

DEBUNKING "PROOF TEXTS" FROM THE PSALMS¹
PART 4 - PSALMS 55, 68, 78, 80, 89

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth in a series of essays in which claims by Christian missionaries concerning "messianic prophecies" in the Psalms are investigated. The first three essays covered the 14 claimed "messianic prophecies" in Psalms 8, 16, 18, 27, 31, 35, 38, 40, 41 and 45.^{2,3,4}

This essay investigates ten additional claims of "messianic prophecies" in the Christian "Old Testament" and their respective accounts of "fulfillment" in the New Testament, all of which are taken from the same *reference list* that was previously used.⁵

II. "MESSIANIC PROPHECY": COMPARING CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

This was covered in detail in Section II in the first essay of this series (please see footnote 2) and will not be repeated in this and the remaining essays.

III. ANALYSIS OF CLAIMED "MESSIANIC PROPHECIES" AND THEIR "FULFILLMENTS"

To say that a prophecy has been fulfilled means that the foretold event, condition, or situation has happened, and that one needs no longer await its completion or

¹ Transliterations of Hebrew terminology into the Latin alphabet will follow these guidelines:

- Transliterated terminology is shown in ***bold italicized*** font
- The accented syllable in transliterated terminology is shown in ***SMALL CAPS*** font
- Latin vowel-sounds, A – E – I – O – U, are used (not the English versions thereof!)
- Distinct Hebrew letter that have ambiguous Latin letter sounds are transliterated according to the following rules:
 - A vocalized letter א is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel
 - A vocalized letter י is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel with an added underscore
 - The letter ח is transliterated as "h"
 - The letter ט is transliterated as "ch"
 - The letter ק is transliterated as "k"
 - The letter ק is transliterated as "q"
 - A vocalized שְׁ (אֶשְׁרָא) is transliterated as a superscripted "e" following the consonant
 - There is no "doubling" of letters in the transliterations to reflect the ***dagesh*** (emphasis)

² *Debunking "Proof Texts" from the Psalms, Part 1 – Psalms 8, 16, 18 -*

<http://thejewishhome.org/counter/PsalmsPrfTxt1.pdf>

³ *Debunking "Proof Texts" from the Psalms, Part 2 – Psalms 27, 31, 34, 35, 38 -*

<http://thejewishhome.org/counter/PsalmsPrfTxt2.pdf>

⁴ *Debunking "Proof Texts" from the Psalms, Part 3 – Psalms 40, 41, 45 -*

<http://thejewishhome.org/counter/PsalmsPrfTxt3.pdf>

⁵ *Jesus is the Messiah: The Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled By Jesus Christ Ordered by Category -*

<http://contenderministries.org/prophecy/jesussmessiah2.php>

fulfillment. On the other hand, a prophecy that has not yet happened, or is yet to be completed, remains a prophecy not fulfilled.

The "messianic prophecies" claimed to be present in Psalms 55, 68, 78, 80, and 89, along with the respective accounts of their "fulfillment" from the New Testament, are addressed in this essay. The analysis aims to determine whether any of these pairs of passages in the Christian "Old Testament" and New Testament qualify as a "messianic prophecy" and its "fulfillment", respectively.

A. Psalms 55

The *reference list* indicates that Psalms 55 contains one "messianic prophecy" that is "fulfilled" according to the New Testament, as shown in Table III.A-1.

Table III.A-1 – Claimed "Messianic Prophecies" and their "Fulfillments"

Statement	Citations ⁶	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"
The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend	Psalms 55:13-15[12-14]	Luke 22:47-48

1. Overview

Following is a summary description of this psalm to help put its context into perspective.

TREACHERY DENOUNCED: A man who had been betrayed by a close friend opens his heart in this Psalm. The victim of base treachery, he turns to God in supplication. He first pleads for His help, then describes his situation, and finally asserts his conviction that God will intervene. Tradition concurs that the Psalm is connected with Absalom's rebellion; the 'familiar friend' (verse 14) is named as Ahitophel in the Targum and in *Ethics of the Fathers* (4:3). Having once been a companion and close confidant of the king, Ahitophel was responsible for inciting David's son, Absalom, to plot against his own father. Disillusioned, David is forced to flee Jerusalem, and in despair wonders if, after having been betrayed by such an intimate friend (verses 13-15, 21-22), there remains any mortal who can be trusted. Consequently, his conclusion is to place all hope in God alone (verses 17 and 23). So strong are his feelings, that twice in the Psalm (verse 16 and 24) he wishes that his enemy meet with untimely death and destruction, a wish that was indeed realized (2 Samuel 17:23).⁷

The superscription identifies King David as the author of this psalm. Even though Absalom (*AvshalOM*), one of David's sons, started a rebellion against him with the help of the king's trusted advisor Ahitophel (*Ahitofel*), King David was unwavering in his faith that God would help him get through this crisis and prevail.

