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MESSIANIC EXEGESIS AND THE CALL OF NATHANAEL
(JOHN 1.45-51)

Craig R. Koester

When Jesus said, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you', Nathanael immediately acclaimed him 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel' (Jn 1.48-49). The significance of Jesus' comment apparently was clear to Nathanael, but more recent interpreters have found the statement to be rather opaque, an allusion 'to some incident of which the evangelist gives no explanation'.¹ Some have argued that the comment was intended to demonstrate Jesus' supernatural knowledge, perhaps utilizing a legal convention in which witnesses were asked under what sort of tree an alleged offense took place.² The difficulty is that this view does not provide a connection between Jesus' comment and the royal titles Nathanael immediately bestowed on him.

Interpreters have more commonly connected the reference to the fig tree with the study or fulfillment of the law and the prophets, which were mentioned in 1.45. Rabbinic sources say that the sages sometimes studied the Torah under a fig tree, suggesting that Nathanael was under the fig tree perusing scripture and its messianic prophecies.³ Alternatively, Nathanael may have been confessing his sins under the tree so that Jesus assured him of forgiveness with an allusion to Ps. 32.2 (Jn 1.47).⁴ The difficulty is that these interpretations are speculative, lacking adequate support from the Gospel and related first-century sources.⁵ Another suggestion is that Jesus recalled Hos. 9.10, where God said, 'Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree. . . I saw your fathers'.⁶ Here the problem is that Nathanael was 'found' by Philip not Jesus (Jn 1.45) and Jesus did not compare Nathanael to a fig tree.

A more promising proposal is that Jesus' remark recalls the vision of 'every man under his vine and under his fig tree', which is found in number of OT passages (1 Kgs 4.25; Mic. 4.4; Zech. 3.10; cf. 1 Macc. 14.12)⁷ and is associated with the coming of a messianic figure called the 'Branch' in Zech. 3.8-10. This proposal has not won general assent from interpreters because the pertinent OT texts seem to convey an image of peace and prosperity which is not apparent in Jn 1.45-51. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that Zech. 3.8-10 provides a point of entry into a series of OT texts which inform the enigmatic interchange between Nathanael and Jesus, and link Philip's reference to Jesus as the fulfillment of scripture with Nathanael's declaration that Jesus was 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel'.

1. Old Testament Allusions in John 1.45-51

A useful way to approach the problem is first to note how episodes from the story of Jacob have been woven into Jn 1.45-51, since the allusions to the Jacob story are widely acknowledged and provide clues to the ways in which the OT is used in this passage. Jacob

was the first to bear the name ‘Israel’ (Gen. 32.28), was noted for ‘guile’ (27.35), and saw a vision of angels ascending and descending on a ladder to heaven (28.12). Jesus alludes to the story of Jacob by identifying Nathanael as ‘an Israelite in whom there is no guile’ (Jn 1.47) and by promising that he and others like him would see ‘heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man’ (1.51). In this interchange Jesus alludes to biblical texts without quoting them, interconnects several related passages, and reinterprets OT texts in terms appropriate to the characters in the gospel: Nathanael, like Jacob, is a representative of Israel, but his willingness to come to Jesus shows him to be without ‘guile’; Jesus in turn is identified as that on which the angels ascend and descend. The evangelist expected readers to catch the allusions to the Jacob story in order to make sense of the narrative.⁸

Similarly, Jn 1.48 alludes to, but does not quote, Zech. 3.10, which says ‘In that day, says the Lord of hosts, *a man will call* (קרא) *his neighbor under a vine and under a fig tree*’. Jesus echoes the passage by saying, ‘Before *Philip called you*, when you were *under the fig tree* I saw you’ (1.48). The primary connection between Zech. 3.10 and Jn 1.48 is the action of one man calling his neighbor under a fig tree, not the idea of peace or prosperity. Nathanael apparently was under the fig tree at the time Philip called him, while the original sense of the Hebrew text was that a man would call his neighbor to come under his vine and fig tree (אל תחת תאנה). Nevertheless, this idea was already modified in the LXX which simply said that each man would invite his neighbor ‘under’ (ὑποκάτω, cf. Jn 1.50) his vine and fig tree. Similarly, Mic. 4.4 and 1 Kgs 4.25 (5.5 MT) speak of ‘every man under his vine and under his fig tree’ (תחת תאנתו; ὑποκάτω σακῆς αὐτοῦ) rather than someone coming under the fig tree; the same idiom also appears in 1 Macc. 14.12. Taken together, a simple conflation of Zech. 3.10—especially in its LXX form—with similar OT passages would make it easy to apply the text to Philip calling Nathanael when he was already under a fig tree.

