What's Old about New Testament Exegesis of Scripture?: Fulfillment Citations in Chronicles and the Gospels

Gary Edward Schnittjer
Cairn University, Langhorne, PA

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chronicler uses the combination of Jeremiah's seventy years and Leviticus' remedial sabbath rest for the land in 2 Chronicles 36:21 as a decisive element in his overall ideological narrative. Reading these earlier scriptures together explains the exile as Yahweh's sovereign judgment alongside his rebellious people's responsibility to repent. But there is more. The Chronicler only names his dependence on Jeremiah as a control text even while he also alludes to Torah. He then grammatically shifts the sense of "fulfilling" from the completion of duration of time (*qal* מלא) in Jeremiah to the filling of the prophetic word by actualizing it (*piel* מלא) set within a formulaic expression of fulfillment. Both of these exegetical interventions in 36:21 set precedents for scriptural exegesis in the gospels. The thesis of this study is that the Chronicler's use of Jeremiah and Leviticus in 36:21 gives birth to interpretive tendencies found in later scriptures. These include the referencing of only one of multiple sources of scriptural allusion as a control text in Mark 1:2–3 and Matthew 27:9–10 as well as establishing the kind of fulfillment formulas appearing in Matthew and John.

The ongoing exegesis of earlier scriptural traditions within Israel's scriptures spans more than one thousand years before the days of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus and the New Testament authors did not invent a novel approach to handling scripture. They walked along an already ancient and well-worn path of scriptural exegesis within Israel's scriptures. This

partially explains the deep continuity of scriptural exegesis running through both testaments. Scriptural exegesis, within the scriptures of Israel, provides rich resources for explaining the difficulties of the use of scripture in the New Testament. A full-length hermeneutical study of the Bible's use of the Bible with attention to the exegesis of earlier scripture in both testaments can be found elsewhere.[1] The present study focuses narrowly on precedent-setting exegesis in 2 Chronicles 36:21 with attention to the gospels' development of it.

Inadequate attention by New Testament scholars to precedent-setting exegesis within Israel's scriptures is not unique to this case. The scholarship of the New Testament's use of scripture has not sufficiently evaluated scriptural exegesis within Israel's scriptures. Yet the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the authors of the New Testament carefully and persistently studied Israel's scriptures. This evidence shows why it is natural for these authors to model their own use of scripture on the exegesis of earlier scriptures appearing across Israel's scriptures. Virtually every exegetical maneuver in the New Testament follows exegetical precedents within Israel's scriptures.[2] The next section of this study will evaluate the function of 2 Chronicles 36:21 within the book as a whole, especially within its last chapter. The following sections will evaluate the precedent-setting exegesis in 36:21 for the gospels by naming one of the multiple donor texts of an interpretive blend and establishing how biblical fulfillment formulas function, as well as summarizing selected implications. In this study, donor text refers to the cited text; receptor text refers to the citing text; allusion refers to quotation or lesser intentional evoking; and interpretive blend refers to a receptor text that interprets one donor text in light of another.[3]

II. THE FUNCTION OF 2 CHRONICLES 36:21 WITHIN THE BOOK

This section summarizes the results of previous studies on Chronicles, its final chapter, and the function of 2 Chronicles 36:21 within its context.[4] The purpose of these summaries is to provide a basis

---

[1]See Gary Edward Schnittjer and Matthew Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible: Seven Hermeneutical Choices for the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming 2024).

[2]See ibid.; Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* [*OTUOT*] (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 847–65; idem, "Long-Lost Grandparent Texts of the New Testament," *Didaktikos* 5, no. 4 (2022): 27–31.

[3]The expression "interpretive blend" is broader than—but based on—the expression "legal blend" coined by Michael Fishbane in *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 220. Interpretive blends appear in every genre and every part of the Christian Bible. For a list of interpretive blends in both testaments, see Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Index of the Bible's Use of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming).

[4]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 693–846, esp. 701–04, 712–18, 837–39; idem, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament in Parallel Layout* [*OTUOTPL*] (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming), see entry on 2 Chr 36:21; idem, *Old Testament Narrative Books:*

to evaluate the precedent-setting use of scripture in 2 Chronicles 36:21 in the following sections.

Chronicles presents a new version of the old story of the Davidic kingdom to motivate the discouraged Yahwistic Judeans of the stalled postexilic restoration to join David and Solomon in repentance and worship of Yahweh at the place he chose for his temple. The series of backslidden times followed by times of repentance and renewal in the new narrative—including the exile in 2 Chronicles 36—fits the situation of the Chronicler's constituents. Since the book dates to ca. 400 BC, it presupposes the failure of the restoration narrated in Ezra-Nehemiah and preached against by Malachi.[5] The Chronicler looks back to the beginning days of the restoration in 1 Chronicles 9:2. From there, he traces out the Davidic kingdom with emphasis on its recurring (in)fidelity to and patronage of the temple in Jerusalem. The final chapter of the sweeping story is crucial to reshaping the identity of the Chronicler's constituents. They need to repent and worship at Yahweh's temple even as David repents and Solomon builds the temple David never could.

With great patience, Yahweh sends his prophets to call Israel back to himself until he finally brings long-deferred retribution against Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:15–16). The Chronicler adapts Yahweh's persistent sending of his servants who call for repentance from Jeremiah 25:4.[6] The Chronicler uses Zedekiah and Jeremiah as proxies to represent the longstanding rejection of Yahweh's prophetic word by Davidic kings (vv. 11–12).[7] The Chronicler seems to be building on Jeremiah's characterization: "But neither he [Zedekiah] nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of Yahweh which he spoke by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet" (Jer 37:2).[8]

Just as the word of Yahweh through Jeremiah initiates judgment (2 Chr 36:12), so too his word through Jeremiah activates restoration (v. 21). Yet the Chronicler turns to the sabbath years of Leviticus to explain why Jeremiah forecasts seventy years.[9] Notice that the expression

"desolation" (שמם) serves as a catchword for the Chronicler to bring together Leviticus 26:34 and Jeremiah 25:11–12 (emphases signify parallel roots in Hebrew).[10]

> Then **the land shall pay** [רצה] **its sabbaths all the days of its desolation** [שמם], and you are in the land of your enemies, then the land **will rest** [שבת] and **shall pay** [רצה] **its sabbaths**. (Lev 26:34; cf. 25:2)[11]

