

# Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Ensnconced in Maimonides' *Commentary of the Mishnah Tractate Sanhedrin* between comments concerning the fundamental tenets of the Jewish faith and his well-known thirteen fundamental principles is a brief section on the days of the messiah. Somewhat surprisingly, Maimonides (AD 1135–1204) cites Isa. 42.4a to validate the proposition that following an extended reign the messiah will die. A translation reads as follows:

And the Messiah will die, and his son will reign in his stead and then his grandson. God has already predicted his death in the verse,  
'He shall not fail nor be crushed,  
till<sup>1</sup> he have set the right in the earth.'<sup>2</sup>

Maimonides' usage provides but one, albeit late, example of Jewish messianic exegesis of Isa. 42.1–4. That he would appeal to this text in support of his understanding of the days of the messiah is not unexpected given its long history of usage within Jewish messianic thought.<sup>3</sup> What is rather unusual, however, is that he would cite Isa. 42.4a to validate the messiah's death.

Engaging in a messianic exegesis of his own nearly a millennium before, the author of the Gospel of Matthew also cites Isa. 42.1–4; however, in Matthew's version of the text in 12.18–21, the reference to weakness and perhaps even death found in Isa. 42.4a is absent. This line of text has been excised from Matthew's version of Isa. 42.4a (Matt. 12.20b) and an unknown piece of text inserted in its place (see the passages below). Despite Maimonides' and Matthew's common interest in the messiah, their

<sup>1</sup> Maimonides has understood מָוֹל in a temporal sense, thus subordinating the messiah's death, when he would 'fail' and 'be crushed', to the establishment of 'the right in the earth'.

<sup>2</sup> *Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishnah Tractate Sanhedrin*, translated by F. Rosner, New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of a pre-Christian messianic reading does exist. The Targums seem to contain early material that reads the passage messianically. See the discussions in chapters 3 and 5.

handlings of Isaiah's text contrast markedly. Separated by a considerable span of time and evincing no reliable evidence of direct traditional links, these treatments give rise to the surprising judgment that the Jewish interpretation focuses upon the messiah's frailty while the early Christian interpretation, as presented in Matthew's text, seemingly disregards this emphasis.<sup>4</sup> This omission from Matthew is rather curious given the widely held view that a 'suffering servant' motif is implicit in Matthew's usage in 12.18–21 and undergirds a thoroughgoing motif of weakness and lowliness that is traditionally considered fundamental to Matthew's portrait of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Such a presentation of these thematic elements appears to overstate Matthew's intended emphasis.

Herein lies the problem: if Matthew's text-form does not support the traditional presentation of a meek and lowly Jesus, then Matthew's portrait of Jesus may be more complex than is otherwise thought. Such a proposition, however, raises a host of issues concerning Matthew's presentation of Jesus and the role of the OT quotations in framing that portrait and, in particular, his use of the formula quotations, of which Isa. 42.1–4 in 12.18–21 is but one. Although the process of determining the function of Isa. 42.1–4 and its influence upon Matthew's portrait of Jesus, the Christ, within Matthew's narrative may be beset with obstacles, a careful investigation of this topic has the potential to make a substantial contribution to our understanding of his richly textured and high christology.

When the two passages are placed beside each other, the differences become more pronounced.<sup>6</sup>

## Isaiah 42.1–4

<sup>1</sup>Here is my servant, whom I  
uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul  
delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the  
nations.

## Matthew 12.18–21

<sup>18</sup>Here is my servant, whom I  
have chosen,  
my beloved, with whom my soul  
is well pleased.  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the  
Gentiles.

<sup>4</sup> In Matthew's version, Isa. 42.4a is not the only verse to undergo modification and be stripped of an allusion to weakness. God's sustainment of the servant also is excised from the text of Isa. 42.1a. See chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup> R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of the Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission*, London: Tyndale Press, 1971, pp. 124–5.

<sup>6</sup> Both passages are taken from the NRSV translation.