⁶ In cases where verse numbers differ between the Hebrew Bible and the Christian "Old Testament", the citation shows the verse number in the Hebrew Bible followed by the verse number in the Christian "Old Testament" in brackets. Example: Psalms 40:7-9a[6-8a].

⁷ *Soncino Books of the Bible – The Psalms*, Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Editor, p. 172, The Soncino Press (1992)

2. Investigating claimed "Messianic Prophecies" [and "Fulfillments"]

a. *The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend*

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.A.2.a-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.A.2.a-1 – Psalms 55:13-15[12-14] and Luke 22:47-48

"Messianic Prophecy" KJV "Old Testament" Translation	"Fulfillment" KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 55:12-14	Luke 22:47-48	Psalms 55:13-15
12. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: 13. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. 14. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.	47. And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?	13. For no enemy reviled me that I should bear it; my enemy did not open his mouth wide against me, that I should hide from him. 14. And you are a man of my equal, my prince and my esteemed one. 15. That together we would devise counsel; in the house of God we would walk with a multitude.

The situation described by King David is similar to the one encountered in Psalms 41 – he was betrayed by a close and trusted friend, yet he prevailed.

The "fulfillment" text for this "messianic prophecy" differs from that which was used with Psalms 41:10[9]. After he found his disciples sleeping upon his return from praying at the Mount of Olives, Jesus spotted Judas Iscariot in a crowd that had gathered. As Judas was approaching to kiss him, Jesus asked Judas if he came to betray him with a kiss.

In biblical times, the act of kissing someone or something was a way of paying homage (e.g. 1Samuel 10:1). Yet, according to the "fulfillment" text, the kiss by Judas was to be the "kiss of death". Consequently, trying to compare the "fulfillment" account with the situation being described by King David is problematic. Namely, the friend who betrayed King David failed in his mission, while the betrayal by Judas succeeded, and it led to the crucifixion of Jesus. The same problem was encountered in the scenario that was attempted to be forced into Psalms 41:10[9].

Conclusion: Psalms 55:13-15[12-14] is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

B. Psalms 68

The *reference list* indicates that Psalms 68 contains two "messianic prophecies" that are "fulfilled" according to the New Testament, as shown in Table III.B-1.

Table III.B-1 – Claimed "Messianic Prophecies" and their "Fulfillments"

Statement	Citations	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"
The Messiah would ascend into heaven	Psalms 68:19a[18a]	Luke 24:51
The Messiah would give gifts to men	Psalms 68:19b[18b]	Matthew 10:1

1. Overview

Following is a summary description of this psalm to help put its context into perspective.

GOD'S VICTORIES: While this Psalm is one of the most magnificent of all (Ibn Ezra) in its forceful sweep of thought and language, the commentators are in disagreement on the events which occasioned it. The Targum and others connect it with the revelation at Sinai or the exodus from Egypt. If we look for an occasion in the lifetime of David, it might allude to the occasion when he triumphed in victories over Aram-Zobah and Aram Damascus, Moab, Edom and Philistia (2 Samuel 8) (Malbim). It has also been suggested (Kimchi) that it refers to the future downfall of Sennacherib's army in the days of Hezekiah. Meiri contends that, most probably, it is a prophecy relating to the battle of Gog and Magog which will lead to the coming of the Messiah. Whatever the reason for its composition, it takes the form of a triumphant march proclaiming the kingship of God over the earth.⁸

The superscription identifies King David as the author of this psalm. He recounts the many victories Israel achieved with God's help over mighty empires, and foretells that this phenomenon of Israel's triumph will continue. King David then invites all nations to join in praising God.