> All of this land will become a ruined <u>desolation</u> [שמם], and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it will be when <u>seventy years are fulfilled</u> I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, declares Yahweh, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it an everlasting waste. (Jer 25:11–12)[12]

> And he took into exile the remnant from the sword to Babylon, and they were for him and for his descendants slaves until the reign of the kings of Persia, <u>to fulfill</u> the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah until **the land paid back** [רצה] **its sabbaths, all the days of its <u>desolation</u>** [שמם] it **rested** [שבת], <u>to fulfill seventy years</u>. (2 Chr 36:20–21)

Consider the way the Chronicler organizes the allusions to Leviticus 26 and Jeremiah 25. The Chronicler carries over the infinitive construct "to fulfill" from Jeremiah 25:12 and repeats it as part of his citation formula. In this way, the Chronicler encloses the substantial allusion to Leviticus 26:34 within his allusion to Jeremiah 25:11–12 (akin to resumptive repetition).[13]

The context of covenant renewal in Leviticus 26 explains the use of Jeremiah's seventy years in Chronicles. The "humbling" (*niphal* כנע) of uncircumcised hearts in Leviticus 26:41 is the element that Yahweh reveals as the trigger for restoration in his programmatic statement to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14.[14] The Chronicler uses Leviticus 26 to signal how the exile is the circumstance in which the people need to repent even while satisfying divine judgment against the people for neglecting the land's sabbath years—a symbol of covenantal fidelity. By using Leviticus 26 to explain Jeremiah's seventy years, the Chronicler

---

[10]See Schnittjer, *OTUOTPL*, entry on 2 Chr 36:12. Ralph W. Klein observes that the *Hophal* infinitive form of "desolation" (הָשַּׁמָּה) only appears in Lev 26:34–35 and 2 Chr 36:21 (idem, *2 Chronicles*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012], 545, fn. 65).

[11]For the sense of "pay" for iniquity in Lev 26:34, 41, 43, see *HALOT*, s.v., "רצה II."

[12]Though Jer 29:10 includes the phrase "seventy years are fulfilled," the expression "desolate" does not appear until v. 18. This along with the allusion to Jer 25:4 in 2 Chr 36:15 makes it more likely the Chronicler is alluding to Jer 25:11–12 in 2 Chr 36:21.

[13]This observation is indebted to Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 1076.

[14]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 769–70.

emphasizes both Yahweh's righteous judgment through the exile and the need for the people to humble themselves and confess their sin—divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

There is more to it, but this summary will serve as a basis to evaluate the use of scripture in 2 Chronicles 36:21 as setting precedents for distinct uses of scripture in the gospels in the next sections.

III. NAMING ONE OF MULTIPLE DONOR TEXTS IN 2 CHRONICLES 36:21 AND THE GOSPELS

This section will evaluate the use of scripture in 2 Chronicles 36:21 as setting a precedent to name one of the multiple donor texts. This exegetical action is repeated in Mark 1:2–3 and Matthew 27:9–10. The purpose here is limited to how these later texts develop the Chronicler's exegetical precedent; space does not allow a full evaluation of these contexts.

Marking refers to making explicit in any way within the receptor text its dependence on a scriptural donor text.[15] Marking by citation formulas does not affect exegetical allusions themselves, as can be seen in marked and unmarked allusions that function identically standing side by side in Nehemiah 10:34, 36 [35, 37].[16] The Bible includes more than 500 marked allusions. These appear in the Torah, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, Writings, and the New Testament. Naturally, later portions of Israel's scriptures include more than earlier portions. The New Testament includes the most frequent marking.[17] Marking usually does not name the donor text in cases like "as it is written." In some cases, marking includes naming the donor text such as "as it is written in the Torah" (Neh 10:34 [35]).

1. The Chronicler's Use of Marking

The Chronicler marks his allusion and names Jeremiah as the author of the donor text that mediates the word of Yahweh. He says, "to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah" (2 Chr 36:21). The way the Chronicler adapts and enhances this language from his donor text (Jer 25:12) will be taken up in the next section. The present concern is that the Chronicler only names Jeremiah while he combines the allusion with an

---

[15]See the Introduction in Matthias Henze and David Lincicum, eds, *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), esp. 10.

[16]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 637.

[17]All marked allusions and quotations in both testaments are indicated in Schnittjer, *Index*, and are spelled out in *OTUOTPL* and idem, ed., *New Testament Use of Old Testament in Parallel Layout* [*NTUOTPL*] (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming).

unmarked allusion to the Torah. Elsewhere the Chronicler twice marks allusions to Leviticus and names them as part of the Torah. This is normal since the Chronicler interchangeably refers to every part of the Torah as we know it. He says "as it is written in the Torah of Yahweh" when alluding to Leviticus 23:37 (cf. 2 Chr 31:3) and "as it is written in the book of Moses" when alluding to Leviticus 3:3–4 (cf. 2 Chr 35:12).[18]

Yet 2 Chronicles 36:21 makes explicit only his dependence on Jeremiah while he leaves his extensive allusion to Leviticus 26 unmarked. It seems unlikely that the Chronicler worried that his constituents would miss the allusion to Jeremiah. Earlier, Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5 make unmarked allusions to the seventy years that his constituents seem familiar with (see Zech 7:3). As noted in the previous section, the Chronicler names Jeremiah repeatedly as representing the long line of Yahweh's prophets (cf. 2 Chr 35:25; 36:12, 21, 22). This evidence taken together suggests that the Chronicler wished to ground his combined allusion upon the message of Jeremiah 25.

The phrase in 2 Chronicles 36:20, "The remnant…was for him and for his descendants slaves" (הַשְּׁאֵרִית...וַיִּהְיוּ־לוֹ וּלְבָנָיו לַעֲבָדִים) alludes to MT Jeremiah 27:7 (not LXX) "all the nations will serve him and his son and his son's son" (וְעָבְדוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת־בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־בֶּן־בְּנוֹ).[19] The Chronicler may have seen the connection between "these nations will serve" (וְעָבְדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה) in Jeremiah 25:11 and "all the nations will serve" (וְעָבְדוּ...כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם) in MT 27:7. This explains why he uses language from MT 27:7 to supplement his allusion to 25:11–12 in 2 Chronicles 36:20–21. The Chronicler interprets Jeremiah's seventy years according to the prophet's own gloss—interpreting scripture by scripture.