The similarity of Zech. 3.10 to other passages also provides a connection with the story of ‘Israel’. 1 Kgs 4.25 says, ‘Israel and Judah dwell in safety. . . every man under his vine and under his fig tree’; 1 Macc. 14.11-12 narrows the focus, speaking only of Israel dwelling in safety under the vine and fig tree. Again, a simple conflation of Zech. 3.10 with texts containing nearly identical imagery would produce a vision of a representative of Israel being called by his neighbor while under a fig tree.

The original context of Zech. 3.10 relates the image of one man calling another under a fig tree to the advent of a messianic ‘Branch’ (צמח, 3.8), who was to build the temple and ‘bear royal honor’ (6.12-13). References to a messianic Branch also appear in Jeremiah, where the Branch is portrayed as a royal, Davidic figure: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely. . . In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely’ (Jer. 23.5-6; 33.15-16a). The references to Israel dwelling ‘securely’ (לבטח) would reinforce the connection between the advent of the Davidic Branch in Jer. 23.6 and 33.16, and the vision of every man under his vine and fig tree in 1 Kgs 5.5 (MT).

The Fourth Evangelist used passages from Zechariah a number of times. These instances show that he would have known Zechariah well enough to connect the fig tree in Zech. 3.10 with the messianic reference in 3.8, and that he did relate passages from Zechariah to similar OT texts, conflate passages, and recast texts to fit the characters and events of the Gospel story. The evangelist invoked Zechariah twice in formula citations. First, Jesus’

approach to Jerusalem in 12.15 is presented as the fulfillment of a paraphrase of Zech. 9.9, perhaps conflated with Isa. 35.4 or 40.9;⁹ the reference is preceded by a paraphrase of Ps. 118.25-26 coupled with Zeph. 3.15, which also deals with the kingship theme (Jn 12.13). Second, the piercing of Jesus' side at the cross fulfills Zech. 12.10 (Jn 19.37); in the same context, his unbroken legs fulfill Exod. 12.46 and perhaps Ps. 34.20 (Jn 19.36). At the temple cleansing, Jesus said, 'you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade' (Jn 2.16), which probably alludes to Zech. 14.21,¹⁰ and the statement is followed by a reference to Ps. 69.9, which also mentions God's house: 'Zeal for thy house will consume me' (Jn 2.17). The formula citation 'out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water' (7.38) cannot firmly be identified with any one OT passage, but the image of 'living water' in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles suggests familiarity with Zech. 14.8 (cf. 14.16) and other texts (e.g. Ps. 78.15-16; Ezek. 47.1-2; Isa. 12.3), which are recast to anticipate the flow of water from Jesus' side in Jn 19.34.¹¹

Readers who were familiar with the book of Zechariah and attuned to the evangelist's creative use of scripture would find Jn 1.45-51 to be a subtle and engaging narrative sequence. Philip approached Nathanael, who was a friend or acquaintance, to tell him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph' (1.45). The expression 'we have found' echoes Andrew's statement, 'We have found the messiah' (1.41), indicating that Philip too was speaking of the messiah.¹² Nathanael responded, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' (1.46). His objection probably meant that the scriptures said nothing about the messiah coming from Nazareth or even Galilee (cf. 7.41-42, 52), although it also may show disdain for Nazareth's insignificance.¹³ Despite his misgivings, Nathanael went to see Jesus for himself and was greeted as 'an Israelite in whom there is no guile', a statement which identified Nathanael as a representative of Israel through a veiled reference to the Jacob story. Nathanael was startled by Jesus' uncanny knowledge and Jesus revealed that he had seen him before Philip called him under the fig tree.

Philip's comment in 1.45 associated Jesus with the law and the prophets, and Jesus' statement about Philip calling Nathanael under the fig tree alluded to Zech. 3.10, which spoke of the time when every man would call his neighbor under the vine and fig tree. The remark suggested that what was promised in Zech. 3.10 was coming to pass.

Moreover, similar passages related the image of the vine and fig tree to Israel, and Nathanael himself had just been identified as Israel's representative. The fulfillment of Zech. 3.10 signalled the advent of God's servant 'the Branch', who was the Davidic messiah foretold in Zech. 3.8 and 6.12, Jer. 23.5 and 33.15. Nathanael therefore responded with titles appropriate for a Davidic ruler, acclaiming Jesus as 'the Son of God' and 'King of Israel'.