2. Investigating claimed "Messianic Prophecies" [and "Fulfillments"]

a. *The Messiah would ascend into heaven*

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.B.2.a-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

⁸ *Soncino Books of the Bible – The Psalms*, Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Editor, p. 209, The Soncino Press (1992)

Table III.B.2.a-1 – Psalms 68:19a[18a] and Luke 24:51

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 68:18a	Luke 24:51	
Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: [thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.]	And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.	You ascended on high, you took captives; [you took gifts to be among men, and also rebellious ones for Y-h God to dwell.]

This is not a prophetic passage – it is historical. Several historical scenarios have been proposed by the Jewish Sages, and two of these are presented here. Targum Yonathan and RASHI opine that David is referring to Moses, who ascended Mount Sinai on behalf of Israel to receive ("capture") the Torah from the hands of the angels (Proverbs 30:4).

According to RADAQ (Rabbi David Qimḥi), David is speaking of God, who removed His "divine presence", the *Sh^echⁱNAH*, from His "dwelling" in Jerusalem and remained aloof in His heavenly abode. In doing so, He allowed foreign nations to invade Israel.

The "fulfillment" text depicts "The Ascension", the scene where Jesus departed from those with whom he walked and spoke during one of his appearances following his alleged "resurrection". *What was accomplished by this action?* He just disappeared, apparently without a purpose, and he has not returned.

Conclusion: Psalms 68:19a[18a] is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

b. The Messiah would give gifts to men

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.B.2.b-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.B.2.b-1 – Psalms 68:19b[18b] and Matthew 10:1

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 68:18b	Matthew 10:1	Psalms 68:19b
Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.	And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.	You ascended on high, you took captives; you took gifts to be among men, and also rebellious ones for Y-h God to dwell.

The two interpretations from the previous case also apply to these "gifts". Targum Yonathan and RASHI explain that Moses brought down the Torah as a gift for mankind, even though there were those who rebelled against God and provoked Him.

According to RADAQ, God took away the gifts He gave to Israel – that He would "dwell" in their midst and that He would protect the people – until even the rebellious King of Assyria made plans to dwell in the holy city of Jerusalem.

The "fulfillment" text describes Jesus giving his 12 disciples the gifts to cast out unclean spirits (exorcism) and to heal all sicknesses and diseases (faith healing). Though the New Testament contains accounts of Jesus and the disciples performing exorcisms and engaging in faith healing, there is no indication from the context of the psalm itself that these were, in fact, the gifts. According to accounts in the Hebrew Bible, the ability to heal is almost exclusively God's, and with few exceptions, e.g., Elisha, it is a gift given by God, not by a "son of man", to someone of His choice [see also the discussion on Psalms 80 below].

Conclusion: Psalms 68:19b[18b] is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

C. Psalms 78

The *reference list* indicates that Psalms 78 contains one "messianic prophecy" that is "fulfilled" according to the New Testament, as shown in Table III.C-1.

Table III.C-1 – Claimed "Messianic Prophecies" and their "Fulfillments"

Statement	Citations	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"
The Messiah would speak in parables	Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34-35

1. Overview

Following is a summary description of this psalm to help put its context into perspective.

LESSON OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY: A didactic Psalm, bringing home to the people a warning which was writ large in the annals. It reveals the Israelites' eternal mission to inspire all future generations to loyal obedience to God and His Divine Law. A survey is made of the historical moments of deliverance and decline from the days of Moses to David, hailing the election of David as the beginning of a new and better future. The Psalmist points out the dire consequences suffered when 'Ephraim' fails to learn from history that God is the sole source of their good fortune, and concludes with the poetic description of the Divine shepherd choosing David, the Judahite, to be the father of the dynasty that would lead the nation to be ever mindful of their eternal bond to God.⁹

The superscription identifies *ASAF* as the author of this psalm.¹⁰ *ASAF*'s message is that God's love and concern for Israel have always been present and will continue. Keeping this memory alive brings comfort and consolation in harsh times. Failing to do so causes people to go astray and transgress.

2. Investigating claimed "Messianic Prophecies" [and "Fulfillments"]

a. *The Messiah would speak in parables*

The relevant texts from the King James Version (KJV) "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.C.2.a-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.C.2.a-1 – Psalms 78:2 and Matthew 13:34-35

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34-35	
I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:	34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.	I shall open my mouth with a parable; I shall express riddles from time immemorial.