More importantly, the Chronicler's interchangeable use of "turn" (שׁוב) and "humble himself" (כנע) before Jeremiah in 2 Chronicles 36:12–13 shows that he thinks along the lines of "turn!" (שׁוּבוּ־נָא impv.) to remain in the land (אֲדָמָה, γη) in Jeremiah 25:5.[20] The interchangeability of "turn" and "humble oneself" for the Chronicler indicates why he would look to Leviticus 26:34 to explain the seventy years of exile in 2 Chronicles 36:21. The trigger for ending the exile and

---

[18]See the entries on 2 Chr 31:3 and 35:12 in Schnittjer, *OTUOTPL*; and idem, *Index*.

[19]This observation is indebted to Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1074; Carl F. Keil, *1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles*, trans. James Martin and Andrew Harper, Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1866–91; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 723. But neither Japhet nor Keil observes that Jer 27:7 is not in the earlier version of Jeremiah preserved in the LXX. The revision of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX version of Jeremiah into the proto-MT version of Jeremiah likely happened long before the days of the Chronicler, perhaps in the exilic period, based on the evidence of its transitional biblical Hebrew deduced by a diachronic study of the Hebrew of the long plusses in MT Jeremiah. See Aaron D. Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case of a Sixth-Century Date of Composition*, SSLL 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 366–67. See also, Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 263–67.

[20]For a detailed investigation of the issues surrounding Jer 25:4–5 in 2 Chr 36, see Schnittjer, "Individual vs Collective," 118–25.

returning to the land (אֶרֶץ, γῆ) is "humbling oneself" in Leviticus
26:41–42. Again, Leviticus 26:41 is the source of the Chronicler's
favorite term for repentance as used by Yahweh in his revelation to
Solomon (2 Chr 7:14). This suggests that the Chronicler is interpreting
Leviticus by Leviticus in order to explain Jeremiah's seventy years.

In sum, the Chronicler interprets scripture by scripture. Whereas the
previous section notes the catchword connection ("desolation") between
the donor texts, the preceding paragraphs in this section have evaluated
the deeper contextual issues. The surrounding context of 2 Chroniclers
36:21 and the surrounding contexts of its donor texts (Lev 26:34; Jer
25:11–12) reveal why the Chronicler names Jeremiah alone when both
donor texts would have been known to his constituents. Leviticus 26
provides the mechanism of the people's self-humiliation that causes
Yahweh to remember and restore his people to the land, thus ending
exile. The Chronicler prioritizes Jeremiah 25 as a control text by naming
it because Jeremiah spoke of an exile with a concrete beginning and
ending—the seventy years of the generations of Neo-Babylonian rule.

2. New Testament Authors' Use of Marking

In at least two places, New Testament authors name one donor text
while alluding to more than one—Mark 1:2–3 and Matthew 27:9–10.
Interpreters sometimes claim Matthew made a mistake or many other
kinds of speculations.[21] More commonly, commentators suggest that New
Testament authors depend on rabbinic interpretation for this marking
technique.[22] This gets things turned around. Both New Testament authors
and rabbinic interpretation follow the exegetical methods they each found
modeled within Israel's scriptures—in this case in 2 Chronicles 36:21.
Others have observed that naming only one of the multiple donor texts in
Matthew 27:9–10 is akin to the marking in 2 Chronicles 36:21.[23]

Mark 1:2–3. Here, Mark names Isaiah and blends together allusions
to Exodus 23:20; Malachi 3:1; and Isaiah 40:3. These three donor texts
were already connected by a preexisting interpretive blend of the other

---

[21]For a list of ten other views, see Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old
Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*,
NovTSup 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 125–26, fn. 3.

[22]See, e.g., ibid.; Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew, Gospel of," in *Dictionary of the New
Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker
Academic, 2023), 510; idem, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the
Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic,
2007), 95; Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary:
Commentary on the Variant Readings of the Ancient New Testament Manuscripts and How
They Relate to the Major English Translations* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008),
91.

[23]See Gundry, *Use of the OT*, 125.

two in Malachi 3:1.[24] Malachi uses much irony when he repeatedly turns cherished scriptures into scathing criticisms and dire warnings. Important examples are the inversion of the priestly blessing (Num 6:23–27) into a curse in Malachi 1:6–2:9 and converting the promise of a guardian on the exodus and new exodus journeys through the wilderness (Exod 23:20; Isa 40:3) into a warning of a messenger coming against the returned people in Malachi 3:1.[25]

Mark 1 carries forward the same irony when both John the baptizer and Jesus respectively warn their listeners to repent before the one to come next and the coming kingdom of God (Mark 1:4, 15). John wears a leather belt just as Elijah did when he called fire down from heaven on the king's servants (1:6; cf. 2 Kgs 1:8). Mark likely includes this detail because of the expectation of the coming of Elijah before the great and terrible day of Yahweh in Malachi 4:5 [3:23]—note the catchphrase "behold, I am sending" (הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ) in 3:1 and 4:5 [3:23].[26] Jesus recruits followers to be fishers of people just like the fishers of people who would bring doom according to Jeremiah (Mark 1:16–17; cf. Jer 16:16). Mark builds this irony on the warnings in the contexts of all three donor texts (cf. Exod 23:21; Isa 40:11; Mal 3:2–3).[27]

If Mark plays off shared elements in all of his donor texts, why name only Isaiah? Though there is more to it, Mark builds his narrative of the beginning of the good news of the Messiah as the eschatological fulfillment of God's redemptive will within the framework of Isaiah's new exodus (Isa 40–55, 56–65).[28] This begins by using the expression "good news" from Isaiah 40:9 in Mark 1:1 to introduce his entire narrative. Mark's use of Isaiah 40:3 also helps identify Jesus with the God of Israel.[29] The turning point toward death and resurrection is Jesus' own allusion to Isaiah 53 in Mark 10:45.[30]

Mark's gospel narrative unfolds out of the blended allusion in 1:2–3 that names only Isaiah as a control text. Notice the series of verbal

---

[24]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 468–69.

