

Psalms Prophecies as Evidence that Jesus is the Messiah

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Abstract

This journal article explores the prophecies found in the Book of Psalms, employing a hermeneutical research method to argue that these prophecies serve as substantial evidence for the claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Through a detailed examination of key Psalms traditionally considered messianic, the article highlights the historical, literary, and theological dimensions of these texts, demonstrating their fulfillment in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Book of Psalms, a central text in the Hebrew Bible, contains numerous passages that have been interpreted as prophetic references to the coming Messiah. This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these Psalms, employing hermeneutics to uncover their messianic significance and to present a compelling case for Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of these ancient prophecies. Using the hermeneutical research method, this study examines the Psalms through multiple lenses: historical context, literary analysis, theological exegesis, canonical context, and reception history. This multifaceted approach ensures a thorough understanding of the text and its implications. Through hermeneutical analysis, this article provides substantial evidence that the messianic prophecies in the Psalms find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The convergence of historical, literary, and theological insights underscores the coherence and credibility of the claim that Jesus is the promised Messiah. This study not only enriches our understanding of the Psalms but also strengthens the theological foundation for Christian belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

Keywords: Prophecies; Jesus; Messiah; Psalms

INTRODUCTION

Scholars, theologians, and Christians have been drawn to the Old Testament's Messianic prophecies for millennia. Written many years before Jesus of Nazareth was born, these prophecies offer prophetic insights into the life and work of the Messiah—the long-awaited deliverer and human savior. One of the most important of these prophecies may be found in Psalm, which paints a vivid picture of the future Messiah and is recognized as an extraordinary premonition of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of this prophecy in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is a subject of great theological and historical relevance. It stands as an uncommon prophetic literary unit that foretells the arrival of a messianic figure.¹

¹ Victor Umaru, "The Messianic Prophecy in Psalms 2 and Its Fulfillment in the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ," *The American Journal of Biblical Theology* 25, no. 14 (2024),

The Book of Psalms, one of the most cherished and frequently cited books in the Bible, holds a significant place in both Jewish and Christian traditions. Its collection of 150 songs, prayers, and poems covers a wide range of human emotions, from despair to exultation, making it a timeless spiritual resource. Among the various themes explored in the Psalms, one of the most intriguing and theologically rich is the concept of messianic prophecy. The idea that the Psalms contain predictions about a future Messiah has been a cornerstone of Judeo-Christian thought, influencing religious beliefs, practices, and expectations for centuries.²

The concept of the Messiah—a divinely anointed leader destined to bring salvation and establish God's kingdom on Earth—has its roots deeply embedded in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Psalms, this figure is depicted through various metaphors and allusions, providing a multifaceted portrayal that has been interpreted and reinterpreted through the ages. For early Jews, the Psalms were a source of hope and assurance of God's intervention in history. For Christians, the Psalms' messianic prophecies were seen as foretelling the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, thereby affirming his role as the promised Savior.

Among the Psalms, several stand out for their explicit and implicit references to the Messiah. Psalm 2 speaks of a royal figure established by God, facing opposition yet ultimately triumphant, a theme resonant with messianic kingship. Psalm 22, with its vivid depiction of suffering and divine deliverance, has been poignantly linked to the crucifixion narrative in the Christian tradition. Psalm 45, a royal wedding song, has been interpreted as a metaphor for the divine union between the Messiah and his people. Psalm 72 envisions an ideal king whose reign brings justice, peace, and prosperity, embodying the messianic hope for a restored kingdom. Psalm 89 reflects on God's covenant with David, underpinning the belief in a messianic heir to David's throne. Lastly, Psalm 110 presents a priest-king, a figure combining spiritual and temporal authority, seen as a precursor to the Christian understanding of Jesus as both king and high priest.

The messianic interpretations of these Psalms have not been static; they have evolved through historical contexts and theological developments. In ancient Israel, these texts were likely understood in relation to the Davidic monarchy and the hope for a future ruler who would restore Israel's glory.³ During the Second Temple period, as political turmoil and foreign

<https://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/UmaruV03.pdf>.