<p><sup>2</sup>He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; <sup>3</sup>a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. <sup>4</sup>He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.</p>	<p><sup>19</sup>He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. <sup>20</sup>He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smouldering wick  until he brings justice to victory.  <sup>21</sup>And in his name the Gentiles will hope.'</p>
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### Thesis

Views on the importance of Isa. 42.1–4 to Matthew as a whole range from the grand assessment, that the entire book of Matthew may swing on it, to the more modest which categorizes it as an example of simplistic ‘prediction-fulfilment’, or proof-texting, to validate merely a single event in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>7</sup> Recent scholarship has tended to focus upon its role in Matthew’s depiction of Jesus the messiah. G. Barth’s statement is illustrative of this tendency: ‘By means of the quotation in 12.18–21 Matthew has especially underlined the humility and lowliness of Jesus . . . in which he proves himself the servant of God of Isa. 42.’<sup>8</sup> Although Barth has touched upon a significant aspect of Matthew’s usage of the citation, his position has not received universal assent. J. Neyrey counters that such a portrait of Jesus does not necessarily square with the one the reader meets in the pericope immediately following the citation, for in 12.22ff. an apologetic component is present in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees that is somehow foreign to Barth’s

<sup>7</sup> C. F. D. Moule, ‘Fulfilment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse’, *NTS* 14 (1967–8): 297–8. See also M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament*, London: SPCK, 1959, p. 84, and B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, London: SCM Press, 1961, p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Matthew’s Understanding of the Law’, in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, edited by G. Bornkamm, G. Barth and H. J. Held, NTL, London: SCM Press, 1963, p. 128 (also cited by J. H. Neyrey, ‘The Thematic Use of Isaiah 42,1–4 in Matthew 12’, *Bib* 63 (1982): 457).

characterization.<sup>9</sup> W. Rothfuchs points to the correlation between the majesty and power manifest in Jesus' miracles and the servant texts with which the miracles are associated (Matt. 8.17 and 12.18–21).<sup>10</sup> R. Schnackenburg, in an attempt to maintain *Hoheit und Niedrigkeit im Bild Jesu*, argues that one must preserve a connection between the present lowliness of the servant and his future victory.<sup>11</sup> The wide variety of opinions concerning this text might lead a person to agree with C. Torrey's assessment, 'This [Matt. 12.18–21] is one of the best examples of Matthew's way of quoting scripture. It has not been correctly explained hitherto, nor has its significance been perceived.'<sup>12</sup>

If Isa. 42.1–4 were a straightforward affirmation of the humble servant, one might expect that this text would have played a more prominent role in the church's liturgy, art or music. Yet J. Sawyer, in his recent work *The Fifth Gospel*, which catalogues the uses of passages from Isaiah throughout church history, observes that the text rarely, if ever, appears.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the usage of this 'servant' text represents an early development in Christian thought that has unfortunately been either forgotten or little explored. While this quotation, and the ideas associated with it, may have suffered poor visibility in the succeeding eras of Christian history, I will argue that the image of the servant presented through Matthew's anomalous text-form is central to his overall portrayal of Jesus and, ultimately, to his profound christology.

The aim of this book, then, is to explore Matthew's use of Isa. 42.1–4. It is hoped that such an endeavour will divulge a more comprehensive understanding of its role in the Gospel, the results of which may then be extrapolated to explain the role of other OT usages as well. It will be argued that in 12.18–21 Matthew employs a redactionally nuanced quotation of Isa. 42.1–4,<sup>14</sup> a quotation already in use in Jewish and early Christian traditions. Furthermore, he does so in order to capture aspects

<sup>9</sup> 'Thematic Use', 457–9.

<sup>10</sup> *Die Erfüllungszitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums: Eine biblisch-theologische Untersuchung*, BWANT 88, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969, p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> "'Siehe da mein Knecht, den ich erwählt habe...'" (Mt 12,18): Zur Heiltätigkeit Jesu im Matthäusevangelium', in *Salz der Erde–Licht der Welt: Exegetische Studien zum Matthäusevangelium. Festschrift für Anton Vögtle zum 80. Geburtstag*, edited by L. Oberlinner and P. Fiedler, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991, p. 221.

