

Interpreting Old Testament Prophetic Literature in Matthew: Double Fulfillment

Craig L. Blomberg

Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary

The mid-to-late-1980s saw a flurry of evangelical interest in the NT's use of the OT. Moisés Silva and Darrell Bock discussed how one might categorize the various uses in terms of both hermeneutics and text type. [1] Walter Kaiser strongly maintained that OT authors consciously intended much of what the NT writers described in terms of fulfillment, [2] while Douglas Moo defended a cautious use of *sensus plenior*. [3] Richard Longenecker and Gregory Beale debated the reproducibility of NT exegesis of the Old. [4] An anthology edited by D. A. Carson and Hugh Williamson presented a survey of each NT corpus' use of the OT and key scholarship on the topic. [5] But no consensus on any of the major issues was established and evangelical interest seemingly turned to other issues. [6] During the 1990s the majority of the discussion of "intertextuality" between the Testaments, as it is increasingly termed, took place outside evangelical circles and, across the entire theological spectrum, published research consistently narrowed itself to more focused studies of specific passages and themes rather than treating broader hermeneutical questions. [7]

The new millennium holds out hope for progress on the projects largely abandoned after the eighties, as Carson and Beale are editing a major reference work to be published by Baker on the use of the OT in the New. [8] Employing Richard Hays's categories of quotation, allusion, and echo, [9] it is designed to be a fairly comprehensive analysis of the meaning of each major NT reference to the Old and, for full-fledged quotations, an assessment of the OT passage in its original context, its pre-Christian Jewish history of interpretation, the text-form used by the NT writer, and a categorization of the hermeneutic employed in its NT context. [10] This project is an extremely welcome development. Focusing simply on the particular area of interest of this essay, the gospel of Matthew, it is noteworthy that the major works on Matthew's use of the OT are even older than the flurry of more general interest in the 1980s, [11] largely because that decade was also spent debating, and for the most part refuting, the notion that Matthew in its overall literary genre corresponds to the Jewish category of midrash. [12] My previous research on Matthew has suggested that a particular OT prophetic text cited by Matthew often points both to and beyond its immediate historic context, without necessarily affirming all that the gospel writer or the individuals he quotes maintains. [13] This phenomenon, which I am provisionally entitling "double fulfillment" emerges particularly prominently in Isaiah. Inasmuch as I know of only one recent study on "Matthew and Isaiah" per se, [14] it seems unlikely that this essay will prove too redundant.

Now a clarification is required at the outset. The expression "double fulfillment" at times has been a virtual synonym for *sensus plenior*, that is, the idea that an OT text has a straightforward literal meaning and a second, more esoteric or opaque meaning, often understood to be part of the divine intent of the text but not consciously in the human author's mind. [15] That is most assuredly not how I am using the expression. Rather, by double fulfillment I mean that in a number of texts from the latter prophets cited by Matthew, and especially in Isaiah, the results of an ordinary grammatico-historical exegesis of the OT text point clearly to a referent within the time frame of the OT books. Yet those same passages, especially when read within the context of their immediately surrounding paragraphs or chapters, disclose a further dimension of meaning never approximated by any OT-age event.

It seems plausible, therefore, to affirm that the prophetic author consciously looked both for a relatively immediate referent and for a more longer-term eschatological fulfillment. Usually Matthew provides more

information about the nature of that fulfillment than the prophet could have been expected to know, and normally no intermediate events or processes in between the two fulfillments appear to support Kaiser's notions of generic fulfillment or single intent. [16] On the other hand, more than pure typology-the repetition of theologically significant patterns of God's actions in history [17]-seems at work in these texts, even though Matthew frequently does use simple typology and also appeals to the more direct fulfillment of prophetic promises that had no short-term precursors. If double fulfillment is too confusing a term to describe these uses of Isaiah by Matthew, then by all means a better term may be suggested-it is the concept and not the label with which I am concerned. But enough prolegomena; it is time to turn to the texts. I will proceed in their order of occurrence in the narrative of Matthew

I. Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23

Because of the controversies spawned by Isaiah's famous prophecy of a virginal conception, it might seem unwise to begin with this illustration. But in fact it seems to me one of the clearest examples, and one that sets the stage for several others. Despite staunch conservative resistance to the idea, [18] I cannot see how the "plain meaning" of Isa 7:15-"before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste" [19]-can mean anything other than that Isaiah believes the child he has just described (v. 14) will be born within his lifetime, as a harbinger of the destruction (by Assyria!) of kings Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Remaliah (7:1). [20] The language of 8:3 echoes that of 7:14 as Isaiah goes in to the prophetess and she conceives and gives birth to a son. It is no longer controversial to observe that the 'almah of 7:14 simply refers to a young woman of marriageable age, without settling the question of her virginity. [21] Thus it seems most likely that the child of 7:14 is Isaiah's son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. [22] Isaiah 8:4 reinforces this equation, with language carefully reminiscent of 7:15-"Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria." Only now Israel is explicitly included among Assyria's victims.