The psalm reviews events in Israel's history, which are expressed in terms of a parable and riddles of sorts, in that they are object lessons for all times – what the past has to teach present and future generations. The

⁹ *Soncino Books of the Bible – The Psalms*, Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Editor, p. 249, The Soncino Press (1992)

¹⁰ *ASAF*, a contemporary of King David, is credited with composing Psalms 50, 73-83. He was a gifted Levite musician (1Chronicles 16:4-7) who was also endowed with a prophetic spirit (1Chronicles 25:2).

parable includes such expressions as "... set a table in the desert ..." (verse 19), and "... and fire was kindled in Jacob ..." (verse 21). Riddles include, "A man ate the bread of the mighty ..." (verse 25), and "And He gave His might into captivity ..." (verse 61; alluding to the Ark of the Covenant captured by the Philistines [1Samuel 4:11]).

This is not an attribute or a skill that will be unique to מַשִּׁיחַ (*mashi'ah*). After all, parables had been used from time immemorial in teaching, and there are accounts in the Hebrew Bible of others who spoke in parables, such as *Bil'AM*, Job, King Solomon, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

The "fulfillment" text claims that Jesus only addressed the multitudes in parables. Yet, there are many accounts in the Gospels in which Jesus talks "straight" and not in parables. In the final analysis, however, speaking in parables was a commonly used instructional technique, so that there is nothing special or unique about it.

Conclusion: Psalms 78:2 is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

D. Psalms 80

The *reference list* indicates that Psalms 80 contains one "messianic prophecy" that is "fulfilled" according to the New Testament, as shown in Table III.D-1.

Table III.D-1 – Claimed "Messianic Prophecies" and their "Fulfillments"

Statement	Citations	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"
The Messiah would be at the right hand of God	Psalms 80:18[17]	Acts 5:31

1. Overview

Following is a summary description of this psalm to help put its context into perspective.

PRAYER FOR ISRAEL'S RESTORATION: Although it is clear that this prayer concerns itself with a time of national straits, the exact reference is a matter of varying opinions. Rashi sees it as an allusion to three periods of exile: the Babylonian, the Greek and the Roman. Malbim suggests that it was composed in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when they returned from the Babylonian exile to rebuild the Temple, and their enemies threatened to thwart their plans by doing battle with them. Impoverished and in a dire position, they composed this prayer contrasting their return from Babylon with the exodus from Egypt. Hirsch develops the idea that it is a Psalm written for the generation of Israel in exile.¹¹

The superscription identifies *ASAF* as the author of this psalm. Recalling the glorious relationship Israel had with God, *ASAF* pleads for it to be restored.

¹¹ *Soncino Books of the Bible – The Psalms*, Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Editor, p. 263, The Soncino Press (1992)

2. Investigating claimed "Messianic Prophecies" [and "Fulfillments"]

a. *The Messiah would be at the right hand of God*

The relevant texts from the King James Version (KJV) "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.D.2.a-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.D.2.a-1 – Psalms 80:18[17] and Acts 5:31

"Messianic Prophecy" KJV "Old Testament" Translation	"Fulfillment" KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 80:17	Acts 5:31*	Psalms 80:18
Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.	[30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.] 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.	May Your hand be upon the man [שׂוֹמֵךְ] of Your right hand, upon the person [דָּוִדִּי] whom You strengthened for Yourself.

* Verse 30 is not part of the "fulfillment" text, but is included in order to clarify the context.

Several earlier verses in the psalm help clarify the context of verse 18[17]:

Psalms 80:9,15-16[8,14-15] – (9) You uprooted a vine from Egypt; You drove out nations and planted it.
(15) O God of Hosts, return now; look from heaven and see, and be mindful of this vine, (16) And of the stock [of vine] that Your right hand has planted, and over the son You have strengthened for Yourself.

The psalmist is praying to God and asking that Israel be again protected by Him. Israel is compared to a vine elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, e.g.:

Jeremiah 2:21 - Yet I planted you a noble vine stock, entirely of right seed; now how have you turned yourself into a degenerate wild vine to Me?

Israel is also called God's son in the Hebrew Bible:

Exodus 4:22 - And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus said the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn."'

When the prophet Isaiah spoke to Israel on behalf of God, he described them as having been chosen and strengthened by God:

Isaiah 41:8-10 – (8) But you, Israel My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, who loved Me, (9) Whom I grasped from the ends of the earth, and from its nobles I called you, and I said to you, "You are My servant"; I chose you and I did not despise you. (10) Do not fear for I am with you; be not discouraged for I am your God: I strengthened you, I even helped you, I even supported you with My righteous hand.