<sup>12</sup> *Documents of the Primitive Church*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1941, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 243. Note, however, that along with Isa. 11.1–2 and 61.1–3, 42.1–4 does appear in the latest Catholic *Lectionary*, p. 889, to validate the actions of the messiah (so Sawyer, *Fifth Gospel*, p. 80 n. 75).

<sup>14</sup> Whether Matthew is himself responsible for the translation is a key question.



of Jesus' character, identity, and mission that are integral to his portrayal of Jesus. Here he presents Jesus as the enigmatic Davidic messiah, who is surrounded by increasing hostility evidenced in his interactions with various people and groups in Matt. 11–13. The primary link between the quotation and its context is to be found in a developed contradistinction between injustice and justice. The Pharisees' concern for strict adherence to halakhah, their unjust treatment of the people and concomitant failure as religious leaders are set against Jesus' own concept of observance of the Law together with the justice evidenced in his care for the people as Davidic messiah.

To validate this thesis, it will be argued that Matthew's usage of this formula quotation, and others, is bi-referential.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the quotation contributes to the meaning of Matthew's story on two levels. First, it possesses significance on the narrative, or linear, level and validates previous elements recounted in the life and ministry of Jesus. On a second level, its usage is fundamentally theological, that is, the passage is employed in light of the realities presented by the teachings and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, the rejected messiah of Israel.

### Problems

Previous studies of Matthew's use of the Old Testament have been broad ranging, usually devoting a few pages to a particular citation and offering a brief analysis along with comments upon what 'prompted' the citation; hermeneutical issues are rarely broached.<sup>16</sup> The great value of such

<sup>15</sup> This language is similar to that employed by others on this topic; for example, D. Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel: Divine Presence and God's People in the First Gospel*, SNTSMS 90, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 168, speaks of 'surface congruity' and 'deeper motifs'.

<sup>16</sup> K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, 1st Sigler Press edn, Ramsey: Sigler, 1991; R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, NovTSup 18, Leiden: Brill, 1967; Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*. The studies of R. S. McConnell, *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel: The Authority and Use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of St Matthew*, Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1969, Rothfuchs, *Erfüllungszitate*, and G. M. Soares Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew: An Enquiry into the Tradition History of Mt 1–2*, AnBib 63, Rome: Biblica Institute Press, 1976, all focus upon the theological usages of the citations; however, due to the breadth of material covered, they offer only minimal comments upon a given passage. Several notable exceptions are Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel*, M. Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction*, JSNTSup 68, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, and J. Miler, *Les citations d'accomplissement dans l'évangile de Matthieu: quand Dieu se rend présent en toute humanité*, AnBib 140, Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1999. See the fine general studies and evaluations in F. van Segbroeck, 'Les

syntheses lies in their capacity to enable one to grasp the overall tendencies of an author. In this work, I have chosen a slightly different tack. It primarily seeks to consider in depth one troublesome quotation, Isa. 42.1–4 in Matt. 12.18–21, in order to determine its function within its surrounding context. In an age when studies are increasingly focusing upon minutiae, the limited scope of such an investigation may need to be defended.

Matthew's use of Isa. 42.1–4 confronts the investigator with a host of challenges that demands a more extensive, thorough and nuanced study. First, as with many of Matthew's distinctive formula quotations, Isa. 42.1–4 possesses idiosyncrasies in its text-form which appear to support christological and ecclesiastical themes fundamental to the Gospel and its portrait of Jesus.<sup>17</sup> Whether Matthew is personally responsible for these textual adjustments has not been immediately obvious to many; however, a thorough assessment of the mixed text-form has provided the common jumping-off point in a study of this nature. As a result, the text-form is

