I fear if we race into chapter 3 we're going to be overwhelmed with all the issues that are introduced; the issue of baptism, John the Baptist and his ministry, the meaning of repent, the concept of the kingdom of heaven, the meaning of "at hand," the citation of Isa 40:3, the introduction of the Pharisees and Sadducees, all these are suddenly on the table and if we don't have a very firm understanding of the overall kingdom program we're going to get lost. And so let's review and get up to speed, give the Holy Spirit some time to work so we have the right connections in our minds before we wade into chapter 3. Dwight Pentecost said that chapter 3:1-6 is critical for understanding the rest of the book and especially the discourses.

Let's start with some basics. What is the theme of Matthew? Jesus is the King. Is that the only theme? If that's the only theme then Matthew accomplishes that in the first chapters 1-11. Why did he write chapters 13-28? Alright, to explain the kingdom program in light of the nation Israel's rejection of the King. The King is offered to the nation Israel in chapters 1-11, the King is rejected in chapter 12 and so chapters 13-28 are explaining that due to the rejection the kingdom is being postponed, and during the postponement God is calling out remnant of Jews that will form the nucleus of the one new body, the Church, and He's predicting that Gentiles will come into that body alongside Jews. It's critical to recognize that the Church is not the kingdom, it's not a spiritual form of the kingdom, it's not a phase of the kingdom, there's only one kingdom and it's not going to be inaugurated until the nation Israel accepts their King. So the theme has two elements; Jesus is the King, but if Jesus is the King then why didn't the kingdom come?

Importantly, does Matthew give us our concept of the kingdom? Where does our kingdom concept come from? Matthew doesn't explain a concept of the kingdom. So where did he get it? From the OT. The OT presents the kingdom concept by way of what? The covenants. What covenants are primarily in Matthew's mind in his kingdom concept? The Davidic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant. That's Matthew 1:1. Let's review the Abrahamic. We can't get too much of the Abrahamic covenant. Where do we find the Abrahamic? Gen 12. Take a look at it. What's promised in verse 1? A land. Verse 2? A seed. Verse 3? A worldwide blessing. The three basic promises are made, in Gen 13 they're repeated, in Gen 15 they become a blood covenant, repeated in Gen 17 and said to be forever, chapter 19, chapter 22, in chapter 26 it goes to Isaac, in 28 it's given to Jacob who is renamed Israel and so the covenant is to the twelve tribes of Israel. Why do we say the Abrahamic covenant is giving us a concept of a kingdom? What do you think Abraham thought God was promising with the land promise? A piece of real estate. He didn't think heaven, he thought something on earth. God said, I'll take you to a land that I will show you and he trekked to the Promised Land. So right away the promise of a land implies a kingdom. A kingdom must have an authority, a sphere of rule and subjects. So you can't have an earthly kingdom without a land that designates geographically the location of the kingdom. What's the second promise? A seed. What does the Bible mean by seed? An offspring. Was Abraham the first one to receive the promise of a seed? No. The woman in Gen 3 is the first to receive that promise. Did Abraham know that? Yes, so the seed of the woman in Gen 12 is narrowed down to the seed of Abraham. What does a kingdom need to be governable? A king. So if Abraham's putting the land promise together with the seed promise then he's seeing a kingdom and a governing king. What passage comes next in the seed promise? Gen 49:10. What does it say, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah." What does a scepter stand for? A king's instrument of rule. So if we weren't sure before that the king concept was clear then we are now. And what tribe is the king to come from? Judah, "the scepter shall not depart from Judah." The kingly line is narrowing. What passage comes next in the seed promise? 2 Sam 7:12-16. Take a look at this one. Who is being spoken to? Verse 8, David. What tribe is he from? Judah. So the seed is narrowing to the house of David. This is the Davidic Covenant, a critical covenant. What's he promising David in verse 10? A land where they can live in peace and security. What does the Lord promise in verse 11? A house for David. What kind of house? House can be literal referring to a