These titles have two levels of significance. First, Nathanael understood the titles in terms of Jewish messianic expectations; he coupled 'Son of God' with 'King of Israel' indicating that both should be taken as royal titles.¹⁴ His understanding was informed by OT passages that use the term 'messiah' for the king of Israel, who was designated God's 'son' in Ps. 2.7, 2 Sam. 7.14, and Ps. 89.26-27. Jesus accepted these titles, but declared that they were only a beginning. Jesus was much more than Nathanael realized at this point.

Readers are prepared by the prologue to recognize a second level of meaning in the titles used by Nathanael. The prologue stated that the Word which was 'in the beginning' with God had become flesh in the person of Jesus (1.1, 14). John the Baptist announced Jesus'

singular status in terms of his pre-existence when he said that Jesus ‘ranks before me for he was before me’ (1.15, 30). The evangelist could assume that readers knew that ‘Son of God’ was more than a royal title, since Jesus was of divine origin, God’s ‘only begotten Son’ (1.1, 14, 18). Later the Gospel will confirm that Jesus is also a king, but one whose power comes from above, not from the world (18.36). Jesus pointed more directly to this second level of meaning in 1.51, by stating that Nathanael and others like him would see God made manifest in himself as the Son of man.¹⁵

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls

The preceding discussion assumed that once Jesus is understood to be the Branch foretold by Zech. 3.8, he could be acclaimed as ‘the son of God’ and ‘King of Israel’ because these titles were appropriate for the Davidic messiah. Evidence from the Dead Sea scrolls shows that Jewish exegetes of the NT period had indeed identified the Branch foretold by Zechariah and Jeremiah as Messiah, Son of God, and King of Israel. The scrolls also understood the Davidic messiah to be the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The Fourth Evangelist, unlike the Dead Sea exegetes, did not write a commentary on the OT, but drew on the OT to say something about Jesus. Nevertheless, the way he paraphrased, conflated, and alluded to scripture, and related various OT texts together on the basis of common words or themes is analogous to some techniques used in the scrolls. The Qumran texts contain some interpretations peculiar to the Dead Sea sect as well as interpretations which circulated more widely in Jewish circles of the time. The texts offer a messianic interpretation of the Davidic Branch which was not limited to the sect, as will be shown later.¹⁶

Three texts are especially important for our consideration. The first is 4QFlorilegium, a midrash which draws on disparate OT texts to elucidate a paraphrase of 2 Sam. 7.10-14. The relevant portion of the text reads,¹⁷

‘The Lord declares to you that He will build you a house’. ‘I will raise up your seed after you’. ‘I will establish the throne of his kingdom [for ever]’. I [will be] his father and he shall be my son’. He is the Branch of David who shall arise with the Interpreter of the Law [to rule] in Zion [at the end] of time (4QFlor 10-12a).

The text is significant because it assumes that the Davidic Branch was a well-known messianic designation which could be applied to the ‘son’ of God mentioned in 2 Samuel 7.

A second text is 4QP Bless, a midrash on Gen. 49.10: ‘The sceptre shall not depart from the tribe of Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs. And the peoples shall be in obedience to him’. The commentary reads,¹⁸

Whenever Israel rules there shall [not] fail to be a descendant of David upon the throne. For the ‘ruler’s staff’ is the Covenant of kingship, [and the clans] of Israel are the ‘feet’, until the Messiah of Righteousness comes, the Branch of David. For to him and to his seed was granted the Covenant of kingship over his people for everlasting generations. . .

This text is significant because it identifies the Davidic Branch as ‘Messiah of Righteousness’ and the ‘King of Israel’. It also shows that the interpreter assumed that the Davidic messiah was foretold in the law as well as the prophets.

The third text is 4QpIsa^a 8-10, which includes an interpretation of Isa. 11.1, ‘There shall come forth a shoot (זטר) from the stump of Jesse, and a branch (נצר) shall grow out of his roots’. Although the text is fragmentary, it clearly refers to a Davidic messianic figure who may have been called the ‘Branch’. The commentary reads,¹⁹

[Interpreted, this concerns the Branch] of David who shall arise at the end [of days]. . . God will uphold him with [the spirit of might, and will give him] a throne of glory and a crown of [holiness] and many-colored garments. . . [He will put a sceptre in his hand and he shall rule over all the [nations] (lines 17-20).²⁰

If the reconstruction is correct, the text indicates that the Branch mentioned in Zechariah and Jeremiah was identified with the ‘Shoot’ foretold in Isa. 11.1. Together, these Dead Sea texts consistently understand the Branch to be the Davidic messiah, who was foretold in both the law and the prophets.