citations d'accomplissement dans l'évangile selon Saint Matthieu d'après trois ouvrages récents', in *L'évangile selon Matthieu: rédaction et théologie*, edited by M. Didier, BETL 29, Gembloux: Duculot, 1972, pp. 107–30; G. N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993, pp. 346–63; R. Pesch, 'Der Gottessohn im matthäischen Evangelienprolog (Mt 1–2). Beobachtungen zu den Zitationsformeln der Reflexionszitate', *Bib* 48 (1967): 395–420; 'Eine alttestamentliche Ausführungsformel im Matthäus-Evangelium: Redaktionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Beobachtungen', *BZ* 10 (1966): 220–45; 'Eine alttestamentliche Ausführungsformel im Matthäus-Evangelium (Schlub)', *BZ* 11 (1967): 79–95; J. M. van Cangh, 'La bible de Matthieu: les citations d'accomplissement', *ETL* 6 (1975): 205–11; A. Baumstark, 'Die Zitate des Matthäus-Evangeliums aus dem Zwölfprophetenbuch', *Bib* 37 (1956): 296–313; R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, London: Paternoster, 1989, pp. 171–84; and the excursuses in U. Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, translated by W. C. Linss, Continental Commentaries, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, pp. 156–64, and W. D. Davies and D. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols, ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997, vol. III, pp. 573–7.

<sup>17</sup> The studies on Matthew's use of the Old Testament, already an extended list, continue to multiply with the recent works on specific passages by L. Lybaek, 'Matthew's Use of Hosea 6,6', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, edited by C. M. Tuckett, BETL 131, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997, pp. 491–9; M. J. J. Menken, 'The Source of the Quotation from Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17', *NovT* 39 (1997): 313–27; 'The Quotation from Isaiah 42,1–4 in Matthew 12,18–21: Its Text Form', *ETL* 75 (1999): 32–52; D. P. Senior, 'The Lure of the Formula Quotations: Re-Assessing Matthew's Use of the Old Testament with the Passion Narrative as a Test Case', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, edited by Tuckett, pp. 89–115; W. Weren, 'Quotations from Isaiah and Matthew's Christology (Mt 1,23 and 4,15–16)', in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken*, edited by J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne, BETL 132, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997, pp. 447–65; 'The Use of Isaiah 5,1–7 in the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12,1–12; Matthew 21,33–46)', *Bib* 79 (1998): 1–26; A. M. Leske, 'Isaiah and Matthew: The Prophetic Influence in the First Gospel; A Report on Current Research', in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, edited by W. Bellinger and W. Farmer, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998, pp. 152–69.

perhaps the most exhaustively explored area in analyses of Matthew's OT usage.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, a comprehensive theory of Matthew's text-form(s) has thus far eluded investigators.<sup>19</sup> This is not unexpected given the tenuous strands of evidence by which textual theories have often been strung together. One may find assistance in understanding Matthew's text-form in the more recent discoveries of texts at Khirbet Qumran, Masada, Wadi Murabbaat and Naḥal Ḥever, which have challenged many of the theories concerning the development of the text-form that previously dominated the academic landscape.

Second, closely related to Matthew's text-form is the matter regarding whether a relationship exists between the adjusted text-form and its context. Doubt continues to be expressed about the assertions that Matthew himself adapted/redacted the citations in light of his theological agenda and that these changes reflect the content of the narrative into which the quotations are inserted. Third, Isa. 42.1–4 is the longest of the OT quotations in Matthew, but at first glance very little of the citation appears to relate to the surrounding context. This would mean that much of the citation is essentially irrelevant and raises the troubling question why a conscientious redactor like Matthew would have haphazardly included such an extensive amount of superfluous material. It remains incumbent upon those who presuppose greater significance in the superfluous elements to explain their presence.<sup>20</sup> A fourth difficulty concerns Matthew's

<sup>18</sup> This is an ancient discussion which has received much attention. See the following on 12.18–21 (= Isa. 42.1–4): P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon, 1959, pp. 249–52; Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, pp. 144–52; E. Nestle, 'Matthew xii.19–Isaiah xlii.2', *ExpTim* 20 (1908–9): 92–3, 189; W. C. Allen, 'The Old Testament Quotations in St Matthew and St Mark', *ExpTim* 12 (1900–1): 281–3; 'Matthew xii. 19–Isaiah xlii. 2', *ExpTim* 20 (1908–9): 140–1; T. Stephenson, 'The Old Testament Quotations Peculiar to Matthew', *JTS* 20 (1918): 227–9; N. Hillyer, 'Matthew's Use of the Old Testament', *EvQ* 36 (1964): 12–26; J. Grindel, 'Matthew 12,18–21', *CBQ* 29 (1967): 110–15; Stendahl, *School*, pp. 108–15; and Gundry, *Use of the Old Testament*, pp. 110–16.

