

# From King Ahaz's Sign to Christ Jesus

The "Fulfillment" of Isaiah 7:14

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Most Latter-day Saints are familiar with a particular image of Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> A bearded, gray-haired Isaiah writes with his quill, hunched over a large stone table. Two witnesses, perhaps Uriah and Zechariah (Isaiah 8:2), peer over his shoulders, watching him work. His scroll lies open, flowing over the edge of the stone slab. No words appear on the scroll. Yet the message he writes is made clear by strokes of light that sweep upward from the point where his quill touches the parchment. They draw the viewer's attention upward, across the green valley in the background and into the light blue sky, where an image takes shape. There, Mary and Joseph, framed by two young lambs, gaze lovingly upon their newborn son, cradled in a pillow of hay. Commissioned by the Church and painted by Harry Anderson in the late 1960s, this painting conveys important Church doctrines: for instance, prophets testify of Christ, and Christ's coming was part of a foreordained divine plan.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, as a depiction of a particular account from the Bible, the painting better represents Matthew's interpretation of Isaiah than the words of Isaiah alone.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew interrupts the narrative of Jesus's birth with this declaration: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:22–23).<sup>4</sup> Ever since Matthew wrote these words, Christians have read Isaiah 7:14 predominantly, if not solely, as a description of Jesus's birth. This is reflected in Anderson's painting. Yet Isaiah never claims to have witnessed the birth of Jesus in a vision.<sup>5</sup> What's more, in the larger literary and historical context of Isaiah 7, the Immanuel prophecy seems to refer directly to events that occurred in Isaiah's own lifetime.

This is a study of the relationship between Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy and its "fulfillment" in the Gospel of Matthew. Rather than read Isaiah through the lens of Matthew's Gospel, we will begin by studying Isaiah in Isaiah's own historical context.<sup>6</sup> This includes the study of the political situation that lies behind Isaiah 7, Isaiah's use of symbolism, and the possible identity of Immanuel in the time of Isaiah. Then I will show how Matthew uses this prophecy, which was fulfilled in the time of Isaiah, in order to teach his readers about the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

## Isaiah 7 in its Historical Context

Isaiah was a prophet in Jerusalem during turbulent times.<sup>7</sup> Almost two hundred years before Isaiah, just after the death of King Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel fractured (c. 930 BC).<sup>8</sup> The ten tribes to the north seceded and became the new "Kingdom of Israel"—sometimes called the Kingdom of Ephraim. The remaining

tribes to the south, which continued to be ruled from the city of Jerusalem, became the Kingdom of Judah. Tensions and frequent outbreaks of violence between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah persisted to the time of Isaiah. Sometimes Judah would form an alliance with a neighboring kingdom and wage war against Israel, other times Israel was the aggressor (for instance, see 1 Kings 15). Both Israel and Judah also faced threats beyond their internecine disputes—the neighboring kingdoms were not always allies.<sup>9</sup>

By the time of Isaiah, the menace of regional politics paled in comparison to the looming threat posed by the increasingly powerful Assyrian force. Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria (c. 747–727 BC), sometimes called Pul (see 2 Kings 15:19), made incursions into the land and began to collect tribute from Israel and Judah as well as from neighboring kingdoms, such as Syria to the north of Israel (2 Kings 15:19–20). During the reign of Pekah, king of Israel (c. 735–732 BC), Assyria took captive the people of “Galilee, all the land of Naphtali,” and several major cities in Israel (2 Kings 15:29). A fragmentary Assyrian record from the period corroborates the biblical account. In that record, Tiglath-pileser boasts of the tribute that he received from Ahaz of Judah (identified by his full name, Jehoahaz):

In all the countries which . . . [I received] the tribute of Kushtashpi of Commagene, Urik of Qu'e, Sibitti-be'l of Byblos, . . . Enil of Hamath, Panammu of Sam'al, Tarhulara of Gungum, Sulumal of Militene, . . . Uassurme of Tabal, Ushhitti of Tuna, Urballa of Tuhana, Tuhamme of Ishtunda, . . . [Ma]tan-be'l of Arvad, Sanipu of Bit-Ammon, Salamanu of Moab, . . . Mitinti of Ashkelon, Jehoahaz of Judah, Kaush-malaku of Edom, Muzr[i . . .], Hanno of Gaza, (consisting of) gold, silver, tin, iron, antimony, linen garments with multicolored trimmings, garments of their native (industries) (being made of) dark purple wool . . . all kinds of

costly objects be they products of the sea or of the continent,  
 the (choice) products of their regions, the treasures of (their)  
 kings, horses, mules (trained for) the yoke.<sup>10</sup>

As is clear from this record, Judah's neighbors suffered similar losses. In an effort to staunch the rising tide of Assyrian aggression or to expand their own territorial control, Rezin, king of Syria, attempted to form a coalition of those kingdoms that had been subjugated by Assyria; this included both the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah.<sup>11</sup> Israel, under the rule of Pekah, joined with Rezin, but Judah would not. This was the political situation when the twenty-year-old Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah.

Ahaz is characterized by the author of 2 Kings as a wicked man who "walked in the way of the kings of Israel" (16:3). Despite his affinity for the idolatrous ways of Israel, he would not join the alliance. So Pekah and Rezin responded with force. In an effort to depose Ahaz and replace him with a king who would be more sympathetic to their cause—the otherwise unknown "son of Tabeal" mentioned in Isaiah 7:6—Pekah and Rezin laid siege to Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:5).<sup>12</sup> This attack against Judah is known as the Syro-Ephraimite War (c. 734 BC), so named because of the alliance between the kingdom of Syria and Ephraim, the northern Kingdom of Israel. Ahaz responded to this attack by appealing to Assyria for help: "So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 16:7–8). According to 2 Kings, Assyria's response was swift and decisive. Tiglath-pileser III captured Damascus the capital of Syria, killed Rezin, and took his people captive (2 Kings 16:9).