[25]See the entries on Mal 1:6–2:9 and 3:1 in Schnittjer, *OTUOTPL*.

[26]See the entry on Luke 1:17 in Schnittjer, *NTUOTPL*—I am indebted to Matthew Harmon for this observation.

[27]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 368–69.

[28]See Elizabeth Evans Shively, "Israel's Scriptures in Mark," in *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Matthias Henze and David Lincicum (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 245; Brandon D. Crowe, "Mark, Gospel of," in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 498.

[29]See Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 19–21; idem, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 23, 62–63; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 219. For Isa 40–55 in the NT, see ibid., 32–51 though Bauckham does not treat Mark 1:3 there.

[30]See Shively, "Israel's Scriptures in Mark," 239, 251–53.

allusions signified by emphases as well as alternate references to God signified by broken underlining.[31]

See, <u>I am sending a messenger ahead of you</u> to guard you along <u>the way</u> and to bring you to the place I have prepared. (Exod 23:20)

A voice of one calling: "*In the wilderness prepare the way for <u>Yahweh</u>*; *make straight in the wilderness a highway for <u>our God</u>.*" (Isa 40:3)

"**<u>I will send</u> my <u>messenger</u>**, who **will prepare *<u>the way</u>* ahead of** <u>me</u>. Then suddenly <u>the Lord</u> you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says Yahweh Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand at his appearing? For he will be like a refiner's fire or like a launderer's soap. (Mal 3:1–2)

…as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "**<u>I will send my messenger ahead of <u>you</u></u>**, who **will prepare** your **<u>way</u>**—*a voice of one calling in the wilderness*, '*Prepare the way for the Lord*, *make straight paths for* him.'" (Mark 1:2–3)

In sum, the marked blended allusion in Mark 1:2–3 names Isaiah alone. The evangelist handles all donor texts in accord with their surrounding contexts and even the preexisting allusions to the earlier scriptural traditions in the preexisting blended allusion in Malachi 3:1. The choice to name Isaiah alone reveals Mark's purpose to present Jesus the Messiah, who shares Yahweh's identity, as the servant who fulfills the redemptive will of God promised in Isaiah's new exodus.

Matthew 27:9–10. Here, Matthew only refers to Jeremiah and blends loose echoes of Jeremiah 19 and 32 into a strong unmarked allusion to Zechariah 11:12–13. The donor text in Zechariah 11 and the receptor text are sharply contested. The present purposes only require evaluating why Matthew names Jeremiah alone, however the details of Zechariah's oracle are decided. Since Matthew 27:9–10 is one of the fulfillment formula passages in Matthew, they need to be briefly introduced here. The fulfillment formula passages provide evidence that Matthew only names one donor text. This relates to Matthew's selection of donor texts. However, getting at the sense of fulfillment in the formulas will be postponed until the next section.

Focusing on Matthew's ten fulfillment formulas here and in the next section is merely a convenience, since matters of fulfillment appear in

---

[31]Adapted from Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible*, 20–21.

many other places of the first gospel (e.g., Matt 3:15; 5:17–20; 26:54, 56).[32]

Matthew	Donor texts
1:22–23	Isaiah 7:14
2:15	Hosea 11:1
2:17–18	Jeremiah 31:15
2:23	various (esp. Isa 11:1)
4:14–16	Isaiah 9:1–2
8:17	Isaiah 53:4
12:17–21	Isaiah 42:1–4
13:35	Psalm 78:2
21:4–5	Zechariah 9:9 (+ Isa 62:11?)
27:9–10	Zechariah 11:12 + Jeremiah 19 (and 32?)

Though debated, the dominant readings regard Matthew as responsible for the text forms he cites (adapted from LXX or a revised LXX, proto-MT, and non-aligned) in the fulfillment formula contexts and the selection of texts from Israel's scriptures they frame as well as the extent of each quotation taken from its source text.[33] I agree, but accepting these points is not essential to the present argument.

Is there a common denominator to the psalm and prophetic texts introduced by the fulfillment formula, something that would shed light on the citation of only Jeremiah in Matthew 27:9–10? Many have focused on

[32]For variations among the fulfillment formulas, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–1997), 1:211; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 100, fn. 71; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 24. For other passages that lack the introductory formula or lack the expression "fulfill," see Matt 2:5; 3:3; 9:13; 11:10; 12:7; 13:14–15; 15:7–9; 21:42; 26:31, 54, 56.

[33]See Maarten J. J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 279–80 (Matthew primarily uses the revised LXX available to him; he determines the extent of his quotations); Zack C. Phillips, "Filling Up the Word: The Fulfillment Citations in Matthew's Gospel" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2017), 146–59 (Matthew controls the size and/or form of cited texts); Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 126–27, cf. 203 (Matthew's own rendering of proto-MT as well as cases dependent on LXX), iv (selection of existing Greek textual traditions—preface to the second edition); Gundry, *Use of the OT*, 184 (Matthew produced mixed text forms). See also Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 11–14 (esp. 14); idem, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989), 171–76; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:573–77; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2010), 38–40; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 19–25. For a different view—Matthew bound by cited texts mediated from earlier traditions—based on an argument from silence, see Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007), 128–30; idem, *Matthew 1–7*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss, CC (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 159–61.

the geographical elements mentioned in the fulfillment formulas of
Matthew 2–4.[34] This is fine as far as it goes, yet geography seems to be
secondary.[35] In any case, is there a logic to all ten fulfillment formula
texts? Daniel Kirk and Brandon Crowe—in different ways—propose that
the fulfillment formula texts demonstrate how Jesus is the new Israel.[36]

After noting warnings against accounting for the fulfillment formula
texts in a unified conception, Kirk emphasizes how typological logic
somewhat explains what Matthew is doing. He combines this with the
eschatological presuppositions inherent in fulfillment motifs.[37] Kirk says,
"The narrative perspective allows us to see that Matthew is not
necessarily looking for patterns of activity, but for moments in a plot that
is unfolding for the second time, only now with a different player cast in
role of Israel."[38] While Kirk's suggestion helps deal with what he sees as
the problem of Matthew's selectivity, it misconstrues one of the
fundamental aspects of typological patterns within scripture. Biblical
authors *selectively* appropriate elements of antecedent patterns (historical,
legal, lyrical) as these align with the fulfillment.[39] This selectivity is
fundamental to differences that distinguish biblical typological exegesis
from allegorical readings like the pesher exegesis of Second Temple
Judaic sectarians, whose readings go line by line through a scriptural
text.[40]