<sup>19</sup> One might simply compare the comments by D. S. New, *Old Testament Quotations in the Synoptic Gospels and the Two-Document Hypothesis*, SBLSCS 37, Atlanta: Scholars, 1993, p. 121, who asserts that Matthew's Bible was the LXX, with those by Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I.52, who concur with the judgment that Matthew knew and translated directly from Hebrew.

<sup>20</sup> The literature on 12.18–21 is extensive. In addition to the short discussions scattered throughout various books and articles, the passage has received focused attention from Stendahl, *School*, pp. 108–15; Gundry, *Use of the Old Testament*, pp. 110–16; Neyrey, 'Thematic Use', 457–73; O. L. Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven*, CBQMS 5, Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976, pp. 32–52; and Schnackenburg, 'Siehe da mein Knecht', pp. 203–22. Recently, there has been a spate of short studies on other quotations in Matthew. For example, see Weren, 'Quotations from Isaiah', pp. 447–65; 'Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem: Mt 21,1–17 in the Light of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, edited by Tuckett,

insertion of Isa. 42.1–4 into what is perhaps the most thematically diverse and complicated context in the Gospel, chs. 11–13.<sup>21</sup> Fifth, there is evidence that the quotation was part of both Jewish and early Christian exegetical traditions. It seems to have been interpreted messianically prior to the emergence of Christianity. Finally, taking a page from literary theory, the rhetorical function of the final form of the citation poses an intriguing challenge. The grammatical and linguistic adjustments in Matthew's peculiar text-form create a new set of associations and distinctive meanings, affecting the rhetorical force of the citation within its context. Although this particular emphasis has been little explored, it may prove to be the most promising.<sup>22</sup> When taken all together, these various issues warrant a more exhaustive analysis that may shed light upon the role of this formula citation within Matthew's narrative and thought world.

### Guiding presuppositions and assumptions

Essential to the process of understanding a biblical text is an awareness of the assumptions that one personally brings to both the book and the interpretative task. What is particularly difficult about Matthean studies is that numerous 'introductory matters' remain unresolved. Scholarship has, however, arrived at many reasonable and informed conclusions that offer a place to begin. Rather than taking the space to argue each position at length, I will simply state the assumptions central to this study, most of which have now generally become accepted views in Matthean scholarship.

Fundamental to the study is the question of the author's nationality and literary abilities. Although a segment of twentieth-century commentators have posited gentile authorship,<sup>23</sup> the evidence seems to support the

pp. 117–41; Menken, 'Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17', 313–27; Lybaek, 'Hosea 6,6', pp. 491–9; M. Hasitschka, 'Die Verwendung der Schrift in Mt 4,1–11', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, edited by Tuckett, pp. 487–90; and S. Graham, 'A Strange Salvation: Intertextual Allusion in Mt 27,39–43', in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, edited by Tuckett, pp. 501–11.

<sup>21</sup> D. J. Verspeut, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King: A Study of the Composition of Matthew 11–12*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986, pp. 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> L. Hartman, 'Scriptural Exegesis in the Gospel of St Matthew and the Problem of Communication', in *L'évangile selon Matthieu: rédaction et théologie*, edited by M. Didier, BETL 29, Gembloux: Duculot, 1972, pp. 131–52, examines the rhetorical force of the citations.

<sup>23</sup> K. W. Clark, 'The Gentile Bias in Matthew', *JBL* 66 (1947): 165–8; W. Trilling, *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, Munich: Kösel, 1964, pp. 219–24; P. Nepper-Christensen, *Das Matthäusevangelium – ein jüdenchristliches Evangelium?*, Acta Theologica Danica 1, Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1958, pp. 202–7;

historic position that Matthew was Jewish and wrote within a Jewish framework for a primarily Jewish audience.<sup>24</sup> While it is difficult to say whether he knew Hebrew well, he does appear to have been ‘an intellectual’.<sup>25</sup> His work, as evinced in the Gospel, suggests a thoughtful, reflective author who took great care with his sources and yet also adjusted them to create the grand composition of the Gospel.<sup>26</sup> It appears that Matthew was written in the latter half of the first century, probably between AD 70 and 85.<sup>27</sup> The Gospel’s Jewish content and the thematic development of conflict with the Pharisees seem to indicate a location of composition in either northern Palestine or southern Syria. Although Antioch is a possibility,<sup>28</sup> serious questions remain regarding its feasibility. Another contentious issue concerns whether Matthew’s Gospel represents a community that was still connected to its parent body Judaism (*intra muros*)<sup>29</sup> or had recently undergone a painful separation (*extra muros*).<sup>30</sup> However

G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*, FRLANT 82, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962, pp. 15–35.