This is the historical context of Isaiah 7. Both 2 Kings and Isaiah describe the siege of Jerusalem laid by the armies of Pekah and Rezin, but only Isaiah includes an account of prophetic intervention.

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. . . . Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of [Pekah] the son of Remaliah. (Isaiah 7:1–4; compare 2 Kings 16:5)<sup>13</sup>

Isaiah's message is one of faith and patience. Ahaz should not fear the kingdoms of Syria and Israel because the Lord is aware of their plans (see Isaiah 7:5–6) and will not allow them to succeed: "Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (Isaiah 7:7). Isaiah promises Ahaz not only that this immediate attack would fail but also that Ahaz's enemies would soon cease to be a threat: "Within threescore and five years [that is, sixty-five years] shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people" (Isaiah 7:8).<sup>14</sup> In a time when a twenty-year reign was impressive, the promise of a sign sixty-five years in the future may have been too distant for Ahaz to accept. It is clear that Ahaz was not convinced since Isaiah next asks Ahaz to choose another sign that would convince him: "Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above" (Isaiah 7:10–11). When Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign, Isaiah provides one anyway:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. (Isaiah 7:14–17)

For Ahaz, this prophecy was about his immediate concern: the threat posed by Ephraim and Syria—what Isaiah calls, “the land that thou abhorrest.” With this understanding of the historical and political context of Isaiah’s prophecy, we can now turn to the prophecy itself.

### *Isaiah’s Prophetic Symbolism*

In order to fully understand Isaiah’s message to King Ahaz, it is necessary to understand the symbolism he employs. In antiquity, prophets often conveyed their messages through symbolic proclamations and gestures (for example, Ezekiel 4–5 or Hosea 1:6, 9).<sup>15</sup> In Isaiah’s prophecies to Ahaz about the various threats facing Judah, three children and their unique names function as symbolic representations or confirmations of Isaiah’s messages (see Isaiah 8:18). When Isaiah first approaches Ahaz, he brings his son Shear-jashub (Isaiah 7:3). The Hebrew name Shear-jashub means “a remnant shall return.”<sup>16</sup> Isaiah prophesies that Israel, the northern kingdom, will be destroyed and will no longer be a threat to Judah if Ahaz will have faith (Isaiah 7:4–9). Isaiah does not explain the connection between this son’s name and his prophecy. Since Isaiah’s promises are often conditional, “a remnant shall return” may refer either to Israel, since a mere remnant of Israel would not be a threat to Ahaz (see Isaiah 10:20–23), or it may refer to Judah, since Ahaz is warned of impending disaster if he is not

faithful (Isaiah 7:9).<sup>17</sup> Next, Isaiah promises Ahaz that a child would be born who would be called "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). This name means "God is with us," and it supports Isaiah's message that the fate of the kingdom of Judah was ultimately in the hands of God (Isaiah 7:14–25).<sup>18</sup> Finally, Isaiah and "the prophetess" have another child, whom he is commanded to name "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," which means "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens" (Isaiah 8:1–3).<sup>19</sup> This name coincides with Isaiah's prophecy that "the riches of Damascus [the capital of Syria] and the spoil of Samaria [the capital of Israel] shall be taken away before the king of Assyria" (Isaiah 8:4).<sup>20</sup> The names of each of these children function as prophetic signs (Isaiah 8:18), second witnesses to each of Isaiah's prophetic messages.

In the cases of both Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, their ages also serve as prophetic signs. Regarding Immanuel, Ahaz is promised, "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Isaiah 7:16). Likewise, the Lord reveals through Isaiah that before Maher-shalal-hash-baz "shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away" (Isaiah 8:4). In both instances, the ages of these children become chronological markers on the Lord's timetable. Through these children, Ahaz could count down the years before his enemies would fall. The lives of these children attest to the imminent end of Ahaz's troubles.

### *The Identity of Immanuel in Isaiah's Lifetime*

Two of the three prophetic children, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, are clearly identified as Isaiah's sons (see Isaiah 7:3 and 8:3). The identities of Immanuel and his parents, however, are not so clear. Immanuel's mother is described only as *'almâ* (עַלְמָה) in the original Hebrew and *parthenos* (παρθένος) in an ancient Greek translation of Isaiah.<sup>21</sup> Although *'almâ* is most commonly translated as "young

woman” and *parthenos* as “virgin,” neither of those English words perfectly captures the meaning of the Hebrew or Greek words.<sup>22</sup> Regarding the translation of the Hebrew *’almâ*, John Watts explains, “It is difficult to find a word in English that is capable of the same range of meaning. ‘Virgin’ is too narrow, while ‘young woman’ is too broad.”<sup>23</sup> Likewise, regarding the translation of the Greek *parthenos*, Ronald Troxel has shown that this term can sometimes be used to connote “young woman” even though its basic meaning is “virgin.”<sup>24</sup> This means that Isaiah’s prophecy did not originally emphasize the sexual inexperience of Immanuel’s mother or present her pregnancy as miraculous.<sup>25</sup> As we have seen, the miraculous sign Isaiah provided to Ahaz was not about Immanuel’s mother or her pregnancy.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the prophecy foretold how changing political circumstances would correspond with Immanuel’s age: “Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings” (Isaiah 7:16). The sign was Immanuel’s maturation, not his birth.