Crowe argues that Matthew selects texts that appear in contexts of
Israel's disobedience. Against these contexts, Matthew shows how Jesus,
by his obedience, reverses and fulfills every way that Israel failed. Crowe
makes a strong case for eight of ten of these texts.[41] He admits that Isaiah
42:1–4 and Zechariah 9:9 do not align with the profile of Israel in
rebellion like the others.[42] That Crowe does not force the two passages
into the paradigm or make the criteria more elastic is a helpful
hermeneutical model for respecting the evidence. Yet the humble servant
of Isaiah 42 and the humble, saved king coming on a donkey in Zechariah
9:9 each present a figure who triggers a reversal of rebellious Israel. Do

---

[34]See, e.g., Richard T. France, "The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the
Problem of Communication," *New Testament Studies* 27, no. 2 (1981): 237–40.

[35]See Phillips, "Filling Up the Word," 298–300.

[36]J. R. Daniel Kirk, "Conceptualising Fulfilment in Matthew," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59, no.
1 (2008): 77–98; Brandon D. Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew as Eschatological Reversal,"
Westminster Theological Journal 75, no. 1 (2013): 111–27.

[37]See Kirk, "Conceptualising Fulfillment," 89–90.

[38]Ibid., 91.

[39]See Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield:
Almond Press, 1983), 380. See also Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of
the Bible*, 133, 145–46.

[40]See Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 862.

[41]See Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew," 113–21. Though not treating all ten, Hays
makes a strong case for Jesus as obedient Israel where the people had failed in the first three
fulfillment formula citations of Mattew, bleeding over into the surrounding contexts. See
Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 113–20, 139–40, 165.

[42]See Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew," 121.

not these humble figures anticipate the reversals of Jesus the Messiah as exemplified in the other eight fulfillment formula texts of Matthew? These two exceptions may be set aside for the present purposes. The other eight do well to show how Jesus fulfills all righteousness (Matt 3:15; 5:17–20) in contrast to the failures of Israel against which the prophets preached.[43] While we need to come back to Crowe's important thesis in the next section, for now, it is enough that he explains why only Jeremiah is named in Matthew 27:9–10.

The fulfillment formula in Matthew 27:9–10 cites Jeremiah alone— and echoes the language and context of Jeremiah 19 (and maybe Jer 32)—even while it loosely quotes extensively from Zechariah 11. The context of Jeremiah 19 reveals Judah in full rebellion leading to the prophet's sign of judgment by smashing the potter's jar. By citing only Jeremiah, Matthew shows the reversal of Israel's failure even in the betrayal of Judas which led not only to the death of Jesus but also his resurrection.[44]

In sum, Matthew names only Jeremiah to emphasize the failure of Israel and its reversal in Judas' betrayal of the innocent blood of Jesus (27:4).

3. Reflections on Marking One of Multiple Donor Texts

While there is broad agreement on the blended allusions in 2 Chronicles 36:21 and Mark 1:2–3, the sense of Zechariah 11 and Matthew's use of it in 27:9–10 trouble interpreters. In spite of this soft spot, the evaluation of these receptor texts each with marked blended allusions that only name one of the donor texts shows substantial exegetical continuity.

The Chronicler and the first two evangelists each name one of multiple donor texts as something like the interpretive control text. In addition, 2 Chronicles 36:21; Mark 1:2–3; and Matthew 27:9–10 appear to be sensitive to the surrounding contexts and allusions to still earlier texts within their donor texts. Each of these receptor texts makes exegetical advancements of revelation by means of blending one or more additional allusions into the named control donor text.

Elsewhere both Mark and Matthew have studied Chronicles. In addition to the genealogy in Matthew 1 and slaying Zechariah in 23:35 (cf. 2 Chr 24:21), the first gospel may echo 2 Chronicles 36 in other places.[45] The riddle of the renegade vineyard tenders in Mark 12:1–12 seems to depend on 2 Chronicles 36:16, among other donor texts (cf.

---

[43]See Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 84–93.

[44]See Crowe, "Fulfillment in Matthew," 117–18.

[45]Similarities include innocent blood filling Jerusalem (LXX 2 Chr 36:5 [not MT]; cf. Matt 23:35) and repeatedly rejecting prophetic warnings (2 Chr 36:15–16; cf. Matt 23:30). See Phillips, "Filling Up the Word," 126.

Mark 12:2–5). This evidence makes it reasonable to think that 2
Chronicles 36:21 served as an exegetical model for Mark 1:2–3 and that
one or both of these served as an exegetical model for Matthew 27:9–10.

In sum, there are many moving parts and much more to be
considered with 2 Chronicles 36:21; Mark 1:2–3; and Matthew 27:9–10
and each of their donor texts and all of their respective contexts. Still, the
evaluation of the reasons for receptor texts naming only one of multiple
donor texts suggests that 2 Chronicles 36:21 set the exegetical precedent
for the evangelists. This observation holds promise for further research.

IV. FULFILLMENT FORMULAS IN 2 CHRONICLES 36:21
AND THE GOSPELS

This section evaluates the exegesis of Jeremiah 25:12 in 2 Chronicles
36:21 as establishing the fulfillment formulas distinct to Matthew and
John. The primary emphasis will fall on the grammatical and semantic
function of "to fulfill" (מלא) in 2 Chronicles 36:21 and how this informs
the fulfillment of the formulas of Matthew and John. This evidence
applies more broadly to fulfillment in the gospels even though space does
not allow pursuing anything else.

The Chronicler borrows and adjusts language from Jeremiah 25:12
(cf. 29:10). Notice the shift from מלא in *qal*—referring to the completion
of a duration of time—to מלא in *piel*—as actualization of the prophetic
word.