<sup>24</sup> Reasons for this conclusion include Matthew’s use of the Old Testament and particularly the formula quotations (so D. A. Hagner, ‘The *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel of Matthew’, in *Treasures Old and New: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies*, edited by D. R. Bauer and M. A. Powell, SBL Symposium Series, Atlanta: Scholars, 1996, p. 45) and the close similarity his argumentation bears to rabbinic debate (see, for example, M. Bockmuehl, ‘Matthew 5:32; 19:9 in the Light of Pre-Rabbinic Halakha’, *NTS* 35 (1989): 291–5; and, most recently, P. Luomanen, ‘*Corpus Mixtum* – An Appropriate Description of Matthew’s Community?’ *JBL* 117 (1998): 478–9).

<sup>25</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I.133; see also E. von Dobschütz, ‘Rabbi and Catechist’, in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, translated by R. Morgan, edited by G. N. Stanton, 2nd edn, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995, pp. 27–38. The majority of scholarship has concurred on this throughout history. See Papias (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39) and Irenaeus (Eusebius, *HE* 5.8.2).

<sup>26</sup> See most recently the provocative discussion by I. H. Jones, *The Matthean Parables: A Literary and Historical Commentary*, NovTSup 80, Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 16ff.; also G. N. Stanton, ‘Matthew as a Creative Interpreter of the Sayings of Jesus’, in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien*, edited by P. Stuhlmacher, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983, pp. 273–87; and D. Senior, ‘A Case Study in Matthean Creativity: Matthew 27:3–10’, *BR* 19 (1974): 23–36.

<sup>27</sup> The case for a date after AD 70 relies upon Matthean dependence upon Mark and especially Matt. 22.1–10, which appears to contain a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I.132–3, add 28.19 to the equation and argue that its theological sophistication would demand a date between AD 85 and 100.

<sup>28</sup> See most recently D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The Historical Setting of the Matthean Community*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998, pp. 53–62.

<sup>29</sup> G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St Matthew*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 122; G. Bornkamm, ‘End Expectation and the Church in Matthew’, in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, edited by Bornkamm, Barth and Held, p. 22 n. 1; most recently, A. J. Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 2–4, 84–7, and J. A. Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, pp. 4–5.

<sup>30</sup> Stendahl, *School*, p. xiii; G. N. Stanton, ‘The Origin and Purpose of Matthew’s Gospel:

one decides, the Gospel reflects a running conflict with the parent body. Finally, while acknowledging that the textual situation was perhaps more complex than has otherwise been suggested, this work presupposes Marcan priority throughout and assumes that Matthew also had access to the sources known as Q and M.<sup>31</sup>

### Limitations

The primary limitation of this work is that it will not directly address or interact with OT scholarship concerning the so-called 'servant songs'. Several considerations have led to this restriction. First, the predominant interest of OT critical scholarship has been to locate the historical identity of the servant figure, thus rendering moot any application of the text in the first century AD.<sup>32</sup> Second, Matthew's understanding of the text does not represent the concerns of critical OT scholarship. This is no doubt a reflection of the increasing difficulty of squaring historical research of the Hebrew Bible with first-century studies.<sup>33</sup> Third, the source-critical concerns behind Duhm's programmatic agenda which argued that the 'servant songs' were originally lifted from one source and later inserted into Isaiah are of little import for a study of Matthew, for whom there existed neither Deutero- nor Trito-Isaiah.<sup>34</sup> Thus, it would be anachronistic to speak of Deutero-Isaiah, the role of the 'servant' in the theology

Matthean Scholarship from 1945–1980', in *ANRWII.25.3*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983, p. 1915; B. Gerhardsson, 'Sacrificial Service and Atonement in the Gospel of Matthew', in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday*, edited by Robert Banks, Exeter: Paternoster, 1974, p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> The recent rise in support for the Griesbach hypothesis is evidence that the issue of Matthean sources is more convoluted than the simplistic affirmation that Matthew used Mark, Q and the source M (most recently argued by W. R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, Dillsboro: North Carolina Press, 1976). See, for example, the exploration of Matt. 18 in Jones, *Matthean Parables*, pp. 16–30.