physical house, David wanted to build God a physical house, a Temple, but house can also be used as a metaphor for what? A dynasty. Note the end of verse 11, the LORD will make a house for you. David isn't being promised a physical house, he's being promised a dynasty. Note verse 12, "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom." Who was David's son who came to the kingly throne? Solomon. Verse 13, "He shall build a house for My name," that's the Temple, Solomon built the Temple "and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." There's an eternal Solomonic throne. Verse 14, "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men," notice there can be discipline. What's the discipline based on? The Mosaic Covenant. If Solomon violates the Mosaic covenant then discipline will follow. But notice in verse 15 constraints are put on the discipline. "but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you." What's the lovingkindness referring to? It's the word for covenant love, a loyal love. He's referring to the fact that this is a covenant with the dynasty of David through Solomon. Saul never had a covenant with God so he lost his throne. But Solomon can never lose his throne. There can be discipline within Solomon's dynasty but his dynasty can never be destroyed, can never lose the throne, can never lose the kingdom. Verse 16 summarizes, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." David through Solomon was promised an eternal dynasty, an eternal kingdom and an eternal throne. Question: Are these earthly or heavenly promises? What did David think? Earthly. David ruled on an earthly throne in an earthly kingdom. If you make this into heaven and float off into spiritual space then you can never understand the Gospels. It's fundamentally impossible. Where else do we find the earthly nature of the Davidic covenant? Turn to Psalm 132. What is David saying in the first five verses? "Remember, O Lord, on David's behalf, All his affliction; How he swore to the Lord And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, Surely I will not enter my house, Nor lie on my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids, Until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob." What's he thinking of building? The Temple; a house for God. David longed to build a house for God. But what did the Lord swear to David in verse 11, "The Lord has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne."

That's an incontrovertible promise. Verse 12, "If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever." So there was a condition set forth for sitting and ruling. There is no condition that one from David will sit, but the right to sit and rule was conditioned on obedience. Verse 13, "For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it." Question. Is Zion earth or heaven? It's earth. Is the Davidic throne of verse 12 earthly or heavenly? It's earthly, it's in Zion on earth. That is where He desires to dwell. Any other passages on the Davidic covenant? You're joking you say. They are multitude, 1 Chron 17:11-15; 28:4-10, 28-30; 2 Chron 13:8-9; Ps 89; Jer 22:1ff, 29-30; 33:17. They all establish the Davidic covenant through Solomon; that Israel is to expect a king from David's line through Solomon to come and to be established forever on the Davidic throne on earth and rule over a kingdom forever.

Look at the first verse in Matthew's Gospel. The "record" or "book of the origins of Jesus the Messiah." Is this how you start a book if you want to sell a lot of copies? Ha. A Gentile would throw that book in the 50 cent bin. Why is he starting this way? Because of the Davidic and Abrahamic Covenant. Do Gentiles care about that? They better care about it. But this is so Jewish it hurts. Note, "Jesus the Messiah, the son of David." Why start with David? The Davidic covenant. The Messiah had to be the rightful heir of the Davidic promises. What did we say the three Davidic promises were? An eternal dynasty, an eternal kingdom, an eternal throne. The kings in David's line could be disciplined and thus refused the right to sit but Matthew's genealogy is defending Jesus as the One who is the rightful heir of the Davidic throne and kingdom who can sit. Then what does Matthew say, "the son of Abraham." Why Abraham? The Abrahamic covenant. What was promised in the Abrahamic covenant? Gen 12:1-3, the land, which refers to the kingdom realm, the seed which refers to the king and the worldwide blessing which refers to the nations who enjoy the kingdom blessing. So the Abrahamic covenant is the original covenant and the Davidic covenant gives further explanation of the seed. Together the covenants define the kingdom; the nature of the kingdom and the house of the King that is to come. It's Davidic as verse 6 shows but not only Davidic; it's Davidic through whom? Solomon. It was David through Solomon. 2 Sam 7:12 we read, "your descendant after you, who will come forth from you,...I will establish his kingdom...I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." David had other sons but there