> And it will be when seventy years are fulfilled [*qal* כִּמְלֹאות]…
> (Jer 25:12a)

> …to fulfill [*piel* לְמַלֹּאות] the word of Yahweh by the mouth of
> Jeremiah…to fulfill [*piel* לְמַלֹּאות] seventy years. (2 Chr 36:21a, c)

The sense of *qal* מלא in Jeremiah 25:12 is to complete or fill up a set
timespan. The Chronicler shifts the infinitive of מלא to *piel* and makes its
object the divine word prophesied and repeats the infinitive of מלא in *piel*
concerning the prophetic word Jeremiah uttered. The sense of *piel* מלא in
2 Chronicles is to "fill up" the divine word by actualizing it—bringing it
into its full reality. It is worth pausing here to observe that Matthew's first
two fulfillment formulas also emphasize that the Lord spoke the word
mediated by the prophet (Matt 1:22; 2:15), as does the Chronicler.[46]

New Testament scholars are well aware that the fulfillment formulas
in Matthew and John have no analogues in Second Temple Judaic

---

[46]See France, *Matthew: Evangelist*, 171.

sectarian writings or the Mishnah.[47] They also know that the fulfillment formulas of the gospels have parallels in Israel's scriptures, though engagement rarely goes beyond noting said parallels.[48] In spite of intensive research on the fulfillment formulas in Matthew and John, attention to the significance of מִלֵּא in the *piel* is glaringly absent. Yet, the key uses of "fulfill(ment)" within Israel's scriptures that function like the fulfillment formulas in the first and fourth gospels are these very cases (1 Kgs 2:27; 8:15, 24 // 2 Chr 6:4, 15; 2 Chr 36:21).[49]

New Testament scholars have been correct to latch onto the sense of πληρόω as "fill up." But filling up (*piel* מלא) a word does not work like filling up vessels or as though Jesus is the last part of filling up. Kirk's statement, "[T]he life of Jesus [is] like water filling up a sculpted vase" requires pushback.[50] The prophetic word and its fulfillment are not two separate things with one filling the other. Brevard Childs' important study on fulfillment includes an indictment against views that see "Jesus Christ merely as the culminating ingredient of a filling process. Here such analogies as the filling of a receptacle can be misleading, since Christ is not the last link in a chain of events…. Something completely new came with him."[51]

The Hebrew verbal root מלא functions as "fill" in *qal* and as "fill by actualizing" or "fill by bringing into reality" in *piel* when it refers to the prophetic word.[52] Yahweh fills by his hand what he speaks with his mouth.[53] For example, "What he [Yahweh] spoke with his mouth … and with his hand he has brought into reality" (אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּפִיו ... וּבְיָדוֹ מִלֵּא) (1 Kgs 8:15 // 2 Chr 6:4)[54] and "you [Yahweh] have spoken with your mouth and with your hand you have brought into reality" (וַתְּדַבֵּר בְּפִיךָ וּבְיָדְךָ מִלֵּאתָ) (1 Kgs 8:24 // 2 Chr 6:15). There is some overlap between the *qal* and *piel* senses because of how words, speech, messages, and the like, function in biblical contexts. The distinctions between מלא as fill in *qal* and actualize the prophetic word in *piel* did not get picked up in the LXX which translated both *qal* and *piel* with the same conjugations of

---

[47]See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament," *New Testament Studies* 7, no. 4 (1961): 331; Bruce M. Metzger, "The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70, no. 4 (1951): 306–07.

[48]Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:574; France, *Matthew: Evangelist*, 172.

[49]While Dan 9:2 has the *piel* inf. const. of מלא in connection with the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah, Daniel uses it to refer to the completion of a duration of time.

[50]Kirk, "Conceptualising Fulfillment," 97.

[51]Brevard S. Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment: A Study of Contemporary Hermeneutics," *Interpretation* 12, no. 3 (1958): 269.

[52]The key passages that use the *piel* of מלא in association with the prophetic word (1 Kgs 2:27; 8:15, 24 // 2 Chr 6:4, 15; and 2 Chr 36:21) are listed as "fill," see *HALOT*, s.v., "מלא"; comp. *DCH*, s.v., "מלא"; also, BDB, s.v., "מָלֵא."

[53]See *TDOT*, s.v., "מָלֵא."

[54]Note that 2 Chr 6:4 pluralizes "and with his hands" (וּבְיָדָיו).

πληρόω.[55] Yet the sense of actualization of the prophetic word in the contexts using the *piel* of מלא with Yahweh's word as its object shows the dynamic range of πληρόω in the New Testament.

Childs' study points out the problem with thinking that biblical fulfillment relates to detached predictions.[56] This approach causes prophecy to "become equated with arbitrary prediction, divorced from the purpose of God in history."[57] Instead, Childs builds an understanding of fulfillment from its use in the scriptures. The term מלא in *qal* refers to filling in a spatial sense or in a temporal sense of the filling of time. When Rebekah's days were full she gave birth (Gen 25:24).[58] Meanwhile term מלא in *piel* continues to mean fill, including the filling of words. Childs says, "A true word is one which is filled. It does not return empty, but accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent (Isa 55:11)."[59]

Prophetic words are part of the very reality that they initiate. "The prophetic word and its fulfillment are not held independently of one another, but belong to the same event."[60] Like prophetic words, history as revealed by Israel's scriptures is also fulfilled by the Messiah.[61]

Fulfillment of a divine word of promise can be compared to the sense of faithfulness to fulfill a vow.[62] More importantly, the *piel* infinitive construct of מלא with the divine word as its object, as in 1 Kings 2:27 and 2 Chronicles 36:21, connotes the reality enacted by the filling of the word *as the purpose* of the word. Enacting the named reality is the purpose of the expectational word of divine promise. Yet, especially when fulfilled, the divine word of promise needs to be interpreted within its biblical context.

Zack Phillips works through the use of πληρόω in those cases where this expression translates מלא in *piel* in Israel's scriptures (listed above)

---

[55]For a list of terms used to render the *piel* of מלא in the LXX, see T. Muraoka, *A Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 254. Also, note the other Hebrew terms rendered by πληρόω in the LXX such as שבע and כלה (97). Translating כלה with πληρόω only occurs in LXX 2 Chr 36:22, likely under the influence of πληρόω to render מלא in 36:21 (comp. Allen); even כלה in the synoptic parallel of 36:22 in Ezra 1:1 is rendered by τελέω. See Leslie C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles: The Relation of the Septuagint of I and II Chronicles to the Massoretic Text*, vol. 1: The Translator's Craft, VTSup 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 54.