² Peter C. W. Ho., "The Shape of Davidic Psalms as Messianic," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62, no. 3 (2019), https://etsjets.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/files_JETS-PDFs_62_62-3_JETS_62.3_515-531_Ho.pdf.

³ "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Book of Psalms," in *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the First Book of Psalms* (Academic Studies Press, 2019), 13–17,

domination intensified messianic expectations, these Psalms provided a scriptural foundation for hope and resilience. For the early Christians, the life and mission of Jesus offered a new lens through which to view these ancient songs, identifying him as the fulfillment of the long-awaited messianic prophecies.

Understanding the messianic prophecies in the Psalms requires a multifaceted approach that considers historical, literary, and theological perspectives. This exploration not only sheds light on the original contexts and meanings of these texts but also reveals their profound impact on religious thought and practice. The Psalms, with their rich tapestry of themes and images, continue to inspire and challenge believers, inviting them to reflect on the nature of divine promise and human expectation.

In modern biblical scholarship, there is a more nuanced understanding of the Psalms' messianic prophecies, incorporating historical-critical methods, literary analysis, and theological reflection. Studies by scholars such as John J. Collins have explored how messianic expectations evolved during the Second Temple period, influencing the interpretation of the Psalms. According to John Collins, the Messiah is an appointed representative of God for the last days who isn't always referred to as the messiah.⁴

Richard B. Hays' work on intertextuality examines how the New Testament writers engaged with the Psalms, seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of these ancient texts.⁵ The research on the messianic prophecies in the Book of Psalms is vast and varied, reflecting the deep impact these texts have had on religious thought and practice. From early Jewish expectations and New Testament interpretations to medieval commentaries and modern scholarly analysis, the Psalms continue to be a fertile ground for exploring the concept of the Messiah. This ongoing scholarly dialogue enriches our understanding of these ancient texts and their enduring theological significance.

METHODOLOGY

Using the hermeneutics research method in theology to examine prophecies about the Messiah in the Book of Psalms involves a structured approach to interpret these texts accurately. Hermeneutics focuses on understanding the meaning of texts by considering various factors, including historical context, literary form, and theological significance. Here

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781618110459-003/html>.

⁴ John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star. The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, (New York: ABRL, 1995), 146.

⁵ Doosuk Kim, "Intertextuality and New Testament Studies," *Currents in Biblical Research* 20, no. 3 (June 15, 2022): 238–260, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1476993X221100993>.

is this method to study messianic prophecies in the Psalms. The hermeneutics research method provides a comprehensive approach to studying messianic prophecies in the Psalms. By examining the historical context, literary form, theological themes, canonical context, reception history, and contemporary application, scholars and students can gain a deeper understanding of how these ancient texts point to the Messiah.⁶

DISCUSSION

Identifying Messianic Prophecies in Psalms

The verb "*Mashiach*," which means "to rub or smear," is the Hebrew source of the term "*Messiah*." W. C. Kaiser, Jr. identifies six additional Old Testament verses (1 Samuel 2:10,35; Psalms 20:6, 28:8, 84:9; Hebrews 3:13) that employ the technical sense of Messiah. It talks about people doing things like calling a prophet or crowning a priest or king. In the Old Testament, it is uncommon to find the term "Messiah" used in a technical sense to describe an eschatological Deliverer. But it's also frequently used to describe a person who has been specially dedicated to serving God.⁷ The Old Testament psalms have connected the messianic hope to David and the Davidic monarchy. The passages from Psalms 2: 7-9, Psalms 45, Psalms 72, and Psalms 110: 1-2; 5-7.⁸

There are five kinds of Messianic psalms: I. Psalms that make reference to a modern-day Davidic king and place him in the context of his Messianic purpose, either explicitly or implicitly. II. Those wholly committed to the ideal Davidic monarch of the future. III. Those that allude to the splendors of God's kingdom in the future but do not specifically name a Messiah. IV. Those that, despite appearing to be said by a single person, actually reflect the experiences of the Jewish people as they stutter carry out their Messianic mission. V. Those where, more or less consistently, the psalmist presents as the speaker the individual and ideal "Servant of Jehovah" (to borrow the phrase from Isa. XLII., &c.).⁹

It establishes the tone for the Old Testament's God-planned promises. There are important details about this prophecy to be aware of. Initially, rather of David building a house for God,

⁶ Gavin Flood, "Hermeneutics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (Oxford University Press, 2016), 149–160, <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/27966/chapter/211574790>.