Clearly, the reference in verse 18[17] is to Israel, not to **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. It is part of a prayerful wish for Israel to regain its favor with God.

The KJV, once again, attempts to enhance the Christological appeal of this verse by exploiting a term that has several meanings. For poetic reasons, the psalmist made use of two different terms that have the same meaning. In the first part of verse 18[17] the term **אִישׁ** (*ISH*), **a man**, is used, and in the second part of the verse a synonym, **בֶּן־אָדָם** (*BEN-ADAM*), is used, and which literally means **[a] son of man** or **[a] son of Adam**. These terms are idioms for “a man” or “a person”, both in Biblical and in Modern Hebrew, i.e., “a mortal human being”. Moreover, both terms, **אִישׁ** and **בֶּן־אָדָם**, are occasionally used poetically as metaphors for “a group of persons”, such as “a people”. The KJV translators appear to have been aware of these nuances, as can be seen from their rendition of **בֶּן־אָדָם**, as “**a man**” at Job 16:21. Similarly, at Psalms 89:48[47], the plural **בְּנֵי־אָדָם** (*b^eNEI ADAM*), is translated in the KJV as “**men**”.

The "fulfillment" text appears to have one direct "connection" with the "messianic prophecy", namely, the use of [God's] “right hand” and an implied "connection" via the terms “man” and “son of man”. These refer to Jesus as God manifest in the flesh while on earth, and particularly as the title “Son of man” is used in connection with his alleged sacrificial death and resurrection (e.g., Luke 9:22; note that the ascension is mentioned in Acts 5:30, the verse preceding the "fulfillment" text).¹²

Conclusion: Psalms 80:18[17] is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

E. Psalms 89

The *reference list* indicates that Psalms 89 contains five "messianic prophecies" that are "fulfilled" according to the New Testament, as shown in Table III.E-1.

Table III.E-1 – Claimed "Messianic Prophecies" and their "Fulfillments"

Statement	Citations	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"
The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:4-5[3-4]	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would call God his Father	Psalms 89:27[26]	Matthew 11:27
The Messiah would be God's "firstborn."	Psalms 89:28[27]	Mark 16:6
The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:30[29]	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:36-37[35-36]	Matthew 1:1

¹² Jesus is called the “Son of man” (note the capital “S”) in 84 out of the 85 instances of this expression in the KJV New Testament. The single exception is at Hebrews 2:6, where the author points to Psalms 8:5[4] as a prophetic statement about Jesus, and wherein the phrase “son of man” (note the lower-case “s”) is “quoted”.

1. Overview

Following is a summary description of this psalm to help put its context into perspective.

MEDITATION IN NATIONAL ADVERSITY: Two divisions are clearly marked in the Psalm, with the break at verse 39. The first section deals with the past in which the two attributes of God, mercy and faithfulness, were abundantly demonstrated in His relation with Israel. In particular the promise to David, that his throne would endure for ever, is recalled. The second section paints its dark picture of the nation's vicissitudes and the overthrow of the kingdom by a triumphant enemy. So glaring is the contrast between the promise and its frustration, that the Psalmist gives utterance to his perplexity in forceful language, and finally prays that God will remember His people in their adversity.¹³

The superscription attributes this psalm to Ethan the Ezrahite.¹⁴ He reflects upon God's promises to King David, as presented in verses 4-38 with God as the speaker, and expresses his confidence that God will fulfill them. This psalm, like Psalms 45, contains passages which some Jewish Sages have interpreted as messianic text, while others view them as historical.

2. Investigating claimed "Messianic Prophecies" [and "Fulfillments"]

a. *The Messiah would be a descendant of David*

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.E.2.a-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.E.2.a-1 – Psalms 89:4-5[3-4] and Matthew 1:1

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 89:3-4	Matthew 1:1	Psalms 89:4-5
3. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.	The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.	4. I formed a covenant with My chosen one; I swore to David My servant. 5. Until eternity, I shall establish your seed, and I shall build your throne for all generations. Selah.

These two verses summarize the central theme of this psalm – God's covenant with King David. The details of this covenant are reviewed in verses 20-38 of the psalm.

¹³ *Soncino Books of the Bible – The Psalms*, Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Editor, p. 289, The Soncino Press (1992)

¹⁴ Ethan the Ezrahite (*EITAN ha'EzraHI*) was the chief musician and a composer in King David's and King Solomon's court.