was only one son through whom the Davidic promises would be established and that son was Solomon. Solomon's kingdom and Solomon's throne will be established forever. Everyone who follows Solomon in verse 7 down to Jeconiah in verse 11 was a Davidic king and sat on the Davidic throne. They all ruled. Jeconiah ruled too but what happened with Jeconiah? He was cursed. Where's the passage about Jeconiah? Jer 22:30. Turn there. Had God warned that He would discipline if the king rebelled against the Mosaic Covenant? Absolutely. Did Jeconiah rebel? Yes. Verse 30 is the discipline. "Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah." Did Coniah have children? Sure, he had seven children. So the curse is not saying Coniah wouldn't have any children. Neither is the curse saying that Coniah's children wouldn't have throne rights. What's it saying? They won't sit or rule again. That was the discipline. The discipline was not that they would lose throne rights, they all had throne rights. What the discipline is saying is that they could not sit on the throne and exercise those rights. No direct descendant of Coniah could ever sit on the throne. It's a pretty severe discipline if you think about it. It makes you wonder, how is God going to work this out? It looks as if He's just gone back on His covenant. Do you think Matthew knew that? Back in Matthew that's why he's writing the genealogy. Look at the list of the men following Coniah in v 11; Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abihud, Eliakim, Azor, etc...all these men came from Coniah. Did Matthew know that these men couldn't sit on the throne? Sure. What Matthew was impressed with was how God worked it out. How did God work it out? Verse 16 answers, "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah." According to that verse who gave birth to Jesus? Up to this point it was always a father that gave birth to a son. At this point the structure shifts. Mary gave birth to Jesus. Joseph is not the physical father of Jesus but Mary is the physical mother of Jesus. Why couldn't Joseph be His natural father? Because if he was Jesus would be under the Coniah curse. So why then does Joseph need to marry Mary? In order to adopt Jesus and pass on his legal throne rights. Jesus gets his throne rights from Joseph but because of adoption what can Jesus do that none of the other men from Jeconiah could do? Exercise those throne rights, actually sit and rule on the throne. Legally Jesus is the heir of David through Solomon down through Joseph. It has to be this way. Mary wasn't from Solomon. Jesus can't get throne rights from Mary. What a joke. And yet apparently this is really popular. I was told

this was going on at the seminary last week. Kids spouting off this nonsense in Greek class. Jesus didn't get one iota of throne rights through Mary! Joseph, Joseph, Joseph is the key! And everyone looks at Mary. Mary is a descendant of David's son Nathan. Is that the kingly line? No. So Joseph married a girl in the same family and same tribe but Jesus could only get his throne rights from Joseph. Does this validate Matthew's point? Has Matthew proven his point? These same people say Matthew proves Jesus isn't the King. But I thought Matthew's point was to prove that Jesus was the King. So to come along and say Matthew disproved his point is ludicrous. Jesus is the King. Matthew has proved it. Now did Jesus sit and rule on the throne of David? Was He the first one to do that since Zedekiah? No. Why not? Because the exercise of His reign is contingent on the nation Israel's acceptance of Him! But did they have any excuse, on the basis of this genealogy to reject Him? No Jew does today either! Pentecost pointed this out, that no Pharisee or Sadducee challenged Jesus' legal right to the throne. It's nowhere in any Jewish records on the face of earth? Do you think they checked the records? Of course. Where were the records kept? At the Temple. It was standing till AD70. All they had to do was trot down and check it out because if that wasn't square then the whole thing was a big sham and you can be sure this claim would be hotly contested. So even though the nation rejected Him, it was not because He was outside the Davidic line and therefore ineligible to claim the Davidic throne. They blew it!

Now what's going on in verses 18-23? Mary is betrothed to Joseph and it became apparent to Joseph that she was with child. What was the betrothal? It was not an engagement, if you say they were engaged I'm going to be upset. It was a lot stronger than that, it was a legal contract between the two fathers. The couple were seen as husband and wife but they didn't have conjugal rights. What was the father's obligation? To protect the purity of the couple. How long was the betrothal? Minimum of one year. If any impurity was discovered during that time period then a breach of contract had occurred. If you can grasp this picture of the betrothal it sheds light on 2 Cor 11:2 because Paul picks up the picture of Jewish betrothal period and he applies it to our Christian life and the importance of remaining pure! What does he say? "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin." What was the goal of the betrothal period? To maintain virginity, purity! Paul puts himself in the place of the father of the Corinthian believers and his