So who was Immanuel’s mother in the time of Isaiah and Ahaz? It was likely someone present at the time of Isaiah’s prophecy. In the King James Version, Isaiah 7:14 reads, “A virgin shall conceive,” as if the young woman was unknown. Yet both the original Hebrew and the ancient Greek translation of this verse include a definite article—not “a virgin” but “the virgin”—suggesting that Isaiah referred to a specific, known “young woman.”<sup>27</sup> The identity of this specific young woman is still debated today.<sup>28</sup> In antiquity, however, she was sometimes identified as the wife of King Ahaz.

There are good reasons to think that Immanuel referred to a particular son of King Ahaz, the future king, Hezekiah. First, the prophecy is directed to King Ahaz; the sign is specifically for him: “The LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God” (Isaiah 7:10–11). And Isaiah implies that the sign is relevant not only for Ahaz himself but also for his royal house:



"Hear ye now, O house of David" (Isaiah 7:13). This suggests that the child called Immanuel, or "God is with us," likely belonged to the house of David. The name is appropriate since the house of David is often described in terms of its special relationship with God—God is "with" David's house (see 2 Samuel 7:9; 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Kings 1:37, 11:38; and Psalms 89:22, 25).<sup>29</sup> For instance, the author of 2 Kings praises Hezekiah, King Ahaz's son, when he ascends to the throne by writing that "the LORD was with him" (18:7).<sup>30</sup> So Immanuel was a fitting title for a future Davidic king.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy points to the reign of King Hezekiah is the lesser-known reference to Immanuel in Isaiah 8, a prophecy with parallels to Isaiah 7.<sup>31</sup> In Isaiah 7, King Ahaz is warned that the Lord would bring Assyria into his land: "The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria" (7:17). In Isaiah 8, Immanuel is given the same warning, that the Lord would bring Assyria into his land: "And he [the king of Assyria] shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel" (8:8). This parallel between the prophecies addressed to King Ahaz and to Immanuel suggests that Immanuel was likewise a Davidic king. In fact, Isaiah 8:8 states explicitly that the Kingdom of Judah belongs to Immanuel.<sup>32</sup> And under the reign of King Ahaz's son Hezekiah, the land of Judah was indeed invaded by Assyria (see Isaiah 36–37, 2 Kings 18–19, and 2 Chronicles 32). In an Assyrian record from c. 701 BC, Sennacherib, the Assyrian ruler at the time of Hezekiah, boasts of this invasion:

As for Hezekiah, the Judean, I besieged 46 of his fortified walled cities and surrounding smaller towns, which were without number. Using packed-down ramps and applying battering rams, infantry attack by mines, breeches, and siege

machines, I conquered them. I took out 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep, without number, and counted them as spoil. He himself I locked up within Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage.<sup>33</sup>

The reference to Immanuel in Isaiah 8:8 and its parallel in Isaiah 7:17, therefore, seem to confirm that Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled through the life of Hezekiah.

It is clear that Isaiah's reference to Immanuel applied to someone born in the time of King Ahaz and that Immanuel's mother was someone present or known at the time of Isaiah's prophecy. Yet some scholars have argued that the Immanuel prophecy was not fulfilled by Hezekiah.<sup>34</sup> Admittedly, if Hezekiah was the prophesied Immanuel, then there is a problem with the chronology of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.<sup>35</sup> According to 2 Kings 16:2 and 18:2, Hezekiah assumed the throne when he was twenty-five years old, after his father Ahaz had ruled for sixteen years.<sup>36</sup> If this chronology is correct, then Hezekiah was born almost a decade before Ahaz was king, long before Isaiah pointed to that young woman in King Ahaz's court and prophesied about her son, Immanuel. There is reason to believe that the dates and years provided by Kings and Chronicles are not precise.<sup>37</sup> Yet the problem with the date of Hezekiah's birth has led some to suggest that Immanuel was not Ahaz's son Hezekiah but Isaiah's son Maher-shalal-hash-baz.<sup>38</sup> This interpretation has the advantage of identifying all three symbolic children from Isaiah 7–8 as Isaiah's sons (see Isaiah 8:18), but it also presents a chronological problem. When Isaiah prophesies of the young woman (*'almâ*) who would bear a son, he is accompanied by his son Shear-jashub (Isaiah 7:3). This makes it improbable that Isaiah's wife could be described as a young woman of marriageable age (*'almâ*). As Raymond Brown explains, "The proposal that the *'almâ* was Isaiah's own wife, 'the prophetess' mentioned in 8:3, is most unlikely; for the fact that she had already

borne Isaiah a son old enough to walk with him (7:3) makes such a designation for her implausible.<sup>39</sup> What's more, the earliest evidence that anyone interpreted Immanuel to be Isaiah's son rather than Hezekiah does not appear until the Middle Ages, approximately 1,800 years after Isaiah.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, the earliest evidence that people interpreted Immanuel to be Ahaz's son, Hezekiah, appears not long after the Gospel of Matthew was written.<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, no definitive conclusion can be reached regarding the precise identity of Immanuel in the time of Isaiah. Nevertheless, at least four facts seem clear from the text of Isaiah 7–8: (1) this child, Immanuel, was to be born during Ahaz's lifetime; (2) Immanuel's mother was someone present or known to Ahaz at the time of Isaiah's prophecy; (3) the prophecy was for Ahaz and assumed that he would observe the boy, Immanuel, as he grew; and (4) the land of Judah could be described as belonging to Immanuel, which makes it likely that he was a Davidic heir.