The original promise was made to King David via the prophet Nathan:

2Samuel 7:12-16 – (12) When your days are fulfilled, and you shall lie with your forefathers, then I will raise up your seed that shall issue from your body after you, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (14) I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son; so that when he goes astray I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with afflictions of human beings. (15) And My mercy shall not depart from him; in the manner in which I withdrew it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. (16) And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever.

This promise includes the following elements:

- ✧ An everlasting dynasty, the Davidic dynasty, is established with David.
- ✧ David's heir to the throne, through whom this dynasty shall pass, will be one of his natural (biological) sons.
- ✧ The son who inherits the throne from David is the one who will build the Temple in Jerusalem.
- ✧ The Davidic dynasty will propagate through David's seed, i.e., via his direct biological descendants.
- ✧ Every future king who sits upon the throne of David will be a mortal man.
- ✧ Every future king who sits upon the throne of David will have a special "father-son" relationship with God, so that when he sins, he will be duly punished.
- ✧ Even when future kings (in David's seat) commit iniquity, God will keep the Davidic dynasty intact, and not terminate it as He did with Saul's kingship.

The establishment of this everlasting Davidic dynasty is significant, since from it will emerge **דָּוִד**, as was already alluded to in Jacob's blessing to Judah:

Genesis 49:10 - The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff, until Shiloh come, and to him shall gather the nations.

The "fulfillment" text is the first verse in the New Testament, the preface to the genealogy listed in the Gospel of Matthew. The title of "son of David" is applied to Jesus more than a dozen times in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 20:31; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:38), even though it is false from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible, the Scripture in force throughout the lifetime of Jesus and for some years after his death.

First, according to Christian theology, Jesus did not have an earthly father. Yet, according to the Hebrew Bible, blood rights, such as Tribal pedigree and the Davidic throne, are transmitted exclusively from a human father to his biological sons (e.g., Numbers 1:18), which rules out such a transfer through the process of adoption. In fact, the psalmist uses the Hebrew term **זָרְעֶךָ** (**zar'acha**), **your seed**, the 2nd-person, singular, masculine

gender inflexion of the collective noun זֶרַע (Zera), **seed**, to refer to King David's descendants who will occupy his throne, which will include מְשִׁיחַ. Whenever the collective noun זֶרַע is applied in the Hebrew Bible in reference to a person's children, it exclusively refers to progeny, i.e., biological descendants.¹⁵ Yet, according to the New Testament, the Holy Spirit fathered Jesus and, therefore, Jesus did not have an earthly father. *How, then, can Jesus be the "seed of David", or the "son of David"?*

Second, Christian missionaries claim that Jesus, through his "virgin birth", is the "seed of a woman", for which they use Genesis 3:15 as the so-called "proof text" (see the essay referenced in footnote 15). However, as noted above, according to the Hebrew Bible, tribal pedigree passes exclusively from a human father to his male progeny {his sons}. *How, then, can the "seed of a woman" also be the "seed of David" or the "son of David"?*

Finally, according to some Gospel accounts, Jesus himself appears to deny that the "Christ" (the Greek/Christian term for "Messiah") would be a descendant of King David:

Matthew 22:41-45(KJV) – (41) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, (42) Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. (43) He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, (44) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (45) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? [See also Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44.]

So, if Jesus did not believe that מְשִׁיחַ will be a descendant of King David, it follows that he denied the need for the validation that מְשִׁיחַ is of the Davidic lineage. This situation creates a serious dilemma for Christianity since it contradicts the claim that Jesus is the Messiah by virtue of his ancestry and, thereby, is fulfilling Biblical prophecy.

Conclusion: Psalms 89:4-5[3-4] may be a valid "messianic prophecy", though it remains unfulfilled.

b. The Messiah would call God his Father

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.E.2.b-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

¹⁵ This term and its applications throughout the Hebrew Bible are described in detail in the essay, *Genesis 3:15 - The "Seed of A Woman": A Kernel of Deception* - <http://thejewishhome.org/counter/Gen315.pdf>

Table III.E.2.b-1 – Psalms 89:27[26] and Matthew 11:27

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 89:26	Matthew 11:27	
He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.	All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.	He will call to Me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.'