⁷ Umaru, "The Messianic Prophecy in Psalms 2 and Its Fulfillment in the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ."

⁸ Daniel D. Martin, "The Davidic Messiah in the Old Testament Tracing a Theological Trajectory," *Perichoresis* 20, no. 5 (December 1, 2022): 87–96, <https://intapi.sciendo.com/pdf/10.2478/perc-2022-0033>.

⁹ Thomas Kelly Cheyne, "The Messianic Element of The Psalms," *The Old Testament Student* 3, no. 6 (1884), <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/469386>.

God would establish a house for David. Second, God's plan for all of humanity is embodied in this prophecy. Third, there is no indication of an end to the promised endless dominion. David and God have an enduring covenant that is entirely reliant on God's fidelity. The following details demonstrate the messianic nature of the Davidic promise: the Messiah will be descended from David, serve as David's heir, and rule an everlasting kingdom. There is no doubt that this Messiah will eventually arrive. The Psalms were written by King David, who ruled over Judah and Israel for forty years. The Kaiser claims that there are more than 101 passages in thirteen different Psalms that foretell the coming of the Messiah. Psalms 2:2, 45:2, 68:18, 69:21, 110:1-4, 118:22, and 132:11 are some of these verses. The Psalms' introduction broadens our understanding of the Messiah. The Messiah will be rejected, betrayed, killed, and raised from the dead, according to the Psalms.¹⁰

Psalms and Their Prophecies

Psalm is mentioned in the Talmud in relation to the battles against Gog and Magog that preceded the arrival of the Messiah. When the conflict of Gog and Magog occurs at the end of times, the idolaters who rage against Israel and the peoples who mutter in vain are the ones who will stand against the Lord and His Messiah. According to one interpretation of Psalms 2:7–8, these are God's words particularly addressed to the Messiah, who is David's son.¹¹ According to Jewish and Christian eschatology's, there will be a time of intense upheaval at the end of time, either prior to the entrance of the Messiah or at his second coming. The next era is expected to bring with it cosmic disruptions, natural calamities, violence and warfare, and "fearful events, and great signs from heaven" (Isaiah 24:1-27:3; Ezekiel 38-39; Daniel 12:1-2; Luke 21:11; 4 Ezra 7:28-29, 32-33). The chosen one will emerge and defeat the powers of darkness following these events, which are referred to as *hevlo shel mashiah* [the birth pangs of the Messiah] (Revelation 19:11–21:4).¹²

Psalm 2: The Anointed One

The chiasm A-B-B'-A', or sense units, is formed by the four stanzas that make up Psalm

¹⁰ Walter C. Jr. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament. Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1933), 91.

¹¹ Mariano Gomez Aranda, "Medieval Jewish Exegesis of Psalm 2," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 18 (January 1, 2018), <https://jhsonline.org/index.php/jhs/article/view/29385>.

¹² James W. Ellis, "A Harmony of Judeo-Christian Eschatology and Messianic Prophecy," *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 4, no. 3 (June 30, 2021): 65–80, <https://abjournals.org/ajsshr/papers/volume-4/issue-3/a-harmony-of-judeo-christian-eschatology-and-messianic-prophecy/>.