## Isaiah 7:14 in the Gospel of Matthew

Since Isaiah's prophecy was directed to King Ahaz and focused on events that would occur in Ahaz's future, why does Matthew say that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy? Was Matthew unfamiliar with the historical and literary context of Isaiah 7? How do we make sense of Matthew's quotation of Isaiah and his declaration that Isaiah's words were fulfilled in Jesus's conception and birth? In order to make sense of this passage, one must understand first what Matthew means by the word *fulfill* and second how Matthew reads scripture.

### *A Fuller Understanding of Fulfillment*

To understand Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14, we have to understand what Matthew means when he talks about fulfillment. Isaiah 7:14 appears in the Gospel of Matthew as the first in a series

of “fulfillment passages.” In Matthew, unlike the Gospels of Mark or Luke, the narrative of Jesus’s life is frequently interrupted by Old Testament quotations that follow statements such as “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet” (Matthew 1:22). Similar statements appear fourteen times in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>42</sup>

In the New Testament, the word *fulfill* can have different meanings. In an important study on “fulfillment words,” C. F. D. Moule demonstrated that there are at least three potential meanings: fulfillment can describe (1) the actualization of an event foretold precisely as it would occur; (2) the “completion” of something that began in the past; and (3) the “consummation” of a covenant-promise.<sup>43</sup> In other words, it is possible that Matthew saw in Isaiah’s Immanuel prophecy a specific revelation pointing solely to Jesus’s birth.<sup>44</sup> Yet Matthew’s fulfillment passage might show how Jesus in some way completes a prophecy which was satisfied in part by events in the past.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, a fulfillment passage might reveal how a scripture that describes God’s covenant relationship with his people in the past finds its consummation (its fullness or *fulfillment*) in the life of Jesus—after all, Jesus came not only to prove individual prophecies but also to fulfill all the law and the prophets (see Matthew 5:17–18).

These three potential meanings of the word *fulfillment* could also be understood in terms of models of interpretation. David L. Turner, in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, proposes three types of interpretation that can be mapped broadly onto Moule’s meanings of fulfillment: Turner categorizes these models as (1) “predictive,” (2) “multiple fulfillment,” and (3) “typological.”<sup>46</sup> When applied to Matthew’s Gospel, the “predictive interpretation” model presumes that Isaiah prophesied directly about Jesus and only about Jesus. The “multiple-fulfillment interpretation” model, on the other hand, suggests that a single prophecy of Isaiah could be fulfilled by two or more distinct events—for instance, one in the time of Ahaz and another

in the time of Jesus.<sup>47</sup> Given Matthew's historical context, it is possible he believed that Isaiah prophesied directly or secondarily about events in his (Matthew's) own time. The Dead Sea Scrolls, written in the century before Matthew, demonstrate a similar conviction—that the prophets foretold events precisely as experienced especially by the founder of the community behind the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>48</sup> This historical parallel, however, does not explain why Matthew would have seen Isaiah 7:14 in particular as a messianic prophecy fulfilled by Jesus's birth. Recall that in Isaiah 7 the sign is not the birth but the maturation of Immanuel: "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Isaiah 7:16). If Matthew read Isaiah 7:14 as no more than a prediction about Jesus, it would seem that either Matthew was not aware of the full literary context of Isaiah 7 or he rejected parts of that prophecy.<sup>49</sup> Yet, as I will argue hereafter, there is evidence to suggest that Matthew was keenly aware of the broader literary context of Isaiah.

Turner's "typological" model of interpretation, as the name implies, suggests that Matthew understood the prophecy of events that occurred in the time of Ahaz as a "type" for the events that occurred in the early life of Jesus.<sup>50</sup> This is closest to Moule's notion of the consummation of a covenant-promise.<sup>51</sup> This model has the advantage of leaving Isaiah's prophecy fully intact rather than dissecting it into some parts that refer only to Ahaz's Immanuel and others that refer only or secondarily to Jesus. In this model, the entire prophecy is directed to Ahaz and speaks to events that would come to pass in his lifetime. At the same time, it also allows for those events to foreshadow or reveal truths about Jesus's life and divine purpose as Matthew understood them. As Turner describes it, "Thus Isa. 7:14 is viewed as a sign to Ahaz that was fulfilled during his days, and Matthew sees in the passage a historical pattern that comes to climatic fulfillment with Jesus."<sup>52</sup>

### *How Matthew Reads Scripture*

Matthew does not specify what he means by the word *fulfillment* when he says, “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet” (Matthew 1:22). Matthew may not have distinguished between these models of interpretation in the way that scholars do today. In order to understand what Matthew means by including this prophecy, we have to understand how Matthew reads scripture.

Matthew’s quotations of Old Testament passages have led some to believe that Matthew was not a careful reader.<sup>53</sup> For instance, Matthew says that Hosea 11:1 was fulfilled when Mary, Joseph, and Jesus returned from their refuge in Egypt: “And [they stayed] there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet [Hosea], saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:15). Yet Hosea identified the son as the people of Israel and was clearly speaking about the exodus: “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. . . . They sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images” (Hosea 11:1–2). This apparent discrepancy between what Matthew says a passage means and what the passage meant has led some to suggest that Matthew was working from a list of proof-texts removed from their original literary context.<sup>54</sup> This argument, however, does not do justice to the literary complexity of Matthew’s Gospel.