[56]For an example of defining πληρόω in Matthew as "fulfillment of predictions," see Luz, *Matthew 1–7* (Hermeneia), 126.

[57]Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 260.

[58]See ibid., 264.

[59]Ibid., 267. Similarly, Gerhard von Rad speaks of "Yahweh's words fulfilling themselves" (idem, "The Deuteronomic Theology of History in 1 and 2 Kings," in *From Genesis to Chronicles: Explorations in Old Testament Theology*, ed. by Kenneth C. Hanson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 156, see also 159–60, 164.

[60]Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 267.

[61]The fulfillment of history is one part of typological patterns. See Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible*, 133, 135–36, 141–42.

[62]See *TDOT*, s.v., "מלא"; *NIDOTTE*, 2:940.

especially 2 Chronicles 36:21.[63] Though Phillips stays focused on the LXX—and nowhere registers a difference between מלא in *qal* and *piel*—his explanation aligns the sense of πληρόω in 2 Chronicles 36:21 as explained in Childs' study noted above.[64] Phillips observes that πληρόω + a word refers to enacting the prophetic word and that Jesus unsurpassably fills up and embodies.[65]

Childs' research needs to be compared to the scholarship on Matthew's fulfillment formulas. Childs highlights a key aspect of how the evangelists use πληρόω (fulfill) in the sense of *piel* מלא (fulfill) the prophetic word. "Jesus Christ is in the Old Testament to the degree in which true and obedient Israel took shape. He fulfilled by his obedience to the will of God the task unfilled by Israel."[66]

This comes close to Crowe's argument introduced in the previous section. He contends that Jesus does not fulfill in Matthew by merely repeating Israel. He says, "[F]ulfillment marks a historical advancement, as Jesus brings salvation history to its goal."[67] This is why the fulfillment formula passages tend to cite prophetic passages in contexts of wayward and rebellious Israel (see previous section). Jesus reverses by his obedience all of Israel's failures.

Crowe makes his strongest case when he explains the Sermon on the Mount as it relates to fulfillment in Matthew. The righteousness required to fulfill the Torah and Prophets (Matt 5:17–20) is incarnate in the Messiah himself.[68] The obedience of Jesus in Matthew includes the fulfillment formula contexts but extends to everything he says and does. Richard Hays expresses this point well: "On Matthew's reading… [Israel has] tragically fallen into disobedience and exile…. This messianic figure [anticipated by the prophets] takes the destiny of Israel upon himself and embodies the radical covenant obedience that God has always desired of his people."[69]

The obedience of Jesus bears on the mission of his followers. Obedience to the teachings of Jesus as underlined by Jesus himself—"teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you" (28:20)—needs to be collated with the selection of prophetic texts that Matthew uses to showcase what the Messiah fulfilled.

---

[63]See Phillips "Filling Up the Word," 114–26.

[64]Phillips gives cursory attention to מלא in one footnote, without observing its different connotations in *qal* and *piel*; see ibid., 79–80, fn. 11.

[65]See ibid., 338. Phillips also observes that James, which likely predates Matthew and John, also aligns with the precedents within Israel's scriptures. "Even more importantly, 2 Chr 36:21–22, 1 Kgs 2:27 may well provide precedent for, and Jas 2:23 a contemporary analogue for, the Matthean usage of πληροῦν" (p. 145). There is not enough space here to unpack this important observation. See Phillips' discussion on pp. 130–43.

[66]Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 270. Others come to similar conclusions, see, e.g., Oren Martin, "Literal Fulfillment," in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), 476.

[67]Crowe, *Last Adam*, 85.

[68]See ibid., 89–93.

[69]Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 138–39; also 188–89.

Again and again Matthew shows how Jesus fulfills by his obedience what was emptiness in the rebellion of Israel (Isa 7; Hos 11; Ps 78; Jer 19; etc.). Crowe goes on to connect fulfillment in the synoptic gospels with necessity. Israel's scriptures make fulfillment by the Messiah a necessity. This is emphasized by Luke but also appears in Mark and Matthew. For the present purposes, it is enough to note that the words attributed to Jesus in the garden signify the necessity of those very events to fulfill the scriptures written by the prophets (Matt 26:54, 56). It had to happen as it did. The sense of necessary fulfillment aligns with actualization as the purpose of a prophetic word that is the object of the *piel* infinitive מלא as in 2 Chronicles 36:21 noted above.

John's use of fulfillment formulas overlaps with but is distinct from their use in Matthew. The quotation of Zechariah in John 12:15 (though without a fulfillment formula) gives good reason to think he was aware of the fulfillment formulas in Matthew since Mark 11:1–10 and Luke 19:28–36 allude to but do not quote Zechariah 9:9 as Matthew 21:5 does. Thus, it is not certain whether John follows 2 Chronicles 36:21 and/or Matthew. In any case, the sense of John's fulfillment formulas needs to be considered briefly. All of John's uses of the fulfillment formula appear in the second half of the narrative after the book of the seven signs (John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36).[70] The passages speak of "fulfilling" the scripture, the word of the prophets, and the Torah.[71] All of the fulfillment formula contexts relate to the suffering of Jesus. The fulfillment formula in John 19:28 uses *teleō* τελέω while all of the others use πληρόω.

> After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished (πάντα τετέλεσται), he said (in order to fulfill the scripture [τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή]), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished (τετέλεσται)." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:28–30)[72]

---

[70]See Jaime Clark-Soles, "Israel's Scriptures in John," in *Israel's Scriptures in Early Christian Writings: The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Matthias Henze and David Lincicum (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023), 287; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 416; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 285–86. On the resurrection as the final sign spoken of in John 2:18–19, see Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 274. Yet its role as a sign can be seen in the temple confrontation in John 2.

[71]See Clark-Soles, "Israel's Scriptures in John," 289.

[72]The text is taken from the NRSVue with inserted Greek adapted from Phillips, "Filling Up the Word," 110.