2's literary structure. The shifts in speakers reveal this chiasm. It is divided into four sections that flow well from start to finish: (1) the earthly rebellious nations (vv.1-3); (2) God in heaven (vv.4-6); (3) the Lord's decree (vv.7-9); and (4) the earthly anointed monarch (vv. 10–12). The rulers of the nation's behave like the gods they thought they represented in the first stanza of Psalm 2, seeking advice from one another against Yahweh and casting doubt on his authority. As the Creator and preserver of the universe, Israel's God, on the other hand, claimed to have absolute power and authority. However, aside from this, Yahweh promised in the covenant with David to create the kingdom and reign of David's successor, a relationship symbolized by a father-son bond. Similar phrases, such as "his (God's) anointed" (v. 2), "my king" (v. 6), and "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (v. 7), are used in Psalm 2 to characterize the monarch's relationship with Yahweh. The Davidic covenant is referred to in verse 7 as the "decree of Yahweh," and "today" is the day of the king's coronation. The ANE setting, which had comparable views of the relationships of their rulers with their gods, is where this idea of the divine relationship with the human king originates. In ancient Mesopotamia, kings occasionally served as priests and had a unique bond with the gods.¹³

The declaration that he has been begotten highlights the Old Testament king's relationship with God. As the king is regarded as God's Son, many interpreters see this verse—"today I have begotten you"—as referring to God taking the king on as his son. Nevertheless, in the scriptures, the verb "begotten" also refers to "reproduce." "I have begotten you" is a figurative phrase that indicates a "new birth" of a divine nature during the coronation, meaning something beyond adoption, which has legal undertones, according to Peter Craigie.¹⁴ The way the language refers to the king's special relationship with God as a "father-son" bond highlights this link. At this point, the monarch has the freedom to ask God anything he wants, and God promises to grant his requests.

Psalm 16: The Resurrection

The fact that David's remains were still in his tomb proved he never mentioned his own resurrection. Peter's case would have been weaker if David had mentioned the resurrection of all the righteous. Indeed, David will rise again, but according to Psalm 16:10, there will be a specific resurrection as well as a general resurrection that occurs before decay. David did not

¹³ C. J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004), 228.

¹⁴ Peter C Craigie and Marvin E. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentary: Psalms 1- 50. Vol 19 (Second Edition)* (Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2004), 65.

speak of himself, as evidenced by the deterioration of his corpse, and his experience did not satisfy Psalm 16:10. As opposed to David's tomb, Jesus' was empty. God the Father had raised his undecayed corpse to life.¹⁵ Psalm 16 in the speech in Acts 2, namely the 'proof' from prophecy explanation, as well as the few other models which have been advanced, are unconvincing on narrative grounds. Instead, it suggests that the Psalm is primarily quoted as a rationale to explain why Jesus rose from the dead and death could not detain him – namely because of his righteousness.¹⁶

The reading that follows is taken directly from Psalm 16:8–11. The passages are all about Jesus because Luke and Peter make them that way. It takes a lot of interpretation to figure out who is meant by the personal pronouns, even with Peter's disclaimer that David spoke this about Jesus. Therefore, when interpreting Psalm 16 from an Old Testament perspective, David refers to himself as the “holy one” and speaks of himself repeatedly.¹⁷

Psalm 22: The Suffering Servant

Psalm 22 is also quoted in rabbinic literature as referring to the sufferings of a Jewish Messiah. *Pesiqta Rabbati* is a rabbinic homiletic work that includes many messianic passages and four entire homilies that present apocalyptic messianic visions, primarily centered on Messiah Ephraim. It contains the major rabbinic passage addressing the topic of a suffering Messiah. This chapter's central thesis is that these sections in *Pesiqta Rabbati* are special because they represent an ideological inversion of Jesus. The Christian belief that Jesus was the only messianic figure to suffer and die in agony while bringing salvation to the faithful is addressed by this portrayal in *Pesiqta Rabbati*. This passage from rabbinic literature indicates that the Jewish Messiah will realize the same paradigm.¹⁸

It is less probable that Jews considered Psalm 22 as expressing David's personal experience because Psalm 22 was understood in ancient Judaism to be alluding symbolically to Israel's or Esther's experiences. This is understandable given that the first-person accounts

¹⁵ Trull V. Gregory, “Peter’s Interpretation of Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-32,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004), <https://media.corban.edu/hydra/media/files/2019/09/10/bibsac-peters-interp-of-ps-16-in-acts-2-1.pdf>.