responsibility is to maintain their purity and virginity so that when he presents them to Christ they're a pure virgin. What would make them impure? Being led astray from Christ by false teachers who are satanic. Sleeping with Satan, so to speak. Now do you see how this opens up and gets applied over in the NT to us? Back to the narrative, what did Joseph think had happened? Mary's father had not protected her purity. A covenant had been violated. She went to her cousin Elizabeth's house and got pregnant by another man. Contract violation! What did Joseph plan to do? He had several options before him. What was his final decision? To divorce her. "send away" is technical in Jewish literature for divorce proceedings. The betrothal was so strong that to break it there had to be a formal bill of divorce. Do you think that might shed some light on Matt 19:1-10 and the issue of divorce among the Jews? What do you do with the statement that Jesus makes, "whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another woman commits adultery?" What do you do with that "exception" clause? Mark doesn't include it, Luke doesn't include it, Matthew does include it. Who is Matthew writing too? Jews! And the issue in the passage is when can we divorce and marry another woman and not be committing adultery. I think the answer is when fornication is discovered during the betrothal period. That's what Joseph was doing. Joseph would have been free to marry another woman if he divorced Mary. It's a distinctly Jewish answer because of a distinctly Jewish betrothal. Gentiles didn't have a legal betrothal period. He's not addressing Gentiles. He's addressing Jews. So Joseph was going to divorce her and he was going to do it privately in the presence of two witnesses. Why? Because he loved her. Joseph didn't enjoy doing this. This man's heart was broken. Alright, when we come to verse 20, why is there this angelic visitation? To ensure that Joseph marry her so he can pass on his legal throne rights. If Joseph hadn't married her Jesus couldn't get access to throne rights. This angelic visitation is absolutely critical. Joseph has to change his mind about divorcing her and he has to go ahead with the marriage or Jesus can't be King. What's the angelic explanation of Mary's pregnancy? The child is there by the Holy Spirit. So it was a virgin conception, she hasn't done anything to betray Joseph. Now to a Jew reading this account what would they think of Joseph? Joseph was doing what a good, righteous, law-abiding Jew should have done if he found impurity, he should divorce her. Even though it broke his heart he was a law-abiding Jew. So he's an upright man and that gives validity to the angelic visitation. In verse 21, this child was to be a son and when he was born what should he be named? Jesus. Why? The reason is the play on the

meaning of the name of Jesus, for he will save His people from their sins. That's what Jesus means, "the Lord saves." What are the sins? Violations of the Mosaic Covenant. Remember, they were under divine discipline in Exile for their sins. Jesus had come to pay the penalty for their sins. If they received Him as their Messiah then He would forgive their sins and lead them in the final conquest and establishment of His kingdom and throne in Jerusalem. What does Matthew start to do in verse 22? Show that this was to fulfill prophecy. What prophecy was Jesus fulfilling by being virgin conceived? Isaiah 7:14. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." What kind of prophecy is this? Remember there are four categories. This is a literal prophecy with a literal fulfillment. Isaiah 7:14 most likely was intended to be a prophecy to the whole house of David of a virgin conception of the Messiah. So what would the Jews expect? What should they expect if we put all this together? They should expect a virgin to supernaturally be with child to be betrothed to a man in David's line through Solomon so he could confer throne rights on this Son. That's how it would all fit together. Do you see how solid a bible student Matthew was? The guy was meticulous. Maybe that comes with being a tax collector and counting everything down to the penny. This guy had it all mapped out. In verse 24 after the dream Joseph awoke and what did he do? He obeyed the angel and took Mary as his wife. Prompt obedience. But what did he do in verse 25? He kept her a virgin until after she gave birth to a Son. So the king was conceived of a virgin and born of a virgin, both are true. On the eighth day, at his circumcision Joseph named him Jesus as the angel commanded and this officially made Jesus his son by adoption so that he could inherit what? Throne rights. When would He inherit them? When do you usually inherit something? When your father dies. Can anyone guess what I'm thinking? Isn't it interesting that when Jesus is on the cross he looks down at John and he says, take care of my mother? What does that imply about Joseph? He had already died. So what I'm thinking is that Joseph died about the time Jesus' ministry began and he started offering Himself as the King of Israel. Before that he couldn't legitimately offer Himself as king because Joseph was still living. He hadn't inherited those throne rights yet. When he died He inherited and began to offer Himself as the legitimate heir to the throne.

Okay, what's Matthew 2 about? Fulfillment of prophecy is one thing, Jesus fulfilled prophecy. Before we get to prophecy what else is going on, especially