Other sources show that this view was not unique to the Dead Sea sect. *T. Judah* 24 contains a mosaic of OT passages which are interpreted eschatologically. The text identifies the Star of Jacob, mentioned in Num. 24.17, with the ‘Shoot’ (βλαστός, πυθμήν) from the tribe of Judah, who is presumably the ‘Shoot’ (βλαστός) promised in Gen. 49.9-10 and the ‘Branch’ foretold by Zechariah, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.²¹ In later periods,²² the targums used ‘messiah’ for the figure mentioned in Zech. 3.8 and 6.12, Jer. 23.5 and 33.15, Isa. 11.1, and Gen. 49.10, and rabbinic sources also interpret these texts messianically (*y. Ber.* 5a; *Gen. R.* 98.8; *Num. R.* 18.21; *Lam. R.* 1.51; *Midr. Ps.* 21.1; *Pirque R. Eliezer* 48).

Significantly, the midrash on Ps. 72.1, ‘Give the king thy judgments O God’, includes comments which identify the king as ‘the King Messiah’, who is also the ‘Shoot’ mentioned in Isa. 11.1, and whose advent is associated with the time envisioned by Zech. 3.10, when each man would call his neighbor under the vine and fig tree. The present form of the midrash is late and we do not claim that it preserves first-century material. Nevertheless, the text does show that connections between Zech. 3.10 and various messianic texts not only were possible, but were made by people familiar with midrashic interpretive techniques.

Some NT writings presuppose a similar understanding of the Davidic ‘Branch’ or ‘Shoot’ as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Lk. 1.68-79 is a canticle about the Davidic messiah (1.69), whose advent marks the coming of the ἀνατολή (1.78), the term used for the ‘Branch’ in the Greek version of Zech. 3.8, 6.12, Jer. 23.5, and 33.15. This Davidic figure is understood to mark the fulfillment of the prophets (Lk. 1.70) and the oath God swore to Abraham, which was recorded in the Mosaic writings (1.73).²³ Similarly, Rev. 5.5 joins the title ‘the Lion from the tribe of Judah’, which recalls Gen. 49.10, with ‘the Root of David’, which echoes Isa. 11.1.²⁴

The OT itself identified the Branch as a royal, Davidic figure who would serve as king. The Dead Sea texts preserved this understanding of the Branch as king of Israel and 4QFlorilegium assumed that such a figure could be called God’s ‘son’ in light of 2 Samuel 7. The Jewish and Christian texts noted above show that similar views circulated among Jews outside the sect and were known to Christians in the NT period.²⁵ The evangelist could assume that the Branch mentioned in Zech. 3.8 was understood to be ‘the one of whom Moses in the law (Gen. 49.10; cf. Num. 24.17) and also the prophets (Zech. 3.8; 6.12; Jer. 23.5; 33.15; cf. Isa. 11.1) wrote’.

3. Conclusion

The encounter between Jesus and Nathanael unfolds through a subtle interweaving of OT allusions. Philip introduced the theme of scriptural fulfillment when he declared, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote' (1.45). The echoes of the Jacob stories have long been recognized, but Zech. 3.8 and 10 also play a pivotal role in the narrative. Zech. 3.10 speaks of the time when a man would *call* his neighbor under a vine and fig tree. Jesus alluded to this text when he said, 'Before Philip *called* you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you' (1.48). The event described in Zech. 3.10 was appropriate for an 'Israelite' like Nathanael because similar OT passages applied the vision to 'Israel'. More importantly, being called by a friend under a fig tree marked the advent of a messianic Branch who would reign as king according to Zech. 3.10 and 6.12, and be a Davidic figure according to Jer. 23.5 and 33.15.

The evangelist quoted and alluded to Zechariah a number of times in the Gospel and clearly knew the book well enough to connect Zech. 3.8 and 10. The Dead Sea scrolls and other Jewish and early Christian texts show that the term 'Branch', which was used in Zech. 3.8, was a familiar designation for the Davidic messiah, who was understood to be the fulfillment of both the prophets and Mosaic writings. The scrolls also show that the Branch was understood to be God's 'son' and king over Israel. The evangelist expected that readers able to recognize the role of Zech. 3.8 and 10 in this narrative would discover that what appears to be an obscure interchange is a subtle and engaging conversation, in which Nathanael identifies Jesus in royal terms appropriate to the messianic 'Branch', and Jesus identifies Nathanael in terms appropriate to Jacob or 'Israel', promising that Nathanael, like Jacob, would see God made manifest.