<sup>32</sup> Note the final footnote in T. N. D. Mettinger's essay *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom*, translated by F. H. Cryer, Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1983, p. 46 n. 83, where the author offers two restrained comments on the servant in early Christianity. First, motifs similar to the christological usage in the Gospels are used of the church in Acts 13.46–7 ('I have set you to be a light to the gentiles'); and second, 'language and imagery used of Israel' in the Old Testament are frequently applied to Jesus in the New Testament.

<sup>33</sup> F. Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 4–6.

<sup>34</sup> B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja: Übersetzt und Erklärt von Bernhard Duhm*, HKAT III/1, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922, pp. 284–7; 339–43; 351–4; 365–78. Already in the second century BC, Jesus ben Sira, author of Ecclesiasticus, presented Isaiah as a book composed by one author (48.24).

of Deutero-Isaiah, or salvation in Deutero-Isaiah. Such designations would have been incomprehensible to the author of Matthew, who cited freely from the entire book under the name of the prophet Isaiah.<sup>35</sup> Instead, the focus will be upon early Jewish and NT perceptions of the text.

### Method

As this study presents an attempt to determine Matthew's use of the citation, a variety of methods commend themselves. Efforts to penetrate the various layers present in Matthew's use of the Old Testament confront several interrelated problems. Prior discussions on his use of the Old Testament, particularly those concerning his formula quotations, have focused primarily upon his distinctive text-form. It has been assumed that a comparison of Matthew's text-form with the known sources (Mark and Q) and major textual traditions would reveal Matthean interests. This, of course, presupposes that the points where Matthew's quotations differ from known textual traditions find their origin in Matthew.

Two related issues are pertinent here. First, to demonstrate conclusively that Matthew made adjustments to the text, one must be able to establish the base text from which he worked, a task not easily accomplished. In their quest, authors have resorted to detailed comparisons with other texts. This method is essentially that of redaction criticism, which, while remaining an effective tool, depends upon the assurance that one is working with the same source(s) Matthew used.<sup>36</sup> With regard to the citations, however, determining a standardized OT text or group of texts upon which Matthew may have drawn has proved elusive.<sup>37</sup> Without such texts with which one may compare Matthew's text-form, it becomes difficult to ascertain what is or is not the result of Matthean composition.<sup>38</sup> Thus,

<sup>35</sup> Modern studies in Isaiah, however, ought not to be considered completely out of bounds. There is much valuable material in the presentations of Isaiah upon which I shall draw.

<sup>36</sup> For a history of redaction criticism and critical evaluation, see Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*, pp. 23–53, who, on p. 24, notes what he labels the three pillars of redaction criticism: (1) the sources which Matthew drew upon were Mark, Q and the so-called M material; (2) the changes made by Matthew reflect his theological concerns; and (3) these adjustments reveal the concerns within his own community. See also Jones, *Matthean Parables*, pp. 1–55, for a detailed critique and refinement of the linguistic and syntactical assumptions upon which the method functions. This is to be compared to the earlier and more optimistic introduction by N. Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969, pp. 64–79.

<sup>37</sup> The earlier studies of Stendahl, *School*, and Gundry, *Use of the Old Testament*, were too hopeful with regard to the OT text. See the discussion in chapter 2.