Matthew alludes to the story of Israel’s exodus from Egypt multiple times before he quotes that passage from Hosea. Through his emphasis on a dreamer named Joseph (Matthew 1:20; 2:12–13, 19, 22; compare to Genesis 37:5, 8–10, 19–20; 42:9), on a ruler who kills infants (Matthew 2:16; compare to Exodus 1:22), and on a return from Egypt to the promised land (Matthew 2:21; compare to Exodus 3:7–10), Matthew has woven into the narrative of Jesus’s life the story of God’s deliverance of Israel.<sup>55</sup> For Matthew, Jesus does not simply *fulfill* a prediction from Hosea; rather, he *fills out* the divine message that Hosea had conveyed about Israel’s deliverance. Richard Hays explains:

Matthew's use of the quotation depends upon the reader's recognition of its original sense: if Hosea's words were severed from their reference to the original exodus story, the literary and theological effect of Matthew's reading would be stifled. . . . The effect of the juxtaposition [between Jesus's flight and Israel's exodus] is to hint that Jesus now will carry the destiny of the people Israel and that the outcome will be the rescue and vindication of Israel, as foreshadowed in the exodus story and brought to fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>56</sup>

Matthew's quotation of Hosea was not a misguided use of a proof-text but the continuation of a theme already established in his narrative of Jesus's life: the salvation-history of Israel is bound up in the story of Jesus.

The same careful use of intertextual allusions can also be seen in Matthew's employment of Isaiah 7:14.<sup>57</sup> The beginning of the Gospel of Matthew is all about Davidic kings. The very first sentence introduces Jesus as the Davidic Messiah, or Christ: "The book of the generation of Jesus *Christ*, the *son of David*" (Matthew 1:1; emphasis added). The genealogy traces the origins and history of the Davidic family line, which includes Ahaz and Hezekiah (Matthew 1:2–16).<sup>58</sup> Although many of the men named in the genealogy are kings, only one is explicitly identified as such: "And Jesse begat David *the king*; and David *the king* begat Solomon" (Matthew 1:6; emphasis added). When Matthew summarizes the genealogy in periods of fourteen generations, the only people he names again, besides Abraham, are King David and Christ (Matthew 1:16–17).<sup>59</sup> In the story of Jesus's birth, Joseph is addressed by an angel as "Joseph, thou son of David" (Matthew 1:20). At this point, Matthew inserts Isaiah 7:14 and proclaims its fulfillment (Matthew 1:22–23). Then, after describing Jesus's birth, Matthew adds the account of the arrival of "wise men from the east" who ask, "Where is he that is born *King* of the Jews?"

(Matthew 2:2; emphasis added). With this emphasis on Davidic kingship, surely Matthew was aware of the context of Isaiah 7:14 and included it here with the hope that his readers would understand its message about Davidic kingship.

The reign of the Davidic king Ahaz was threatened by the alliance of Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the king of Israel (Ephraim). As Isaiah explained to King Ahaz: “Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal” (Isaiah 7:5–6). The threat that Ahaz would be replaced by a foreign king was not a threat to Ahaz alone. God had promised King David through the prophet Nathan, “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Samuel 7:16). The overthrow of Ahaz could mean the end of Davidic rule and the failure of God’s covenant promise. Yet, through Isaiah, the Lord reassures Ahaz—in fact, the Lord reassures the entire house of David (Isaiah 7:13)—that this threat to Davidic rule would not succeed: “For before the child [Immanuel] shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings” (Isaiah 7:16). Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled. Rezin and Pekah failed and their land was “forsaken of both her kings.” The house of David continued, and God was with them (see Isaiah 8:10 and 2 Kings 18:7).

By the time of Matthew, however, there was no king on David’s throne—Herod the Great was not from the House of David.<sup>60</sup> Notice that, in Matthew’s genealogy, the exile of the Jews to Babylon is mentioned, but the return from Babylon is not (see Matthew 1:11–12). This is most likely intentional to emphasize the continued “exile” of Davidic rule. Matthew and his audience would have known that Babylonian exile brought an end to Davidic rule. After Jews returned from Babylonian exile, Zerubbabel (spelled Zorobabel in



the KJV of Matthew 1:12–13) functioned as the Persian governor of Jerusalem.<sup>61</sup> Despite being the Davidic heir, neither Zerubbabel nor any of his descendants were ever crowned as king.<sup>62</sup> Matthew's summary of the genealogy reiterates this problem—the loss of Davidic rule—and presents Christ as the solution, part of a divinely-timed plan: “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations” (Matthew 1:17). W. D. Davies and Dale Allison summarize Matthew's message here as follows: “That the second major break point in Matthew's genealogy is the Babylonian captivity gives us a clue to the evangelist's [theology]. . . . Is not the reader to infer that the kingdom that was inaugurated with David and lost at the captivity is restored with the coming of Jesus, the Davidic Messiah?”<sup>63</sup> The implied answer is yes! Matthew presents Jesus as the new Davidic king.

For Ahaz, Immanuel was a sign of God's promise that he (Ahaz) would not be overthrown and that Davidic rule would not end with him. For Matthew, Immanuel is the sign of a new Davidic rule, one that more fully satisfies God's promise to Ahaz and to King David. When Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14, he draws attention to the name Immanuel by providing its interpretation: “They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (1:23).<sup>64</sup> For Matthew, Jesus is not just another Davidic king who will rule until he is conquered or dies. He is *the* Davidic king. And, as “God with us,” the only one who could fully satisfy the promise made to David: “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Samuel 7:16). Matthew demonstrates the eternity of Jesus's Davidic reign by concluding his Gospel the same way he began it. The first fulfillment passage in Matthew's Gospel declares that Jesus, at his birth, is “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).<sup>65</sup> In the final words of Matthew's Gospel,

Jesus himself, now resurrected, reiterates that promise: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

Certainly Matthew chose to include Isaiah 7:14 because of details within that passage that paralleled his account of Jesus’s life. Could there be a better description of Jesus’s miraculous birth than “a virgin shall be with child” (from the Greek translation of Isaiah)? And a child “conceived . . . of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:20) is aptly described by the title “God is with us.” Yet given what we have seen about the context of Isaiah 7:14, its history of interpretation, and the range of meanings in the word *fulfill*, Matthew likely had other reasons for including this scripture. Unlike certain Book of Mormon authors, Matthew never claims that he is writing for our day.<sup>67</sup> Matthew was writing for his day. He was writing to a particular audience, one whom he expected to be familiar with Isaiah but not necessarily with all the details of Jesus’s life.<sup>68</sup> So Matthew relies on familiar stories and prophecies from the Old Testament in order to teach about Jesus’s divine purpose.