Whether John uses τελέω and πληρόω interchangeably or with a different sense in the fulfillment formulas is debated. Some say the use of τελέω with two parallel terms in close succession (see citation of vv. 28–30 above) is intentionally distinct and means completion.[73] And yet this approach defines the distinct sense of "completion of Scripture" as "the fulfillment of everything that was promised."[74] Others argue that John uses τελέω and πληρόω interchangeably with the sense of completion by bringing its referent to its divinely intended culmination.[75] Both of these approaches highlight the nuance of completion or culmination that can be kept in mind when navigating John's highly ironic use of scripture. Space only allows looking at the first fulfillment formula of John 12:38.[76]

John uses an interpretive blend of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to explain how the miraculous signs of Jesus obstructed the belief of those who witnessed them. John emphasizes that the purpose of this obstruction is to fulfill scripture and that it had to happen. For John, the prophetic word causes the realities both of the Messiah's signs and also the results upon the people. D. A. Carson explains, "[T]he unbelief of the people resulted in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, not that it occurred in order that Old Testament prophecy might be fulfilled, no such weakening can be legitimate here: v. 39 insists that it was for this reason that the people could not believe."[77] By placing this first fulfillment formula after the seven signs, "John extends the scope of application to Jesus' entire ministry."[78] John's emphasis on all-encompassing, reality-enacting prophetic words comes very close to the necessity of fulfillment explained by Jesus in Matthew 26:54, 56. The very unbelief of eyewitnesses is evidence of the truthfulness of what they deny and is compelled by the reality-creating prophetic word.

In sum, the Chronicler shifts from the *qal* of fulfill in Jeremiah 25:12 to the *piel* in 2 Chronicles 36:21. This decisive exegetical intervention establishes the sense of fulfillment applied in the fulfillment formulas of Matthew. Further, the prophetic word in Matthew and John has a sense of necessity in terms of the divine word once uttered must culminate in the reality it initiates. This necessity also brings forward the sense of the *piel* infinitive construct of מלא.

---

[73]See Edward W. Klink III, *John*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 809.

[74]Ibid.

[75]See Phillips, "Filling Up the Word," 110, 112. Phillips says, "For John 'to fill up' 'the (scriptural) word' means to *complete it*, by *bringing it to its scripted telos*" (110, emphasis original).

[76]For interaction with John 19:36–37, see Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible*, 103–04.

[77]D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 447. Similarly, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John, I–XII*, AYB 29 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 484–85; Klink, *John*, 558.

[78]Köstenberger, "John," 481.

V. CONCLUSION

An evaluation of the evidence demonstrates that 2 Chronicles 36:21 sets two exegetical precedents: naming one of multiple donor texts of an interpretive blend and establishing fulfillment citation with the sense of filling the prophetic word by enacting it into reality. This section will summarize select implications of these findings.

First, scholarship of the New Testament's use of scripture needs to invest in the scriptural exegesis within Israel's scriptures. The evidence points to the constant study of Israel's scriptures by the authors of the New Testament. It should surprise no one that New Testament authors modeled their own interpretation on the exegesis of scripture they found within Israel's scriptures. Neglected portions of Israel's scriptures have something to offer New Testament scholarship. Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles tend to be neglected because the New Testament does not quote them. The long habit of neglecting early Second Temple narratives that frequently interact with earlier scriptures impoverishes New Testament scholarship. The evidence in the New Testament itself invites us to join the evangelists in studying the scriptures of Israel to make sense of the gospel of the Messiah.

Second, dramatic shifts driven by the exegesis of earlier scriptures did not begin in the New Testament. Scriptural exegesis of earlier scriptural traditions had been going on for more than a thousand years by the days of the earliest Christians. The exegetical intervention in 2 Chronicles 36:21 is one example among hundreds by narrators, poets, and prophets of Israel's scriptures who themselves typically looked to the Torah's use of Torah as a model for their own interpretations of earlier scriptures. Gerhard von Rad speaks to this long history of exegesis within the scriptures that pre-dates the New Testament. He says, "Such a transformation of the traditional material in the light of a new saving event was as proper for early Christians as were many other such transformations which had already taken place in the Old Testament."[79]

Third, while the evidence shows that the Chronicler interprets Leviticus by Leviticus and Jeremiah by Jeremiah, he also interprets them together. The basis for interpreting together Torah and prophets suggests canonical consciousness of a shared framework of revelation. The use of interpretive blends that read together remote contexts from separate scriptural traditions implies an understood unity of divine authority and revelation. Torah and prophets go together. New Testament authors likewise interpret scripture with scripture within a shared framework of canonical consciousness.

Fourth, the sense of fulfillment as filling words by actualizing them into reality in the rare uses of the infinitive construct *piel* of מלא within

---

[79]Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions, trans. by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 333.

Israel's scriptures (1 Kgs 2:27; 2 Chr 36:21; cf. *piel* perfect in 1 Kgs 8:15, 24 // 2 Chr 6:4, 15) lends itself to being wed to divine necessity by Jesus and the evangelists (cf. Mark 14:49; Matt 26:54, 56). The function of the infinitive construct auxiliary form in 2 Chronicles 36:21 provides the sense of "in order to fulfill" with the divine word as its object. The divine word once spoken actualizes its purpose. The word of Yahweh must come to pass. Its fulfillment is necessary. The cases of מלא in *piel* perfect and in *piel* infinitive construct within Israel's scriptures (listed earlier in this paragraph) apply to expectational words. An exegetical development in Matthew is applying fulfillment formulas to typological patterns of nonexpectational historical contexts. While both of these pieces appear within Israel's scriptures—fulfillment formula and interpreting typological patterns in nonexpectational historical contexts (in Kings, Hosea, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles, and maybe elsewhere)—they are not combined until the New Testament.[80] This important exegetical development requires further investigation and evaluation.

Fifth, and related to the previous point, the evangelists' reading of Jesus as the new Israel and his obedience as reversing all of Israel's failures needs to be evaluated in light of Israel's scriptures. This reading seems very close to some of the messages of the prophets like Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and maybe others. In what ways did the evangelists who present Jesus as the obedient new Israel bring forward the teachings of the prophets? This line of inquiry needs further study.[81]

---

[80]See Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible*, 154–57 (case of Matt 2:15); Schnittjer, *OTUOT*, 194–95; 650; 716.

[81]Thank you to Brandon Crowe and Kevin McFadden for feedback on a draft of this article.