¹⁶ Monique Cuany, “The Divine Necessity of the Resurrection: A Re-Assessment of the Use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2,” *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 3 (July 5, 2020): 392–405, https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0028688520000065/type/journal_article.

¹⁷ Edward W. Hatch, “Divine Empowerment of Leaders: An Intertextual Analysis of Luke’s Use of Joel 2, Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 in Peter’s Sermon in Acts 2,” *Emerging Leadership Journeys* 5, no. 1 (2012), https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/elj/vol5iss1/ELJ_Vol5No1_Hatch_pp102-116.pdf.

¹⁸ Rivka Ulmer, “Psalm 22 in *Pesiqta Rabbati*: The Suffering of the Jewish Messiah and Jesus,” in *The Jewish Jesus Revelation, Reflection, Reclamation* (Purdue University Press, 2011), <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/ulm358008>.

of anguish are clear and detailed, narrating the physical and emotional torment of an Israelite man who is being executed, as well as the way others treated him as though he had already passed away by gambling for his clothes (verse 18) and making fun of him based on audacious theological claims (verses 7-8). The way the speaker recalls two sets of contradictory information is strange.¹⁹

Jesus tells us that those who witness him die make fun of him by saying certain things and calling him names because he has made theological assertions (verses 7-8). Surprisingly, the speaker also expresses optimism that Yahweh's impending death will bring forth widespread adoration for him (verses 25–31). This juxtaposition of ridicule for someone who confidently faces death and believes that global acclaim will ensue is astounding and completely unrelated to David's life.²⁰

Psalms 23: Christ's Shepherd

Amidst the evolving interpretive and canonical framework, I suggest an alternative Christological interpretation of Psalm 23, known as a Christotelic reading. This reading will coexist with the conventional Christian interpretation, which portrays Jesus as Yahweh, the shepherd ("the Lord, Jesus Christ, is my shepherd"). I'll view Psalm 23 as a messianic psalm, which is a prophecy about the Messiah, and present a Christotelic reading in which Jesus assumes the position of the sheep, which was originally played by the psalmist David. It will be useful to briefly examine how the meaning of the psalm may have changed over the course of redemptive history and the canon's expansion in order to arrive at this interpretation. This is how a psalm that originally stated David's relationship with Yahweh ("Yahweh/the LORD is David's shepherd") came to be understood as a messianic prophecy ("Yahweh/the LORD is or will be eschatological David's shepherd"). Ultimately, however, the purely prophetic, forward-looking interpretation gives way to a Christological reading ("The LORD/ God the Father is Christ's shepherd"), with the psalm now understood as a condensed version of the gospel tale.²¹

Verses 4 and 5 convey an early account of resurrection even in their grammatical-historical setting, with their depictions of fleeing the threat of death and (perhaps) returning from banishment. When interpreted prophetically, these verses mirror the narrative of the

¹⁹ John E. McKinley, "Psalms 16, 22, and 110. Historically Interpreted as Referring to Jesus," *Perichoresis* 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 207–221, <https://www.sciendo.com/article/10.2478/v10297-012-0010-8>.

²⁰ McKinley, "Psalms 16, 22, and 110. Historically Interpreted as Referring to Jesus."

²¹ Green J. Douglas, "'The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd'? Psalm 23 as Messianic Prophecy," in *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear* (New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2010), 38.