I have suggested that the relationship between Isaiah’s Immanuel prophecy and its fulfillment in the Gospel of Matthew is not as straightforward as is sometimes assumed. Rather than read Isaiah 7:14 as a prediction that refers directly and only to Jesus’s birth, I have argued that the prophecy was originally understood to refer to a Davidic heir in Isaiah’s time, perhaps Hezekiah. I have shown that Matthew was likely familiar with the larger literary context of Isaiah 7:14 and its emphasis on Davidic kingship. Matthew, who elsewhere writes that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17), adopts this important prophecy from Isaiah to show that something greater than the past Davidic kings is here (see Matthew 12:42). Isaiah’s promise to Ahaz originally referred to a child

born in the king's court whose maturation would be a sign of both the end of Ahaz's political troubles and the perpetuation of King David's house. Yet, as Matthew testifies, Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 because he is *the* Davidic King and the fullness of "God with us."

## Notes

1. Harry Anderson, *Isaiah Writes of Christ's Birth (The Prophet Isaiah Foretells Christ's Birth)*, <https://www.lds.org/media-library/images/prophet-isaiah-foretells-christs-birth-39469>.
2. For more on the Harry Anderson paintings commissioned by the LDS Church, see Robert T. Barrett and Susan Easton Black, "Setting a Standard in LDS Art: Four Illustrators of the Mid-Twentieth Century," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 42–57.
3. I will refer to the author of the Gospel of Matthew as Matthew for convenience. The Gospel of Matthew is formally anonymous, and questions remain about the author and his or her audience; see note 68 of this chapter.
4. All quotations of the Bible are from the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.
5. Nephi says that Isaiah saw the "Redeemer, even as [he had] seen him" (2 Nephi 11:2). Yet that does not mean that Isaiah had the same experience that Nephi describes in 1 Nephi 11:13–22. In fact, Isaiah describes his vision of "the Lord" (Yahweh or Jehovah) in Isaiah 6 (compare 2 Nephi 16).
6. In doing so, we heed the counsel of Nephi that Isaiah's words are easier to understand with knowledge of his own cultural, religious, and geographical contexts (2 Nephi 25:5–7). If we begin with Matthew, we might assume that everything in Isaiah is a direct prophecy about the life of Jesus. This can make it difficult to understand Isaiah's message. For a discussion of this challenge, see Joseph M. Spencer, *The Vision of All: Twenty-five Lectures on Isaiah in Nephi's Record* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2016), 33–34.
7. Not much is known about the life of Isaiah. It is clear that he had direct access to members of the royal court, so it is likely that he was a member

- of Jerusalem's upper class. On the life of Isaiah, see Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 271. For an LDS discussion of Isaiah's life, see Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 1–3.
8. According to 1 Kings 11–12, the division resulted from the stubbornness of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who would not concede to the needs of the oppressed northern tribes.
  9. On the history of the divided kingdom, see Siegfried H. Horn and P. Kyle McCarter Jr., "The Divided Monarchy: The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel" in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, ed. Hershel Shanks, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2011), 129–207.
  10. Translation from James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 264; adapted, transliterations excluded.
  11. As Horn and McCarter have noted, "Most historians came to agree that Damascus and Israel launched the Syro-Ephraimite war . . . to intimidate Ahaz, so that he would renounce his policy of neutrality and join the anti-Assyrian cause. Nevertheless, there is now wide agreement that the initial motivation of Rezin and Pekah was probably more commercial than conspiratorial" (Horn and McCarter, "The Divided Monarchy," 172).
  12. They may have attacked surrounding cities as well (see 2 Chronicles 28:5–7). See also note 10 above.
  13. For an alternate account, see 2 Chronicles 28.
  14. It is not clear whether Isaiah's statement about "sixty-five years" was intended to refer to a specific event. Blenkinsopp says, "[Sixty-five years] gives us a date (669) long after the collapse of the Northern Kingdom (722). It coincides with the death of Esarhaddon and the accession of Ashurbanipal, who may have carried out further deportations subsequent to rebellion in the western provinces (Ezra 4:2, 9–10)." Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible Commentary 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 229, note g.

15. See David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 100–101. For an introduction to this subject that was written for a popular LDS audience, see Donald W. Parry, “Symbolic Action as Prophecy in the Old Testament” in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 337–55.
16. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 231; see also LDS edition Isaiah 7:3, footnote a.
17. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 231; J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 109–10.
18. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 232–34; see also LDS edition Isaiah 7:14, footnote e. On the significance of the name in context, see also Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 119–20, 134.
19. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 238, and Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 129. See also LDS edition Isaiah 8:1, footnote d.
20. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 237–38; Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 129–30.
21. For an introduction to the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, that addresses its origin as well as its importance for the New Testament authors, see Timothy Michael Law, *When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
22. The most common Hebrew word for *virgin* is *betûlâ* (בְּתוּלָה), not *almâ* (עַלְמָה).
23. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Word Biblical Commentary 24 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 99.
24. Ronald L. Troxel, “Isaiah 7,14–16 through the Eyes of the Septuagint,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 79 (2003): 14–16; for example, in the Greek version of Isaiah 23:4, “young women” (παρθένους) appears in a poetic parallel structure with “young men” (νεανίσκους).
25. This may sound strange to anyone who is more familiar with Matthew’s Gospel than with the book of Isaiah. Yet it need not detract from Matthew’s testimony about the miraculous nature of Jesus’s birth from the virgin (*parthenos*), Mary. It does, however, suggest that the birth of the Immanuel