At the same time, 7:14 also refers to the enigmatic child as Immanuel, "God with us," the name that recurs in 8:8 and 10. This name likewise links the child with Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz but also points forward to a more distant time when the plans of Israel's enemies will be thwarted (8:9-10). [23] This "bifocal vision" prepares the reader for 9:1-7, which is all about restoration after the punishment begun by Assyria. In this context appear the words musically immortalized by Handel, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given" (9:6a). Against the current critical consensus it is difficult to identify this son, who is an heir to David's throne, "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace," and governing eternally (9:6b-7), with anyone other than Israel's royal Messiah, [24] and we ought not be surprised to learn that that is precisely how the post-Christian Jewish Targum understood it. While dating traditions in the Isaiah Targum proves notoriously difficult, it does seem unlikely that any Scripture would first be taken as messianic in any Jewish context aware of Christian claims for that text. [25] We do not know why the translators of the LXX chose parthenos-a term that does imply sexual virginity-to render 'almah, but it seems reasonable to assume that part of the reason was that they too recognized Immanuel was no ordinary child whose fulfillment was exhausted in the life of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. [26] Certainly no figures in between Isaiah's day and Jesus' birth even remotely qualify for this child who is a sign of divine presence; [27] hence it seems appropriate to use the expression, "double fulfillment." Isaiah recognized that his son would be a sign and symbol (8:18), both of God's activity in his day and of the ultimate child who would comprehensively fulfill the Immanuel promises of chaps. 7-9. [28]

II. Isa 40:3 in Matt 3:3

The Isa 7:14 quotation formed one of Matthew's distinctive fulfillment citations that he introduced as the gospel's narrator. Isaiah 40:3 appears already in the gospel of Mark (cf. Mark 1:2) as a summary of the ministry of John the Baptist. In both gospels, the quotation is introduced as the explicit prophecy of Isaiah, whereas in Matt 1:23 no mention of the prophet's name appears. Irrespective of debates over the unity and authorship of the sixty-six chapters of canonical Isaiah, chap. 40 clearly marks a major jump forward chronologically to a time after the Babylonian captivity when the Jewish exiles can return to their homeland in Israel. Isaiah 39 concludes the first main section of the book by referring to that coming

captivity; 40:2 thus most naturally refers to its end: “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed.” While some commentators restrict the meaning of the preparation of a way for the Lord in v. 3 to the (metaphorical) highways smoothed out to welcome a visiting king, [29] it seems likely that the straight paths allude to the roads on which the exiles returned to Israel as well, especially in light of the more explicit metaphor to that effect in 35:8-10. [30] While individual Jews as well as small groups returned to the Holy Land off and on throughout the centuries until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, only the return initiated by Cyrus in 538 B.C. was ever widely regarded as the return from exile prophesied by so many of the latter prophets. In this respect, we again have one primary referent, this time not within Isaiah’s lifetime, but still well within the period of history during which the Hebrew Scriptures were written.

At the same time, this return from exile never reestablished the Davidic monarchy in complete freedom from imperial overlords according to the models set up before the divided kingdom. Israel’s sins were never fully paid for (v. 2), every valley, even metaphorically, was never raised up (v. 4), and all humanity hardly saw the glory of the Lord (v. 5). Not surprisingly, a pre-Christian Jewish sect like the Essenes in Qumran could believe that they were beginning to experience the more complete or ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy (1QS 8:13-14). Texts like Sir 48:24, 1 En 1:6, and 1 Bar 5:7 could similarly take Isaiah’s text to allude to the eschatological comfort at the end of the age, which no return from exile had yet fully provided. [31] Once Jesus’ followers believed that in his ministry God was decisively and redemptively coming to his people, it was natural to associate John the Baptist’s ministry with the preparation for that coming. In light of the already existing Jewish eschatological hopes, it is not implausible to imagine even the Baptist thinking of himself in that same light (as in John 1:23). [32] Double fulfillment again appears to be a helpful concept to describe the phenomena involved. [33]

III. Isa 9:1-2 in Matt 4:15-16

The theme of return from exile continues, as Matthew intriguingly associates Jesus’ move to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee with Isaiah’s prophecy of future honor for “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Here we have another one of Matthew’s unique fulfillment formulae. The context in Isaiah is the identical passage that culminates in the prediction of the wonderful child of 9:6, which we have already discussed. Again there is clear bifocal vision present in Isaiah’s prophecy. The gloom for those humbled and in distress, in the area partly contiguous with the territories of the ancient tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, obviously refers to those afflicted by the invasion by the Assyrians of Israel (v. 1a). [34] Yet immediately Isaiah adds, “but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles” (v. 1b), a reference to coming restoration after Israel’s two exiles, and a key to understanding the perfect tenses of v. 2 as prophetic: “the people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” [35] “The way of the sea, along the Jordan” (v. 1b) will thus refer to the highway from the northeast that returning exiles would take to the Sea of Galilee and, for some, on beyond in the direction of the Mediterranean. [36]

In their euphoria, the first Jews heading home under Cyrus’ edict permitting repatriation might well have imagined that they would live to see the complete fulfillment of these promises of restoration, but it would not take many generations for Israel to realize that much remained unfulfilled. Obviously, no king like that described in 9:6-7 had yet been born. The Qumran sectarians recognized that even they, to some extent, still walked in darkness (1QS 11:10). So Matthew is perfectly understandable when he applies this text to Jesus (by Matthew’s time, recognized in his community as the Messiah) taking up residence in the same geographical area, as he prepares to inaugurate his public ministry of proclaiming the full good news of the in-breaking kingdom—a truly great light for those living in spiritual darkness. [37] There is a partial fulfillment within OT times and a more complete fulfillment with Jesus, two events which suggest the expression “double fulfillment.”