in the first 12 verses? The response to the King at His birth. How did the Jews respond? How did the Gentiles respond? Why is Matthew including this so early on in his argument? Because it's setting the stage for the rest of the book. It's in seed form that grows to full blossom by the end of the book. Who's coming to see the King? Gentile magi. Where were they from? The east. By the way, what significance does the direction east have in the Bible? It always means away from God. Which way were Adam and Eve kicked out of the garden? To the east, away from God. When the priest left the Temple which direction did he walk? East, away from God. So if you see people from the east coming west you are seeing men who have been away from God for a very long time coming to God. I'm convinced more and more the issue is not so much the star which grabs everyone's attention, but it's more the direction from where these men are coming. East! They come west to Jerusalem. Why? It's the capital city of Israel. They don't have access to the birthplace of the King. It shows they didn't have Micah 5:2. So they're going around town asking Jews, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." Did the Jews in town know where the king of the Jews was? It doesn't say but it seems to me they didn't know. What does this show? That the average man on the streets of Jerusalem had very little understanding of the word of God. But we do know verse 3, the news reached Herod and he was troubled, as well as all Jerusalem. Why did Herod fear? The proposal of a rival King. Why did all Jerusalem fear? Herod's unpredictable response. The people feared Herod. So verse 4, Herod gathered together the chief priests and the scribes, the experts of the law and asked where Messiah was to be born. And they can quote chapter and verse but do they go to Bethlehem? This whole caravan of Gentile magi have come searching for the king and they don't move one inch. This is a pitiful response and it characterizes the Jewish response through the rest of the book! What about the Gentiles? A wonderful response. Herod calls them in, gives them the birthplace and sends them out. In verse 9 they're seeking the King and God blesses them in their search, He causes the star to re-appear. It leads them and stops right over the house. Can a star in the heavens or a confluence of stars point out one house in the two-bit town of Bethlehem. It can't even single out a nation, much less a house. So they go in and you get their response in verse 11. They fell to the ground and worshiped Him. This was political obeisance. They're recognizing His rights as King! Then they give Him gifts. What were these three gifts? Gold, frankincense and myrrh, of course. What did they represent in the ancient world? The

customary gifts for one who was a King at birth. What do they recognize? That Jesus is the rightful king of the world. Who knows how much they knew? They may have understood Daniel's prophecies of the four Gentile kingdoms. They may have known Rome was the fourth and the kingdom was near. Must be, here's the king. They have the right response. The Jews a dreadfully sorry response. They knew the word of God but didn't apply it. I'd say it looks from Matthew's point of view that they're in trouble. They may have been troubled by Herod but they're going to have more trouble from God

Finally, verses 13-23, Joseph is warned to take Mary and Joseph down to Egypt for a while. While they're gone Herod slays all the boys two years old and under, the mothers weep. Then they're told to return and they head to Judea but Archelaus was ruling and so it was dangerous and they go to Nazareth in the Galilee and raise Him there. What is the big point of this section? To show that Jesus fulfilled Messianic prophecy. One of the difficulties reading the NT is that it so commonly cites the OT. Since most people don't know the OT very well they don't really understand the NT very well either. People forget that the NT depends on the OT; that the NT is to be read in light of the OT. Because of their weakness in the OT they tend to read the NT in their own *sitz im leben*, their own cultural situation in life and that makes a mess of the NT. We're trying to avoid that tendency and also give some tools for understanding how the NT authors are citing the OT. We said there were how many ways the NT authors quote the OT? Four. And each way can be classified under the term 'fulfillment'. So our understanding of the semantic domain of the word 'fulfill' has to be broadened to include all four. What's the first category of fulfillment? Literal prophecy plus literal fulfillment. This is the most expected and common way the NT authors cite the OT. Matthew 2:5-6 is an example. Where was the Messiah prophesied to be born? "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 6'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'" That's a literal prophecy from what OT passage? Micah 5:2. In that passage Bethlehem of Judea means Bethlehem of Judea. Matthew's argument is that even the leadership of the nation Israel recognized this was a literal prophecy of the birthplace of the Messiah and Matthew is saying it was fulfilled in Jesus. The second category of fulfillment is typological fulfillment. This is a less common way the NT authors cite the OT but it is a

way that was well-grounded in the OT. Matthew 2:15 is an example. Where was the Messiah to be called out of? “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.” What OT passage is Matthew quoting? Hosea 11:1. What is Hosea 11:1 teaching in its original context? That historically God called the nation Israel out of Egypt at the Exodus under Moses. How then can a historical statement in the OT be quoted as a prophecy fulfilled in the NT Messiah? By typology. What do we mean by typology? We mean a divinely established correspondence between two persons, places, things or ideas. Matthew is saying there was a typological correspondence between Israel as God’s son being called out of Egypt and the Messiah as God’s Son being called out of Egypt. Was this typological link well-established in the OT? Yes. Two themes establish the typology. First, in Exodus 4:22 the nation Israel is called God’s Son. Later in 2 Sam 7:13-14 the title God’s Son is applied to Solomon. Finally the title God’s Son came to rest on the descendant of Solomon par excellence, that is Jesus, the Messiah. Second, in Numbers 23-24 the oracles of Balaam establish a correspondence between the nation Israel and the Messiah. In Numbers 23:22-24 Balaam states that God brings Israel out of Egypt, that He is for them like the horns of the wild ox and that Israel is like a lion. In Numbers 24:8-9 Balaam states that God brings the Messiah out of Egypt, that He is for Him like the horns of the wild ox and that He is like a lion. This passage is decisive in establishing that the same path Israel took out of Egypt would be taken by the Messiah out of Egypt. Hosea 11:1 joined the two themes and was quoted by Matthew as fulfilled in Jesus. Therefore Jesus is the Messiah. The third category of fulfillment is applicational fulfillment. This is more common than typology but less common than literal. Matthew 2:18 is an example. What happened when the young boys were killed by Herod’s soldiers? “A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.” What OT passage is Matthew quoting? Jer 31:15. What is Jer 31:15 teaching in its original context? That historically when the young Israeli soldiers were captured by the Babylonians they were gathered at Ramah and the Jewish mothers wept as they were taken into captivity. How can this historical situation from the OT be quoted as prophecy fulfilled in the NT? By application. Matthew is simply making an application to a contemporary event due to its similarity with the historical events. In the same way that Jewish mothers wept for their sons as they were taken in captivity, Jewish mothers wept for their sons when they were murdered by Herod. Jer 31:15