- in Isaiah's time was not miraculous. See the section of this chapter that discusses Matthew. For direct prophecy about Mary, see 1 Nephi 11:13–23 and Mosiah 3:8.
26. The complete sign encompasses Isaiah 7:13–17 (perhaps 7:13–25), but Immanuel's mother and his birth are mentioned in only half a sentence in 7:14. Likewise, regarding the ancient Greek translation, Troxel notes: "It is clear that the translator's concern was not with the character of the child's mother, but with that of the child." Troxel, "Isaiah 7,14–16," 22.
  27. Although the KJV renders the Hebrew *h'almâ* as "a virgin," omitting the definite article (compare 2 Nephi 17:14), a number of important modern translations (for example, NRSV, NIV, JPS) include the article: "the virgin." For more on this, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 147–48.
  28. As Blenkinsopp notes, "Scholarly debate on the designation of the woman and the name of the child practically defies documentation." *Isaiah 1–39*, 233.
  29. See Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 101–2.
  30. For more on this, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 234.
  31. Some have argued that the parallels between Isaiah 7 and 8 suggest that the child in Isaiah 7 is that same child mentioned in Isaiah 8—that is, Isaiah's son; see note 38 of this chapter.
  32. Blenkinsopp refers to Isaiah 8:8, 10 as "a fairly transparent allusion to Hezekiah"; see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 234.
  33. Assyrian Sennacherib Prism (Taylor Prism), trans. M. Cogan, in *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 112–15, as adapted by Michael D. Coogan, in *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 340.
  34. See references in note 38 of this chapter.
  35. The author of 2 Chronicles used 2 Kings as a source for his writing; see Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 445.
  36. See 2 Chronicles 28:1 and 29:1.

37. For instance, if the passages cited (2 Kings 16:2 and 18:2) are correct, then Ahaz fathered Hezekiah when he was only ten years old. For more on chronological problems with the reign of King Ahaz, including discrepancies between the Biblical accounts and the Assyrian record, see Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 86; and T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, Word Biblical Commentary 13 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 204–5, 212. Ultimately, as Joseph Blenkinsopp has argued, “[A] conclusion cannot be reached on chronological grounds alone either permitting or excluding identification of Immanuel with Hezekiah.” Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 234.
38. This interpretation began in the Middle Ages with Rabbi Ibn Ezra and Rashi; see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 233. It has been accepted by some modern scholars; for example, Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 339; and Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 119–20. Some evangelical scholars have argued for Immanuel as Isaiah’s son in order to suggest that the prophecy was only partially fulfilled in Isaiah’s time. For instance, John Oswalt argues, “One significance of this equation [Immanuel with Isaiah’s son] is that it clearly means that if the ultimate meaning of the Immanuel sign is that God will be with us in and through a son of David . . . , then the fulfillment in Ahaz’ own time was not the ultimate one [since Isaiah’s son was not a son of David].” John N. Oswalt, *The Holy One of Israel: Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014), 131. Many LDS authors have also suggested that Immanuel referred in part to Isaiah’s son: see Ludlow, *Isaiah*, 143; Keith A. Meservy, “God Is with Us (Isaiah 1–17),” in *Studies in Scripture*, vol. 4: *1 Kings to Malachi*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 95–98; Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 73; Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “‘More Fully Persuaded’: Isaiah’s Witness of Christ’s Ministry,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 6; and Kent P. Jackson, “Foretelling the Coming of Jesus” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, vol. 1: *From Bethlehem through the Sermon on the Mount*, eds. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 13–14.

39. Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 148. Roberts has to argue that Shear-jashub is no older than three or four in order to suggest that “Isaiah’s wife could still have been in her teens” and therefore technically still a “young woman” (*almā*); see Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 119.
40. See note 38 in this chapter.
41. Justin Martyr, a Christian writing c. AD 147, quotes his Jewish interlocutor, Trypho, refuting his (Justin’s) interpretation of Isaiah 7:14, saying: “The quotation is not, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, but *Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son*, and so forth, as you quoted it. Furthermore, the prophecy as a whole refers to Hezekiah, and it can be shown that the events described in the prophecy were fulfilled in him.” Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 67.1, see also 43.8, in *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003). That this was a common Jewish interpretation seems to be corroborated by *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 18.5 and *Midrash Numbers Rabbah* 14.2.
42. Fulfillment passages include Matthew 1:22–23; 2:5–6, 15, 17–18, 23; 3:3; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:14–15, 35; 21:4–5; 26:56; 27:9–10; see also 26:54.
43. C. F. D. Moule, “Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse,” *New Testament Studies* 14, no. 3 (April 1968): 293–320; here 293–94, 297–99. The word translated as “fulfilled,” the Greek *plēroō* (πληρώω), has other meanings. You can get a sense of the range of meanings by looking at how this word is translated in other contexts. It can mean “to fill (something),” for instance, a net can be full (*plēroō*) of fish (Matthew 13:48), a sound or a scent can fill (*plēroō*) a space (John 12:3, Acts 2:2), or a person can be full (*plēroō*) of joy (John 3:29, 15:11, 16:24). It can also mean “to finish” or “to accomplish” something, such as Jesus “ended [*plēroō*] all his sayings” (Luke 7:1), heavenly messengers speak about what Jesus will “accomplish [*plēroō*] at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). See also Matthew 5:17; the opposite of “destroy” is to “finish” or “complete.”
44. One LDS scholar, Monte S. Nyman, has interpreted Isaiah 7:14 in this way based on two general conference talks, one by Hugh B. Brown



(Conference Report, October 1960, 93) and one by Mark E. Petersen (Conference Report, October 1965, 60); see Monte S. Nyman, *Great Are the Words of Isaiah: An Understandable Guide to Isaiah's Monumental Message* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 56–57. For other LDS interpretations, see note 38 of this chapter.