<sup>38</sup> Regarding Mark and Q, Jones, *Matthean Parables*, p. 16, observes that 'it has become

a general overview of the state of research on text-forms in the Second Temple period may assist in evaluating Matthew's aberrant text.<sup>39</sup>

A second issue of method concerns the need to establish criteria by which one may detect the possible interrelationships between the distinctive quotation and the Matthean context. This is a complicated matter that depends in part upon whether the textual peculiarities originate from earlier Jewish traditions or early Christian usage. If there is evidence that the alterations do not derive from another Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic *Vorlage*, then the postulate that Matthew may be responsible for them seems reasonable, unless of course Matthew was working with, or was dependent upon, a group of scholars. Several criteria have been employed in order to determine whether Matthew's peculiar text-form is related to the context and his broader theological interests. The presence of Matthean vocabulary is one element that may be observed. Another approach, which is more difficult to control, involves matching the thematic and theological elements from the citation with those throughout the Gospel. R. E. Brown rightly observes that this method is susceptible to a degree of circularity.<sup>40</sup> U. Eco raises a similar point when he proposes that many 'smart readers' will pick up references and allusions not intended by the 'empirical author'.<sup>41</sup> The challenge is to determine the thematic and theological parallels between the quotations and the Gospel intended by the empirical author, not those discerned according to the insights of 'perceptive' readers.

An additional component in the grouping of methods that will guide this study is the delineation of the usage of the quotation in Jewish and Christian tradition contemporaneous with Matthew. This is an important exercise as it establishes a possible basis for Matthew's thought world. Finally, a method rarely applied to the formula quotations will be used to investigate the final form of Isa. 42.1–4 and its rhetorical impact. The presence of anomalies in Matthew's text-form and their attendant grammatical and terminological relationships allow for a rhetorical force that

increasingly difficult to determine the sources and the text of the sources which Matthew may have used'.

<sup>39</sup> Stanton, *Gospel for a New People*, pp. 349–53, suggests that this area is one of the most promising for Matthean studies. The recent discoveries of textual manuscripts and fragments of significant texts have led to a more sophisticated and informed perspective of the transmission and use of texts that will no doubt give rise to more learned theories concerning Matthew's use of the Old Testament than those of thirty years ago.

<sup>40</sup> *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, New York: Doubleday, 1977, p. 104.

<sup>41</sup> *Interpretation and Overinterpretation: With Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose*, edited by Stefan Collini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 82–3.



is distinct from other versions of Isa. 42.1–4 and more suited to Matthew’s narrative and theological concerns. Thus, exploring Matthew’s use of Isa. 42.1–4 is a complex affair. The search must also extend to the intermediate and remote contexts in addition to the immediate one. Furthermore, the inclusion of a narrative-critical element may assist in determining whether the citation transcends the context to serve Matthew’s overall presentation of Jesus and his concomitant christology.

### **Procedure**

The procedure that will be followed is relatively straightforward. Chapter 2 will consist of the traditional presentation of the history of research of topics relevant to the argument. In particular, the emphases and approaches of prior generations of scholars will be reviewed in the hope that a more comprehensive perspective may be tendered and a way forward plotted. Chapter 3 will seek to establish a historical background for the study in two areas. First, an updated overview of the state of the text-form in the period prior to AD 70 will be offered. Second, an attempt will be made to locate the use of the text and ideas of Isa. 42.1–4 in the Second Temple period in order to establish a historical context and framework for Matthew’s usage. This will allow the study to move cautiously forward with a greater awareness of where both continuity and discontinuity exist. Chapter 4 will endeavour to explore in greater detail the possible relationship between text-form and usage in the context of other Isaianic citations in Matthew. The study will investigate the usages of Isa. 7.14 in Matt. 1.23, Isa. 8.23b–9.1 in 4.15–16, and Isa. 53.4 in 8.17 in the hope of determining not only the relationship between text-form and usage but also whether the ‘superfluous content’ of the citations bears any relationship to Matthean interests. Building upon the work of the previous chapters, chapter 5 will offer a detailed analysis of the use of Isa. 42.1–4 in 12.18–21, explicating its text-form and relationship to immediate and more remote contexts. Chapter 6 will consider the possible christological import of Isa. 42.1–4, with particular attention paid to the contrast between the compassionate servant and the aggressive polemicist. Chapter 7 will form the conclusion.

With this as the overall strategy, I now move to an overview of scholarship’s attempt to wrestle with the question of Matthew’s use of the Old Testament and the so-called formula citations.