was therefore fulfilled in the sense that a fresh application was being made to a contemporary situation. The fourth category of fulfillment is summary fulfillment. This is the least common way the NT authors quote the OT. Nevertheless, it is used on occasion (cf also James 4:5). Matthew 2:23 is an example. Why was the Messiah raised in Nazareth? “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.” What OT prophet is Matthew quoting? If you search the entire OT you will not find one prophet speaking this prophecy. How then can Matthew say it was fulfilled? By understanding that Nazareth as a materialistic Roman city was considered by the Jews “despised.” Therefore anyone that came out of Nazareth was “despised.” Multiple prophets did prophecy that the Messiah would be despised. Therefore Matthew can say that Jesus’ growing up in Nazareth was the fulfillment of the many prophets who predicted that the Messiah would be “despised.”

Does this broaden the term fulfillment beyond what you thought? Yes. Should we allow the NT authors to define fulfillment in their own terms and resist the temptation to read in our own meaning? Yes. Pentecost says, “Matthew...is using the term “fulfilled” in quite a number of ways but I think it can all be harmonized with our literal hermeneutics.” In fact, it would be defining literal hermeneutics and I think we’ve shown that Matthew did not arbitrarily use the OT. The term fulfillment is inclusive of literal prophecies but it’s also inclusive of well-established OT types predicting anti-types as well as making applications to contemporary situations or summarizing what the prophets taught. So I hope I’ve shown that to look at “fulfillment” in the way the biblical authors did we have to expand our understanding of the term.

What is so important about these four categories of fulfillment in Matthew’s thinking? They prove that Jesus is the Messiah. Matthew 2 is setting out to show that Jesus is the Messiah prophetically. That would be very important to validate to a Jew. The Messiah must fulfill prophecy. What comes next in chapter 3 is difficult so read through the first 11 verses. I think you’ll meet John. Why is he called “the Baptist?” I think you’ll find his message is one of repentance. What does that mean? Why was it a crucial time to repent? The kingdom of heaven was at hand. There’s a lot here, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

However, there is a rather large movement in liberal scholarly circles to de-Messianize the OT, to claim that prophecies historically associated with the Messiah are not Messianic at all but merely historic. This is also the same approach taken by modern Judaism with respect to OT prophecies. They reject many of the prophecies we tend to think are Messianic and re-interpret them to having mere historical fulfillments in someone other than the Messiah. For example, Gen 3:15 the seed of the serpent and woman has been re-interpreted to merely mean that snakes and women will have a rather tenuous relationship and not as the conflict between Satan and the Messiah; Psalm 110 has been re-interpreted to merely refer to David and his rule and not the Messiah at His ascension; Isaiah 7 has been re-interpreted to merely refer to a young woman of marriageable age fulfilled in Ahaz' day rather than to a virgin conception and Isa 53 to a lesser extent has been re-interpreted as non-Messianic. This movement has shaken the faith of many seminary students who are now in the pastorate. They are now propagating it to their congregations and shaking their faith. Yet such attempts to de-Messianize OT prophecy seem blatantly out of harmony with the way the NT authors quote the OT as fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah. They also do not fit with Jesus' statement in Luke 24:44, that all things written concerning Him in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Therefore a thorough analysis of how the NT authors quote the OT Messianically brings confidence to students of the word that they were not creative exegetes, interpreting out of context, but rather firmly established OT bible students who validly saw these passages as predictive of the Messiah and quoted them as convincing evidence to 1st century Jews that they were fulfilled in Jesus.

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