45. On Isaiah 7:14 as a dual prophecy, see LDS authors cited in note 38 of this chapter. For a discussion of the problems with a dual-prophecy or multiple-fulfillment interpretation, see notes 47 and 49 of this chapter.
46. David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 70–71. Turner argues that Matthew's interpretation is most likely typological.
47. The concept of multiple fulfillment is sometimes described as dual prophecy. The term *dual prophecy* seems to imply that the divine source of a revelation intended that the single prophecy would apply to two different historical situations. Since divine intent is beyond the reach of the historian's methodologies, scholars more often speak of "multiple fulfillment." Multiple fulfillment suggests that, with the perspective of hindsight, an author or reader might interpret a prophecy as fulfilled through two or more distinct historical events, regardless of original intent.
48. These writings that apply prophetic texts to their own community—called *pesharim* because they are often introduced with the Hebrew word for "interpretation" (*peshar*)—feature quotations and commentary on multiple passages from Isaiah and other prophetic texts. For a basic introduction to *pesharim*, see James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 303–6.
49. Arguments for multiple fulfillment do not solve this problem. As Turner notes, "The multiple-fulfillment view introduces an unwarranted distinction between what the prophet predicted and what God intended to reveal by the text. . . . Instead of this view, which posits an enigmatic double entendre and subsequent divine inspiration to recognize it, one does much better to assert a typological connection in which the biblical historical

- events contain theological motifs that anticipate the Christ event when seen with Christian hindsight." Turner, *Matthew*, 71. Furthermore, the notion of multiple fulfillment or dual prophecy implies an equivalency between fulfillments, which Matthew would likely reject. For Matthew, the fulfillment in the time of Ahaz is not the same as the fulfillment in Jesus because Jesus is the fullness of God's word made manifest.
50. For Turner, the typological model is the most compelling; see Turner, *Matthew*, 70–71. Latter-day Saints sometimes refer to this kind of interpretation as "likening," based on the injunction in 1 Nephi 19:23–24 that we "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning."
  51. Moule, "Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament," 298–99.
  52. Turner, *Matthew*, 70.
  53. For instance, Brigham Young University professor Kent Jackson says, "In some instances, the New Testament writers or speakers stated that the Old Testament words were fulfilled in New Testament events, even when a connection may not seem apparent, or even possible, to modern readers." Jackson, "Foretelling the Coming of Jesus," 12–13. Jackson's first example is Isaiah 7:14.
  54. For example, see S. Vernon McCasland, "Matthew Twists the Scriptures," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80, no.2 (June 1961): 143–48. For a summary and rebuttal of such arguments, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 108.
  55. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 109–39; Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 111–16.
  56. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 113–14.
  57. On intertextuality, see Nicholas Frederick's chapter in this volume.
  58. In the KJV of Matthew, their names are written as Achaz and Ezekias (Matthew 1:9).
  59. The emphasis on the number fourteen may itself refer to King David. See the discussion on gematria in W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew: Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I–VII* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 163–65.

60. For a discussion of Herod's genealogy, see Peter Richardson, "Herod (Family)," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 579–80. In Matthew 2:1–3, notice how "Herod the king" and "all Jerusalem" respond to the wise men when they ask, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (emphasis added): "He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."
61. See Ezra 2–5; Haggai 1–2; Zechariah 4; and Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.33–78.
62. This was contrary to the hopes of Haggai 2:23 and Zechariah 4:6–10.
63. Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 180.
64. David D. Kupp argues, "The added editorial explanation . . . in 1.23 brings into even sharper focus the quotation's anticipation that Jesus will be called 'God with us.'" David D. Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel: Divine Presence and God's People in the First Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 163. By contrast, notice that Matthew does not provide an interpretation of "Jesus," but assumes that his audience understands its significance: "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus (a transliteration from Greek) and its equivalent Joshua (transliterated from Hebrew) means "Yahweh [or Jehovah] is Salvation"; see Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 210.
65. It is not clear from this passage alone, how Matthew would have understood the title "God with us" in regard to Jesus's nature (his humanity or divinity or both). Hays understands the title as a declaration of Jesus as "the one in whom God will be palpably present to his people"; see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 163. Yet there are other possible interpretations; see Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel*, 169–75; and Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 217–18.
66. Kupp argues that this motif appears at significant points throughout the Gospel: "This motif in 1.21–3 opens a major inclusio of Emmanuel presence which will close, but not end, with Jesus' final promise in 28.20, and will arise in the story at crucial points (e.g., 8.23–7; 10.41–2; 12.6; 14.22–33; 17.17; 18.20; 25.31–46; 26.29)." Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel*, 175.

67. On Book of Mormon authors writing for our day, see Mormon 8:34–35. For a study on the Book of Mormon narrators' sense of audience, see Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
68. For more on the anonymous author of the Gospel of Matthew and his or her intended audience, see Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 45–48. For a more detailed analysis of authorship and audience, see Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 7–58, 138–47.