IV. Isa 53:4 in Matt 8:17

With Matthew’s next quotation of Isaiah, we find ourselves in the thicket of controversy over the servant passages and especially this fourth, “suffering” servant text which spans Isa 52:13-53:12 (the three earlier ones are 42:1-4; 49:1-6; and 50:4-9). As with the virginal conception, much of the debate could be

bypassed if we recognized a “both-and” solution to the classic crux. On the one hand, both within and in between these four servant passages Isaiah equates the servant with Israel: “But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen” (44:1); “Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen” (44:2); and “He said to me, ‘You are my servant Israel, in whom I will display my splendour’” (49:3). See also 41:8-10 and 45:4. [38]

Of course, it is not necessary for each of the servant texts to have the identical referent, but that is a natural initial assumption given the recurring imagery throughout the various passages about one who is God’s chosen (42:1; 49:1), who will bring justice (42:1, 4; 53:11) and blessing (49:3-5; 53:10-12), even for the Gentiles (42:1, 4; 49:6; 52:15), despite appearing not to triumph at first because he does not speak out or quarrel (42:2-3; 50:5-7; 53:7), and because he is mocked, despised, and rejected (49:7; 50:6; 53:3). Yet in the end he will be vindicated (42:4; 50:8-9; 53:10-12).

At the same time there is progression of revelation and understanding from one servant passage to the next. [39] Isaiah 42:1-4 could be speaking of an individual, but it is coherent when taken merely as a reference to Israel corporately. Isaiah 49:1-6, while again calling Israel the servant, pushes the boundaries of a collective interpretation further, for how can Israel restore Israel (v. 6)? A separate person seems to be required to fit the description of one “who was despised and abhorred by the nation” (v. 7). In 50:4-9 the description of the servant’s rejection becomes more detailed and explicit—mocked, beaten, spat upon—language that most readily suggests the treatment of an individual but could still be a striking metaphor for a nation. By the time we come to 52:13-53:12, there is nothing that requires Israel as a nation to be in view at all, even though parts of this text could fit such an interpretation. But only an individual makes sense of those verses that speak of substitutionary sacrifice for the nation, including 53:4, the verse quoted in Matthew (cf. also vv. 5-6, 10-12). Similarly, the significant sections of the passage that refer to the servant’s disfigured appearance (52:14, 53:2) or call him “a man of sorrows” (53:3) or refer to his death and vindication (53:8-9, 11) prove far more intelligible when taken of a specific person within Israel. [40]

We ought not be surprised, therefore, that the more we scrutinize the subsequent history of interpretation of Isa 52:13-53:12, the more we find hints that a pre-Christian Jewish understanding of this Scripture as messianic did in fact exist, even if it was not widespread. [41] Martin Hengel’s essay in the recent Tübingen symposium provides the fullest collection of these hints, as he calls particular attention to 1QIsaiaha, 4Q491, Testament of Levi II, Testament of Benjamin 3:8, and the Septuagint ad loc. [42] The post-Christian Targum to Isaiah explicitly takes the servant in these chapters as Messiah, as do a variety of other late rabbinic sources. Again, it seems unlikely that a messianic interpretation would have been first suggested in an environment that already knew of Christianity’s use of these verses, even if it is important to stress that the Targum has so changed the details of this passage that the Messiah no longer suffers or dies in the latter part of the text. [43]

Interestingly, Matthew, too, has reapplied the text—not to the forgiveness of sin, as in Isaiah, but to Jesus’ ministry of restoring people to physical health. Christian debates about the legitimacy of “healing in the atonement,” however, may miss Matthew’s main point, which would appear to be to group together a collection of healings for those who were ritually impure or unclean (Matt 8:1-17), showing how Jesus’ ministry removed the humanly erected distinctions “that ostracize certain kinds of people from the love of God and from fellow humans.” [44] Be that as it may, for our purposes the point to stress is that there is a legitimate fulfillment in the servant passages in a restored, partially obedient, post-exilic Israel as well as a much grander, complete fulfillment in the Messiah. And it is reasonable to assume that Isaiah intended both meanings. [45] At the same time, no other intermediate events compete to suggest that we should see these two prongs as two ends of an unbroken process. [46]

V. Isa 42:1-4 in Matt 12:18-21

Matthew’s next major use of Isaiah need not detain us long, since it too comes from the suffering servant texts, this time from the beginning of the very first one. Like the passage just considered in Matthew 8, this one appears among the uniquely Matthean fulfillment texts and again explicitly mentions the prophet’s name. The reader proceeding sequentially through Isaiah will have already encountered the equation of

Israel (or Jacob) with the servant three times in 41:8-9 and will try to understand 42:1-4 in similar fashion. [47] Not surprisingly, the translators in the Septuagint made such an interpretation explicit by rendering 42:1a as “Jacob my servant, I shall uphold him; Israel my chosen, my soul has accepted him.” The “bruised reed” and “smoldering wick” of 42:3 refer initially to the weakened, shattered Judeans but more implicitly and ironically to Egypt and Babylon in Isaiah’s larger context of assuring Israel her ultimate consolation. [48] But the future role of the Spirit coming on an anointed prophet (61:1) and the inability of Israel ever to bring justice to all the nations of the earth make it natural to look for a larger, more long-term fulfillment in an individual, a Davidic king, or Messiah. [49] Interestingly, that is precisely how the Targum again seems to take this text, this time more akin to Christian messianic interpretation as it adds that the servant is God’s chosen one “in whom my Memra [word] is pleased,” on whom he will place his “Holy Spirit” and who will not break “the poor who are like a bruised reed” or quench “the needy who are like a dimly burning wick” (cf. also Tg. Isa. 43:10; 52:13). By the time one has read all the way through Isaiah, the influence of the later suffering servant songs certainly seem to justify making explicit this double-fulfillment interpretation in chap. 42 as well. The servant is Israel in a temporary, preliminary way; but only the Messiah will truly fulfill the full extent of the prophecy. [50]