Notes

¹ J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1928), I, p. 63.

² Sus. 51-59; *m.Sanh.* 5. 2; *b.Sanh.* 41b. C.F.D. Moule, 'A Note on "Under the Fig Tree" in John I. 48, 50', *JTS* 5 (1954), pp. 210-11; C.H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 310 n. 2; E. Haenchen, *John I* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 166; R. Kysar, *John* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), pp. 40-41. For critique see R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29-29A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966-1970), I, p. 83; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (2nd edn; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), p. 185.

³ *Qoh.R.* 5.11; Strack-Billerbeck, I. pp. 857-58; II, p. 371; R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), p. 104 n. 6; E.C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (2nd edn; London: Faber, 1947), p. 182; M.-E. Boismard, *Du baptême a Cana (Jean 1.19-2, 11)* (LD 18; Paris: Cerf, 1956), pp. 92, 103; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (New York: Herder & Herder/Seabury/Crossroad, 1968-82), I, p. 317; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/ London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), p. 118; O. Betz, "'Kann denn aus Nazareth etwas Gutes kommen?'" (Zur Verwendung von Jesaja Kap. 11 in Johannes Kap. 1)', *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift für Karl Elliger zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. Gese and H.P. Rüger; AOAT 18; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973), p. 14; F. Hahn, 'Die Jüngerberufung Joh. 1.35-51', *Neues Testament und Kirche: Für Rudolf Schnackenburg* (ed. J. Gnilka; Freiburg: Herder, 1974), pp. 187-89; S. Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John* (NovTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1975), p. 304; R.F. Collins, 'Representative Figures in the Fourth Gospel', *Downside Review* 94 (1976), p. 35.

⁴ J. Jeremias, 'Die Berufung des Nathanel', *Angelos* 3 (1928), pp. 2-5.

⁵ For cautionary remarks see Bultmann, *John*, p. 104 n. 6; Brown, *John*, I, p. 83; Barrett, *John*, p. 185.

⁶ J.R. Michaels, 'Nathanael Under the Fig Tree', *ExpT* 78 (1966-67), pp. 182-83.

⁷ Bernard, *John*, I, pp. 63-64; M.-J. Lagrange, *Evangile selon saint jean* (EBib; 5th edn; Paris: Gabalda, 1936), p. 51; Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 182; Lindars, *John*, p. 118.

⁸ Verse 51 is often identified as an originally independent logion. See, e.g., Brown, *John*, I, pp. 88-89; F.J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man* (Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 14; Rome: Las. 1976), pp. 24-25; J.H. Neyrey, 'The Jacob Allusions in John 1.51', *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 586-605, esp. 586-89. If the logion was originally integrated into its present context and its connection with Gen. 28.12 has regularly been acknowledged. On the Jacob allusions in 1.47 see Brown, *John*, I, p. 87; Pancaro, *Law*, pp. 303-304; Barrett, *John*, p. 185. On Nathanael's role as a representative of Israel see also M. de Goedt, 'Un schéma de révélation dans le quatrième évangile', *NTS* 8 (1961-62), pp. 142-50, esp. 144; W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 82; Collins, 'Representative Figures', p. 35; R.A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 123; R.T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 44.

⁹ E.D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (NovTSup 11; Leiden: Brill, 1965), pp. 66-81; F. M. Braun, *Jean le théologien* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1959-72), II, pp. 18-19; Brown, *John*, I, pp. 457-58; Barrett, *John*, pp. 418-19.

¹⁰ E.g., Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 300; Barrett, *John*, p. 198; Brown, *John*, I, pp. 119, 121; Haenchen, *John I*, pp. 184. The use of Zechariah 14 is especially striking since the Synoptic parallels refer to Isa. 56.7 and Jer. 7.11 (Mt. 21.13; Mk 11.17; Lk. 19.46).

¹¹ Freed, *Old Testament*, pp. 21-38; Braun, *Jean*, II, pp. 19-20; Brown, *John*, I, pp. 321-23; Schnackenburg, II, pp. 155-56.