Isaianic Servant because they show how the Messiah will go through some form of suffering before enjoying a blessed life—more precisely, an eschatological feast. Even a prophetic interpretation of this psalm cannot turn it into a prophecy of the actual death and subsequent bodily resurrection of the Messiah, since it must be acknowledged that the psalmist does not actually die—"the valley of the shadow of death" is not death itself.²²

However, despite its debt to both, Christotelic exegesis is not satisfied with a grammatical-historical reading of Psalm 23 or a prophetic reading of the passage. Adopting this approach means that I read Psalm 23:4-5 as a prophecy of the death and resurrection of Christ, even though these verses, in either their earlier grammatical-historical or prophetic sense, do not directly predict these specific events. If, as some have suggested, Jesus Christ is the telos, or goal, of Israel's story, and more specifically the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament—including the Psalter understood as a prophetic book.²³

The previous interpretations of these verses are "expanded" by Christ's death and resurrection. When Psalm 23 is interpreted from an original (postexilic) prophetic perspective, it anticipates that the future Messiah would somehow enter the valley where death throws its symbolic shadow. However, when we interpret it from a Christotelic standpoint, we find that the eschatological David really continues to walk—into Death's own valley, the next valley. It is important to read Psalm 23:4 as a prophecy of the real death of the Messiah rather than a figurative death (such as exile) or living under constant danger of death. In summary, the word "shadow" should no longer occur to us when we interpret Psalm 23:4 in this Christological context.²⁴

Similarly, verse 5 illustrates the greeting Jesus receives upon his return to heaven as the raised and exalted King and speaks of his resurrection and exaltation to "life plus" at the right hand of the Father. The Jerusalem temple is no longer referred to as "the house of the LORD" in verse 6. The idea that the temple was only a sign pointing forward to the reality of God's heavenly habitation and ultimately to the eschatological actuality of heaven on earth is implicit in every Christian understanding of this passage.²⁵

Psalm 110: The Priestly King

In terms of previous Old Testament prophecies about his function as a prophet, priest, and

²² Green J. Douglas, "The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd"? Psalm 23 as Messianic Prophecy."

²³ Green J. Douglas, "The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd"? Psalm 23 as Messianic Prophecy."

²⁴ Green J. Douglas, "The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd"? Psalm 23 as Messianic Prophecy."

²⁵ Green J. Douglas, "The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd"? Psalm 23 as Messianic Prophecy."

king, as well as the New Testament fulfillment of his ministry as the rising monarch and priestly sacrifice of the New Covenant, the themes of the psalm are specifically tailored to the Godman Messiah. Simply said, Psalm 110 foretells how both positions will singularly and beautifully come together for the Messiah.²⁶

Psalm 110 focuses on Yahweh's throne partner's complete victory over the enemies, which leads to his universal rule over the entire earth. Even while the war starts with אֶבְרָם encircling Zion (בָּוֶן יִצְ; verse 2), it then shifts to the heads being subjugated (רָאָשׁ) over the vast ground (רַב־רָחֹק; verse 6). As demonstrated by the symbols (enthronement, footstool, great scepter, anger) justifying the Messiah's right to completely destroy the adversaries in war, the enemies' aggressiveness is firmly reacted to. The reference in verse 4 to Yahweh's endowment of the Messiah as a priest in accordance with Melchizedek's order serves as justification for the Messiah's military activity, as was previously mentioned.²⁷

Psalm 110 is frequently described as a "royal hymn." Many scholars subscribe to this idea, believing that the psalm depicts David being crowned. Rather than relating the psalm to the deeds of the human Davidic monarch, they choose to understand it as messianic and eschatological.²⁸ To David, Psalm 110 appears foreign, but to Jesus, it is familiar. The New Testament (Mark 12:36–37) affirms that David is the author, yet the text describes a person who is both David's Lord and numerically different from Yahweh. Based on Yahweh's words to and about David's Lord—whom Jesus refers to as the Messiah and calls David's son—the entire psalm thus continues the same theme. Furthermore, there is no indication in the canon that David or anybody else regarded David as a Melchizedek-style priest-king. The New Covenant that Jesus establishes during his life and ministry is linked to this special status that is bestowed upon him.²⁹

Affirmation of Jesus as the Messiah

We examine what constitutes an allusion to an Old Testament text and what may be clearly identified as a reference from the Old Testament in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Isaianic or psalmodic verses introduce Jesus' public ministry at its outset. In addition

²⁶ McKinley, "Psalms 16, 22, and 110. Historically Interpreted as Referring to Jesus."