VI. Isa 6:9-10 in Matt 13:14-15 Here appears the second quotation of Isaiah that Matthew has taken over from Mark (cf. Mark 4:11-12). It is also the first of Matthew’s Isaiah quotations in which the fulfillment centers primarily on the opponents of Jesus rather than on Jesus himself. While Jesus reenacts Isaiah’s mission of preaching to his countrymen, the focus is on the obdurate nature of his audience: “ever hearing but never understanding,” “ever seeing, but never perceiving” (Isa 6:9). At first glance, it seems that here we have typology pure and simple: Jesus speaks in parables to confirm his opponents in their freely chosen rebellion just as Isaiah had been sent to prophesy to reinforce his contemporaries’ calloused hard-heartedness. [51]

But a reading of the larger context of Isaiah 6 suggests something more. Immediately after receiving this commissioning, Isaiah asks God, “For how long O Lord?” (v. 11a). God’s answer is until there is utter desolation of the land (vv. 11b-12). Even then a tenth remains, only to be laid waste again (v. 13a). But the chapter ends with a message of hope: “But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land” (v. 13b). Taken as a whole, vv. 9-13 suggest that the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy occurs over a continuous, prolonged period of time—beginning with the judgment that will befall his contemporaries until such time as a righteous people once again populate the land. [52] Given Jesus’ and the first Christians’ convictions that such a situation had not yet been obtained even in the first century (a view not unique to Christian Jews!), it would be legitimate for them to see the obdurate rejection of Messiah as part of the ongoing fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. [53]

Here for the first time, we have something more like the generic prophecy advocated by Kaiser, following Willis Beecher. [54] Does Matthew recognize this distinction when he uses here, and only here, the compound verb *anaple-roo*--so that the text literally reads, “in them is completely fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy” (Matt 13:14)? [55] Whether or not that is the case, we have at least another example of double fulfillment—a referent in Isaiah’s day and one in Jesus’ time, both at least implicitly part of Isaiah’s original meaning, even if the latter could only be explicated in detail when it finally occurred.

VII. Isa 29:13 in Matt 15:8-9

Matthew’s next quotation of Isaiah, also following Mark (cf. Mark 7:6-7), likewise describes those within Israel who do not truly know Yahweh, the God of their people. Again Isaiah is mentioned by name, as prophesying, though here no verb for fulfillment appears. Without the framework of Isaiah 6, we would probably identify Matthew’s hermeneutic here as simple typology: the inconsistency between outward profession and inward heart faith that Isaiah berated is recurring again in many of the Jewish leaders’ response to Jesus. [56] Nothing in the context of Isaiah 29 explicitly suggests anything beyond this, as chap. 6 did with its reference to an unbroken, prolonged period of time of disobedience until the complete fulfillment of the prophecy would occur. Nevertheless, chap. 6 is programmatic for all of Isaiah in several respects. [57] Not only does it begin with its famous picture of God in all his holiness revealing himself to Isaiah (vv. 1-4) and commissioning him for his ministry of prophecy (vv. 5-8), but it sets the stage for a

pervasive theme in the book-God is punishing his people because of their prolonged and severe disobedience and things will get worse before they get better. Adding the details as we can now after the events, Assyrian judgment will merely give way to Babylonian judgment. Return from exile will not restore God's people to their former grandeur, much less come anywhere close to perfectly fulfilling his ideal for them. This will take place only in a coming messianic age that is described in ever more glorious language, so that the closing chapters of the book can speak even of God creating a new heavens and a new earth (65:17-66:24).

In this context of "canonical Isaiah" we should not be surprised to read that even chap. 29 closes with a promise of a coming day when Jacob will no longer be ashamed, when "they will keep my name holy," and when those once "wayward in spirit" will "gain understanding" and complainers will "accept instruction" (vv. 23-24). While this reassuring finale is not linked as tightly to the earlier pronouncements of judgment as in chap. 6, it is reasonable to introduce the same interpretive framework and understand Jesus and the evangelists recognizing that the reaction of the Jewish leaders in their day was a second stage of the fulfillment of Isaiah's description of his own generation, particularly since the fullness of the messianic era was yet to be experienced even with Jesus' first coming. [\[58\]](#)

VIII. Isa 56:7 in Matt 21:1

Matthew's next quotation of Isaiah again follows Mark (cf. Mark 11:17). This time the only introductory formula employed is "it is written." Here the evangelist understands the primary referent of the prophecy neither as the Messiah nor as his opposition, but as the temple. In fact, Matthew follows Mark by contrasting two prophetic texts, Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11, so that Jesus declares that God's house was designed to be a place of prayer, even for Gentiles, but the current Jewish regime has turned it into a "den of robbers," probably, with C. K. Barrett, to be interpreted as a "nationalist stronghold." [\[59\]](#)

The passage excerpted from Isaiah refers explicitly to the future: "my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." The context is explicitly eschatological. [\[60\]](#) This is the time when salvation and righteousness are revealed (Isa 56:1), when no foreigner or eunuch need be excluded from God's people (vv. 3-6), when there is joy on God's holy mountain (Zion, the temple mount-v. 7) and exiles return home who had not done so during previous periods of amnesty (v. 8). Thus, for the first time in our survey, the clearest referent for Isaiah's prophecy is the one in the eschatological future, not the more immediate one. Indeed, here one might be tempted to call the prophecy-fulfillment scheme one of a direct prediction that has to this day never been fully realized. The very late rabbinic midrash on Lamentations (1:2) in fact takes this text explicitly as a messianic prophecy.