¹² E.g., Bultmann, *John*, p. 103; Barrett, *John*, p. 184; Pancaro, *Law*, p. 289; N.A. Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), p. 112. J.L. Martyn (*The Gospel of John in Christian History: Essays for Interpreters* [New York: Paulist, 1979], p. 38) argues that Philip's claim should be connected with the reference to the Mosaic prophet mentioned in 1.21 (cf. Fortna, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 38), but the argument rests on a complex source and redaction analysis that is not convincing.

¹³ On the connection between 1.46 and 7.41-42, 52 see Pancaro, *Law*, p. 290; Barrett, *John*, p. 184; Haenchen, *John I*, pp. 166-67. Insignificance is stressed by Bultmann, *John*, p. 103; Lagrange, *Jean*, p. 50. Schnackenburg (*John*, I, p. 315) and M.M. Thompson (*The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], p. 16) connect 1.46 with the reference to Jesus' parents in 6.42, but Nathanael does not focus on the issue of parentage here.

¹⁴ In addition to the commentaries see Boismard, *Cana*, p. 104; W.H. Cadman, *The Open Heaven: The Revelation of God in the Johannine Sayings of Jesus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), p. 28; Braun, *Jean*, II, pp. 57, 114, 148; J. Painter, 'Christ and the Church in John 1.45-51', *L'Evangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie* (ed. M. de Jonge; BETL 44; Gembloux: Duculot, 1977), pp. 359-62; Moloney, *Son of Man*, p. 35. Pancaro (*Law*, p. 292) blurs the distinction between the inadequate understanding attributed to Nathanael and the fuller meaning known to the evangelist and readers.

¹⁵ There has been extensive discussion about the meaning of 1.51. For a summary of positions see Moloney, *Son of Man*, pp. 23-41. Note also Neyrey, 'Jacob Allusions', pp. 589-605.

¹⁶ There is a large body of literature on biblical interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and its relationship to the NT. See recently D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 31-57.

¹⁷ The Hebrew text, edited by J.M. Allegro, is found in DJD 5, #174. The translation is from G. Vermes,

The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (rev. edn; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 246. For discussion of the Branch as royal messiah in this text see A.S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 3; Assen: van Gorcum, 1957), pp. 171-72; G.J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (JSOTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), pp. 197-205; D. Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 31; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), pp. 172-79; idem, *Messianic Exegesis*, p. 53.

¹⁸ The Hebrew text was published in J.M. Allegro, 'Further Messianic References in the Qumran Literature', *JBL* 75 (1956), pp. 174-87, esp. pp. 174-75. The translation is from Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 224. The Davidic Branch is widely acknowledged to be the royal messiah. The exception is B. Gartner (*The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* [SNTSMS 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965], pp. 38-39) who interprets the Branch as a collective term for the community. Yet see G. Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im NT* (SUNT 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), p. 177 and D.R. Schwartz, 'The Messianic Departure from Judah (4QPatriarchal Blessings)', *TZ* 37 (1981), pp. 257-66, esp. 260.

¹⁹ The Hebrew text, edited by J.M. Allegro, is found in DJD 5, #161. The translation is from Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 227. The word נצח is a plausible restoration for line 17 because it plays an important role in 4QFlor and 4QP Bless, cited above, and is consistent with the movement of the text, which comments on the 'Shoot' mentioned in Isa. 11.1. The restoration has been widely adopted. See, e.g., Vermes, *ibid.*; van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen*, p. 177; A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), p. 275; T.H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (3rd edn; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 307, 335 n. 23.

²⁰ O. Betz ('Kann denn aus Nazareth', pp. 13-15) suggested that Nathanael's changed perception involved connecting Nazareth with *nešer*, the word used for the messianic 'Shoot' in Isa. 11.1. Such a word play is possible and may lie behind Mt. 2.23 (see R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1979], pp. 211-13). But 4QpIsa provides a better connection between Isa. 11.1 and the thought of Jn 1.45 than does 4Q mess ar, the text on which Betz relies.

²¹ See H.W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (SVTP 8; Leiden: Brill, 1985), p.228. Cf. the notes by H.C. Kee, *OTP*, I, p. 801; J. Becker, *Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen* (JSHRZ 3/1; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1974), p. 76 n. 5a.

²² On the use of rabbinic and targumic material for NT interpretation see my *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (CBQMS 22; Washington, DC: CBA, 1989), pp. 68-71.

²³ See R.E. Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 373-74; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB 28-28A; Garden City; Doubleday, 1981-85), I, p. 387; I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 94-95.

²⁴ See R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1920), I, p. 140.

²⁵ See the extensive discussion by Juel in *Messiah and Temple*, pp. 182-90.