²⁷ Aran J.E. Persaud, "Yahweh's 'Lord' and Unrestrained Evil: An Exegesis of Psalm 110," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 49, no. 1 (March 4, 2015), <http://www.indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/1915>.

²⁸ Ikechukwu Kanu, "A Priest in the Order of Melchizedek": The Use of Psalm 110 in Hebrews 7 and the Identity of the African Catholic Priest," *Veritas University* (2023), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367656143_A_PRIEST_IN_THE_ORDER_OF_MELCHIZEDEK_THE_USE_OF_PSALM_110_IN_HEBREWS_7_AND_THE_IDENTITY_OF_THE_AFRICAN_CATHOLIC_PRIEST.

²⁹ McKinley, "Psalms 16, 22, and 110. Historically Interpreted as Referring to Jesus."

to making numerous oblique references, he also directly quotes passages from the Psalms in several of his other quotes. For instance, Matthew and Luke quote exactly from Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me," when Jesus is hanging on the cross. (Mt 27:46, NAB); and Ps 31:6, "I commit my spirit into your hands" (Lk 23:46, NAB).³⁰

The Old Testament plays a major role in the life, ministry, and death of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded in the Gospels. The Psalms and psalmodic poetry in particular play a significant role and aid in our comprehension of his mission. This little study might simply serve as an introduction to the topic, inspiring further research on it. A number of concerns have been raised, highlighting the Old Testament's religious and historical background and raising the question of whether Jesus of Nazareth truly intended to found Christianity.³¹

The Old Testament revolves around the idea of a messiah. It represented the Israelites' aspirations for a beautiful future. The messiah is what unites the Old and New Testaments and is essential to both. He is not only fundamental to the Old Testament but also to the New. The reader is informed in this text of how the Old Testament served to point people toward Christ. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; rather, I have come to fulfill them," declares Matthew 5:17. However, it is clear from reading the gospels that Jesus did not share the Jewish understanding of the messiah.³²

Canonical analysis further strengthens this connection by showing how New Testament writers consistently interpret these Psalms as references to Jesus, affirming His messianic role. Reception history reveals a continuous thread of interpretation across Jewish and Christian traditions, with early Christians particularly seeing these Psalms as prophetic texts pointing to Jesus. This historical trajectory of interpretation adds weight to the argument for Jesus' fulfillment of these prophecies. In conclusion, the convergence of historical, literary, theological, and canonical insights presents a robust case that the Psalms contain genuine messianic prophecies, which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

The examination of the Book of Psalms through the hermeneutical research method reveals a compelling body of evidence supporting the claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the

³⁰ Berković Danijel, "Jesus and the Psalms," *KAIROS - Evangelical Journal of Theology* X, no. 1 (2016), <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/235971>.

³¹ Berković Danijel, "Jesus and the Psalms."

³² R.E. Clements, "The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13, no. 43 (February 2, 1989): 3–19, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/030908928901304301>.

fulfillment of messianic prophecies. By analyzing the historical context, literary structures, theological themes, canonical significance, and reception history of key Psalms, this study demonstrates a profound congruence between the prophecies and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The historical-critical context of the Psalms situates them within the rich tapestry of Israel's religious and political history, highlighting their initial applications to contemporary kings and events while pointing beyond to a greater fulfillment. Literary analysis uncovers the intricate poetic devices and genres used by the psalmists, which enrich the interpretive process and illuminate their prophetic dimensions. The theological exegesis of Psalms such as 2, 16, 22, 23, and 110 uncovers deep messianic themes of kingship, suffering, deliverance, divine authority, and eternal priesthood. These themes resonate profoundly with the New Testament portrayal of Jesus, underscoring His unique identity and mission. This study not only deepens our understanding of the Psalms but also provides a substantial foundation for Christian claims about Jesus' messianic identity. As such, the Psalms serve as a vital link in the scriptural witness to Jesus as the promised Messiah, enriching both scholarly discourse and faith communities.

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