Yet the specific portion cited in the gospels also clearly referred to God's design for the temple from its outset. The court of the Gentiles was set aside from its inception for "prayer for all nations"-in the sense both of prayers for all peoples of the world and of prayers by members of any ethnic group who came to Jerusalem wanting to worship Yahweh (cf. 1 Kgs 8:41-43). [\[61\]](#) So, like the generic prophecy about the obduracy of Israel's leadership, one may justifiably speak here of the perennial purpose for the Jewish temple, but also of two particularly important foci that create the double fulfillment scheme when one compares the referents in Isaiah's day and in Matthew's. [\[62\]](#) In both settings, the temple was not functioning at all as it was supposed to-thus the contrasting rebukes by both scriptural writers immediately following the restatement of the temple's purpose (Isa 56:8-57:13; Matt 21:13b-cf. also v. 12).

IX. Isa 5:1-2 in Matt 21:33

Thus far we have limited ourselves to texts that Matthew introduces with specific formulae that make it clear he knew he was quoting Scripture. Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants, which Matthew again takes over from Mark (cf. Mark 12:1-12), begins without Jesus or either evangelist noting that Scripture is being cited. But a large enough cluster of words unique to Isaiah's vineyard parable makes it difficult to deny direct usage. The vineyard, the wall around it, digging a winepress, building a watchtower, all in the context of a parable of judgment against Israel's leadership, closely reflect elements of Isa 5:1-7. [\[63\]](#) Here

for the first time, there are no references, not even hints, either in the text of Isaiah employed or its larger context, of any future referent, beyond the time of Isaiah's prophecy. But then this is also the first unambiguous use of Isaiah by Matthew (or by one of the characters in his narrative) that does not introduce the quotation with any kind of formula suggesting that the text is being taken as future-referring (or, for that matter, even demonstrating that the speaker was acknowledging his use of Scripture). Instead we have the simple redeployment of parabolic imagery in a new context with striking parallels to the original. The key leaders of Israel, particularly in the temple hierarchy, are so out of touch with the will of God that they are in danger of severe judgment rather than the blessing they expect. Interestingly, in both the Targum and the demonstrably pre-Christian Dead Sea document 4Q500, Isaiah's parable of the vineyard is applied specifically to the temple. [64] If Jesus (or Matthew) were aware of either of these interpretive traditions, an application to the temple authorities shortly after Jesus' demonstration in the temple precincts follows naturally. [65] But there is no need here to speak of formal double fulfillment. [66]

X. Isa 13:10 in Matt 24:29

Matthew's last unambiguous citation of Isaiah appears in his account of the eschatological discourse. For this quotation he is again primarily following Mark, who is presenting words of Jesus (cf. Mark 13:24-25). As with the use of Isaiah's vineyard parable just discussed, neither evangelist introduces the quotation with any formula or reference to Scripture, but the phraseology is close enough to ensure conscious use: "the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light," and the stars will also be involved in cosmic upheavals. There may be a more indirect allusion to Isa 34:4 here, too. [67]

Interestingly, even in this less highlighted form of employing the OT, the text at hand is a future-referring one within Isaiah. N. T. Wright has recently stressed how such texts in Jewish prophetic literature are not always strictly eschatological and may refer to coming socio-economic upheavals in this age. [68] But Wright's critics have also demonstrated, conclusively in my opinion, that there remains a range of such texts that do have a new, messianic and/or millennial age in view, with significant disjunction from the present age, and that Jesus and the gospels, especially in passages referring to the Parousia, employ OT prophecy, legitimately, in this latter fashion. [69] Certainly the context of Isa 13:10 points in this direction, with its twofold reference to the coming "day of the Lord" (vv. 6 and 9) and its promise that God "will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless" (v. 11). [70] At least with 20-20 hindsight, we can declare with confidence that this has not been fulfilled on any wide scale in the history of the world to date.

Yet, as is so common in Isaiah, and in biblical prophecy more generally, such statements are intertwined with historical referents to an immediate, partial fulfillment. Thus 13:17 predicts the rise of the Medes, who will overthrow the Babylonians (v. 19)—one of those odd passages that shouldn't appear in Isaiah 1-39 if its author couldn't foresee beyond the current Assyrian threat—as implied by so many who reject the original unity of Isaiah's sixty-six chapters! What is clear is that Isaiah nowhere discloses any sense of the great amount of time that would elapse between his prophecies' initial and ultimate fulfillment. But it also seems plain that there is a bifocal vision here again, with an event from OT times as the prophecy's preliminary referent, coupled with a more distant, eschatological referent. [71] Jesus' and the evangelists' use of this second referent need not be taken as a meaning completely unintended by the original prophetic speaker.

XI. Conclusion

There are other probable uses of Isaiah in Matthew. The unidentified quotation in 2:23, "He will be called a Nazarene," may well allude to the nezer or regal Branch from Jesse's lineage of Isa 11:1. Jesus' reply to John the Baptist's disciples in Matt 11:5 echoes the description of the messianic age in Isa 35:5-6 and 61:1. Jesus' rebuke of Capernaum in Matt 11:23 may deliberately reuse language of Lucifer's rise and fall in Isaiah 14, especially verses 13 and 15. The heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:17) seems to allude to God's word to his servant in Isa 42:1. The passion narrative may be designed to call our attention to other servant texts, too, particularly 53:7—"he did not open his mouth" (cf. Matt 26:63; 27:12, 14). And there are probably more allusions. But none is as certain as the texts we have just discussed in more detail.

The phenomenon of double fulfillment is not limited to the Isaiah passages cited in Matthew nor even to the formal prophetic corpus. It is probably present in Daniel's famous vision of the Son of Man (Dan 7:13-14, cited particularly in Matt 24:29-30 and 26:64). It may well account for Ps 118:22-26-the famous "cornerstone" (or "capstone") passage that also blesses the one who comes in the Lord's name-used in Matt 21:5, 9, 42,0 and 23:39. The NT itself suggests a different kind of double fulfillment with Zech 12:10, as it is employed by two different gospel writers first to Christ's advent (John 19:37) and then to his return (Matt 24:30; cf. Rev 1:7). But in the other roughly forty clearest uses of the OT by Matthew, double fulfillment proves quite rare and never appears as clearly as when the evangelist is quoting Isaiah.

Conversely, there are numerous examples of pure typology-theologically significant patterns of God intervening in this world and in the lives of his people strikingly repeated or recapitulated in the life of Christ in a way that "fills full" the meaning of Scripture (see esp. Matt 2:6, 15; 10:35; 13:35; 21:16; 23:38; 27:9-10, 34-35). So, too, despite frequent denials within the so-called critical consensus, a significant minority of OT texts employed in Matthew seem to predict very directly what the evangelist says they do, without any preliminary fulfillment during the OT era (see esp. Matt 2:6; 11:10; 21:5; 22:44; 24:15; 26:31, 64). Yet neither of these approaches ever involves texts from Isaiah, at least not any of those for which Matthew provides any kind of introduction acknowledging his conscious reliance on Scripture.

Are these observations statistically significant? They may not be, since about two-thirds of Matthew's fifty or so clearest uses of the OT cite material outside of the prophetic corpus-particularly from the Torah and the Psalms. But the patterns just discussed remain striking nevertheless. If they are significant, they may suggest that Isaiah itself is a more complex prophetic book than his canonical companions and not just a longer one! Perhaps Isa 8:18 is programmatic for much more than just the prophecy of the birth of unique children: "Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty." Perhaps Isaiah understood more clearly than other prophets that much of what God was revealing to him had import both for his generation (or the comparatively near future) and for a coming messianic age. That may be a hypothesis for specialists in Isaiah to test further. It is at least interesting to observe that Matthew seems to think something special is going on in Isaiah, since he highlights the book by citing it by name six times (3:3; 4:15; 8:17; 12:18; 13:14; 15:8), as many times as he mentions all other Scripture writers or speakers put together (cf. 2:18; 19:7; 22:24, 44; 24:15; 27:9).

But for a study of the NT's use of the Old, the primary conclusion of this survey is that, at least for Matthew, double fulfillment plays an important role, especially with his use of the Isaianic material. That is to say, Matthew regularly and with justification understands Isaiah consciously to have intended his oracles to refer to events both in the near and in the more distant future. Occasionally, these two foci may be seen as part of an uninterrupted process that could be described as generic prediction and fulfillment, but in most instances this is not obviously the case. Whether double fulfillment is the best expression to use for this phenomenon, I leave others to judge; it is the hermeneutic that matters most. I leave others also to assess whether a similar phenomenon occurs widely among other NT writers' use of the OT or of Isaiah in particular. Given the numerous doubly- and triply-attested passages in the synoptic tradition, it seems evident that at least Mark and Luke adopt this technique on numerous occasions.

The upshot of this study, then, is to suggest that we ought to pay more careful attention to a phenomenon, at the very least important in Isaiah, but probably also in at least some other OT texts, in which neither the older, classic conservative model of straightforward prediction and fulfillment nor the critical consensus' claim of no messianic intent proves adequate. Instead, in these instances, the prophetic author recognizes and expects his audience to recognize both a preliminary fulfillment during the course of OT history and a more distant fulfillment accompanying the future messianic age. It is a "both/and" approach that affirms the frequently legitimate insights of both the classic conservative and critical consensus models, without pitting them against each other as has so regularly been done. It is not an approach that is a panacea for solving all exegetical cruxes, but it seems to be an important concept at least worth considering whenever one encounters a particularly puzzling NT use of the Old.

ENDNOTES:

[1] Moisés Silva, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Text Form and Authority," in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 147-65, 381-86;

Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New," *BSac* 142 (1985): 209-23, 306-19.

[2] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985).

[3] Douglas J. Moo, "The Problem of Sensus Plenior," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 175-211.

[4] Richard N. Longenecker, "Who Is The Prophet Talking About? Some Reflections on the New Testament Use of the Old," *Them* 13 (1987): 4-8; G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" *Them* 14 (1989): 89-96.

[5] D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson, eds., *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988).

[6] Other noteworthy evangelical contributions during the 1980s included S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980); Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1983); Vern S. Poythress, "Divine Meaning of Scripture," *WTJ* 48 (1986): 241-79; Norman R. Ericson, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament: A Kerygmatic Approach," *JETS* 30 (1987): 337-42; E. Earle Ellis, "How Jesus Interpreted His Bible," *CTR* 3 (1989): 341-51; Douglas A. Oss, "The Interpretation of the 'Stone' Passages by Peter and Paul: A Comparative Study," *JETS* 32 (1989): 181-200. A search of the identical swath of major academic journals and book publishers discloses only two new evangelical contributions of comparable scope to these studies during the 1990s, both by the same author: S. Moyise, "Does the New Testament Quote the Old Testament Out of Context?" *Anvil* 11 (1994): 133-43; id., "The Old Testament in the New: A Reply to Greg Beale," *IBS* 21 (1999): 54-58.

[7] Most notably, Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, eds., *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel* (Sheffield: SAP, 1997); id., *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Sheffield: SAP, 1998); James A. Sanders, "Intertextuality and Dialogue," *BTB* 29 (1999): 35-44; M. C. Albl, "And Scripture Cannot Be Broken": *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); S. Moyise, ed., *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North* (Sheffield: SAP, 2000); R. Penna, "Appunti sul come e perché il Nuovo Testamento si rapporta all' Antico," *Bib* 81 (2000): 95-104; Craig A. Evans, ed., *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (Sheffield: SAP, 2000).

[8] D. A. Carson and Gregory K. Beale, eds., *Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, forthcoming).

[9] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989).

[10] I have been asked to write the chapter on Matthew, which alone is to amount to about 80,000 words, of which this essay is a small offshoot. It is also a slightly revised form of a paper delivered to the ETS at its annual meeting, November 2001, in Colorado Springs. I am grateful to James de Young and the Hermeneutics Study Group for the invitation to participate and for the flexibility to allow me to tailor my presentation to dovetail with my larger research project.

[11] See esp. Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954); Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); G. M. Soarés Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976).

[12] The debate was triggered by Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). Key responses included D. A. Carson, "Gundry on Matthew: A Critical Review," *TJ 3NS* (1982): 71-91; Philip B. Payne, "Midrash and History in the Gospels With Special Reference to R. H. Gundry's Matthew," in *Gospel Perspectives*, vol. 3 (ed. R. T. France and David Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT, 1983): 177-215; Douglas J. Moo, "Matthew and Midrash: An Evaluation of Robert H. Gundry's Approach," *JETS* 26 (1983): 31-39; and Scott Cunningham and Darrell L. Bock, "Is Matthew Midrash?" *BSac* 144 (1987): 157-80.

[13] Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), *passim*.

[14] Adrian M. Leske, "Isaiah and Matthew: The Prophetic Influence in the First Gospel," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins* (ed. William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1998), 152-69.

[15] See the discussion in Kaiser, *Uses*, 63.

[16] *Ibid.*, 66-70.

[17] See esp. the classic study by Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old*

Testament in the New (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982; German original 1939).

[18] E.g., Robert L. Reymond, "Who is the 'LMH of Isaiah 7:14?'" *Presb* 15 (1989): 1-15; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 84-86.

[19] All scriptural quotations follow the NIV.

[20] Cf. Michael E. W. Thompson, "Isaiah's Sign of Immanuel," *ExpTim* 95 (1983): 67-71.

[21] Thus, e.g., even Motyer, *Prophecy*, 84 n. 4.

[22] Cf. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 213; Herbert M. Wolf, "Solution to the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7:14-8:22," *JBL* 91 (1972): 449-56. Contra the view that sees Immanuel as Hezekiah (or a collection of Davidide kings).

[23] Cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 210-11; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 25.

[24] See esp. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 244-48; cf. Motyer, *Prophecy*, 101-5.

[25] Cf. the similar logic used by Joachim Jeremias ("pai" qeou," *TDNT* 5:697-98) with respect to the suffering servant song of Isa 52:13-53:12. Bruce D. Chilton (*The Glory of Israel* [Sheffield: JSOT, 1982], 92-93) questions this approach, pointing out that during the earliest rabbinic period (just after A.D. 70) not all Jewish usage would be aware of Christian interpretation. But when a messianic interpretation appears in a widely known source like a major Targum, developed and utilized over a period of centuries, it becomes much harder to assume that none of its tradents were aware of Christian use.

[26] Likewise Edward E. Hindson, *Isaiah's Immanuel* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978), 67-68.

[27] Contra what would be required to sustain the approach of Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Promise of Isaiah 7:14 and the Single-Meaning Hermeneutic," *EvJ* 6 (1988): 55-70.

[28] A similar conclusion, at least at the redactional level of canonical Isaiah, arrived at only after postulating an earlier tradition-history involving more than one author, appears in H. G. M. Williamson, "The Messianic Texts in Isaiah 1-39," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John Day; Sheffield: SAP, 1998), 238-70.

[29] E.g., Motyer, *Prophecy*, 300.

[30] Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 259. The Jewish tradition subsequently shifted the focus even more away from the Lord's coming to the people's return; see Klyne Snodgrass, "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40:1-5 and Their Adaptation in the New Testament," *JSNT* 8 (1980): 27.

[31] Cf. George J. Brooke, "Isaiah 40:3 and the Wilderness Community," in *New Qumran Texts and Studies* (ed. George J. Brooke; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 130-31.

[32] E. W. Burrows, "Did John the Baptist Call Jesus 'The Lamb of God?'" *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 246.

[33] Cf. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 48: "The words in Isaiah occur in a context of comfort and deliverance from the exile, but they also allude to messianic fulfillment."

[34] E.g., Dan P. Cole, "Archaeology and the Messiah Oracles of Isaiah 9-11," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 53-69.

[35] E.g., Paul D. Wegner, "A Re-Examination of Isaiah IX 1-6," *VT* 42 (1992): 103-12.

[36] Cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 383.

[37] Cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 80, at least at his "canonical" level of the completed book of Isaiah. On p. 81, he adds that 9:6 "makes it absolutely clear that [the child's] role is messianic."

[38] These explicit equations make it difficult to follow those who see the near-fulfillment of the "servant" as an anonymous individual in ancient Israel, as, e.g., in Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Rhetorical Strategy of the Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12): Poetry and the Exodus-New Exodus," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 42-55; Ronald L. Bergey, "The Rhetorical Role of Reiteration in the Suffering Servant Poem (Isa 52:13-53:12)," *JETS* 40 (1997): 177-88.

[39] For a slightly different kind of progression than that envisioned here, see Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, "Das vierte Gottesknechtslied in deuterocesajanischen Kontext," in *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Jesaja 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 1-25.

[40] For the need to see an individual here, see esp. Henri Blocher, *Songs of the Servant* (London: InterVarsity, 1975), 67; for the presence of substitutionary sacrifice, John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 377.

[41] Sydney H. T. Page, "The Suffering Servant Between the Testaments," *NTS* 31 (1985): 481-97.

- [42] Martin Hengel, "Zur Wirkungsgechichte von Jes 53 in vorchristlicher Zeit," in *Der leidende Gottesknecht*, 49-91.
- [43] As stressed in Roger Syrén, "Targum Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and Christian Interpretation," *JJS* 40 (1989): 201-12.
- [44] Blomberg, *Matthew*, 145. Cf. Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 117.
- [45] Gundry, *Use*, 230. Cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 422-23, again at the canonical level. Gordon P. Hugenberger would appear to support this perspective as well in "The Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant Songs' of Isaiah," in *The Lord's Anointed* (ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 105-40.
- [46] Again, contra Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward a Theology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 215-17.
- [47] J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 259.
- [48] Hyun C. P. Kim, "An Intertextual Reading of 'A Crushed Reed' and 'A Dim Wick' in Isaiah 42.3," *JSOT* 83 (1999): 113-24.
- [49] See esp. Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40-66, 108-12.
- [50] Cf. Geoffrey Grogan, "Isaiah," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (ed. Frank E. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 254-55: "There can be little doubt that we are intended to make the identification with Israel to begin with that we might be gently led to him who is the incarnation of God's mind for Israel (cf. Matt 12:15-21)."
- [51] E.g., R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1971), 68.
- [52] W. C. Allen (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907]), 145) also notes that the future tense (as in v. 13) in the LXX of Isaiah readily leads to the use of the passage as a prediction of future events.
- [53] John L. McLaughlin ("Their Hearts Were Hardened: The Use of Isaiah 6, 9-10 in the Book of Isaiah," *Bib* 75 [1994]: 1-25) demonstrates the recurrence of this pattern in all three major parts of Isaiah (29:9-10; 44:18; 63:17). The chronological gaps between these passages support this idea that Isaiah understood an ongoing fulfillment to his prophecy concerning Israel's obduracy.
- [54] See above, n. 15. Cf. Willis J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (New York: Crowell, 1905), 130.
- [55] Gundry (*Matthew: Handbook*, 257) further argues that "completely fulfilled" implies human responsibility and that Matthew's overall introductory formula is phrased "to avoid any thought of divine causation that might be mistaken as a lessening of human responsibility."
- [56] E.g., France, *Jesus*, 68-69.
- [57] On the programmatic nature of vv. 9-10 themselves, see esp. Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6.9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 52.
- [58] Grogan ("Isaiah," 188) highlights how striking the spiritual parallels between the two situations actually are: "In both cases wrong teaching was based on a mishandling of God's true revelation, the sacrificial regulations, and the Mosaic Law as a whole respectively. In each case tradition allied to bad theology resulted in a mishandling of Scripture, and in each case the result was a self-justifying complacency in the presence of the most holy God."
- [59] C. K. Barrett, "The House of Prayer and the Den of Thieves," in *Jesus und Paulus* (ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grässer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 16.
- [60] Cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 458.
- [61] Motyer, *Prophecy*, 467. See also 1 Kgs 8:27-30 for the temple as a house of prayer more generally and cf. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco: Word, 1985), 249-50.
- [62] Cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40-66, 460-61; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 500.
- [63] For a detailed chart of the parallel phraseology of the two parables, see Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (Nashville: Nelson, 2001), 225.
- [64] On which, see, respectively, Wim J. C. Weren, "The Use of Isaiah 5, 1-7 in the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12, 1-12; Matthew 21, 33-46)," *Bib* 79 (1998): 1-26; and George J. Brooke, "4Q500 1 and the Use of Scripture in the Parable of the Vineyard," *DSD* 2 (1995): 268-94.
- [65] Craig A. Evans, "On the Vineyard Parables of Isaiah 5 and Mark 12," *BZ* 28 (1984): 82-86.
- [66] On the other hand, the larger targumic use of Isa 5:1-7 as messianic makes a Christological interpretation of Jesus' overall parable both probable and probably authentic. See esp. Johannes C. de

Moor, "The Targumic Background of Mark 12:1-12: The Parable of the Wicked Tenants," JSJ 29 (1998): 63-80.

[67] For both allusions, see Evans, Mark 8:27-16:20, 327-28.

[68] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 280-338.

[69] See throughout Carey C. Newman, ed., *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999); and esp. Dale C. Allison Jr., "Jesus and the Victory of Apocalyptic," in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel*, 126-41.

[70] Cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 306-8.

[71] Cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 112.

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