Throughout Jewish history, including Biblical times, Jews have referred to God as "our Father":

1Chronicles 29:10 - And David blessed the Lord before the eyes of the entire assembly, and David said, "Blessed are You, the God of Israel **our Father**, from everlasting to everlasting. [See also Isaiah 63:16, 64:7; Jeremiah 3:19, 31:8[7].]

King Solomon and, by implication, future monarchs from King David's lineage, were to have a special "Father-son" relationship with God:

1Chronicles 28:6 - And He said to me, 'Your son Solomon, he shall build My House and My Courts, for I have chosen him to Me as a son, and **I shall be to him as a Father**. [See also 2Samuel 7:14; 1Chronicles 17:13, 22:10.]

The prophet Malachi points to God as our common Father:

Malachi 2:10 - **Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why should we betray, each one his brother, to profane the covenant of our forefathers?**

This is still true today since our daily liturgy includes 1Chronicles 29:10. The liturgies for Fast Days, for the Ten Days of Repentance (which include *ROSH haSHANAH* and *YOM KIPUR*) contain appeals to God that start with the phrase אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ (*avinu malkeinu*), **our Father, our King**. The prayer for the State of Israel opens up with the phrase אָבִינוּ שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם (*avinu she'ba'shamayim*), **our Father Who is in Heaven**. In other words, referring to God as "my Father" (or, "our Father") is something that has been, and will continue to be, commonplace in Judaism. מְשִׁיחַ, too, will follow this practice along with all other Jewish people of his time.

The "fulfillment" text conveys the message that, because "the Father" and "the Son" are mutually and exclusively known only to each other, "the Father" will be known to people only when "the Son" reveals Him to them. This is an absurd concept! In the first place, according to the Torah (e.g. Deuteronomy 32:39), and as echoed by the prophets (e.g., Isaiah 46:5; Jeremiah 49:19; Ezekiel 28:1-19), any claim of equality with God is tantamount to committing blasphemy. Secondly, "the Son", Jesus,

appointed himself as the "gatekeeper" who will decide to whom he would reveal "the Father". This declaration violates what the Hebrew Bible teaches, that all people are urged to seek and know God directly, without having to be subjected to the will and mercy of a mediator (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:29; Isaiah 55:6; Jeremiah 31:33[32]; Hosea 3:5).

Conclusion: Psalms 89:27[26] is not a valid "messianic prophecy".

c. The Messiah would be God's "firstborn."

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.E.2.c-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.E.2.c-1 – Psalms 89:28[27] and Mark 16:6

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 89:27	Mark 16:6	Psalms 89:28
Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.	And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.	I, too, shall make him a firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.

With God as the speaker here, the psalmist uses the Hebrew term בְּכוֹר (b^eCHOR), a firstborn, as he applies to King David the promise originally made about Solomon in 2Samuel 7:14 (see verse 21[20] in this psalm, and also Psalms 2:7). The use of the generic בְּכוֹר, symbolizes the position that a firstborn son holds within a family according to Jewish Law. He owns the birthright (Genesis 25:31-34; Deuteronomy 21:15-17) and, therefore, has a higher status among his siblings. In this sense is the term בְּכוֹר applied to King David – he was the highest of all the past kings, which may also be said of the future מְשִׁיחַ.

Perhaps aiming to enhance the Christological appeal of this verse, the KJV mistranslated the generic term and renders it my firstborn. The difference is significant because it alters the context of the verse, from God regarding someone as having the status of a firstborn to God declaring that someone is His firstborn. To the detriment of the KJV, however, God had already declared who His firstborn is:

Exodus 4:22 - And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus said the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn [בְּכוֹרִי]."

God calls Israel בְּכוֹרִי (b^eCHORI), My firstborn, and this points to an added dimension – God not only selected Israel as a chosen people, He actually

took "ownership" of Israel as *His chosen people*, exalted above all other nations.

The "fulfillment" text is taken from the resurrection narrative at the end of the Gospel of Mark, which tells of three women who brought spices to the sepulcher, where Jesus was allegedly buried following his crucifixion, in order to anoint him. However, when they entered the place, his body was not there, and they were told by a man dressed in a white robe, allegedly an angel, that Jesus "is risen". The implied "connection" between the "fulfillment" text and the "messianic prophecy" is that the "resurrection" of Jesus attested to the fact that his sacrificial death was fully accepted by "the Father" and paid for the sins of mankind, a sequence of events that is claimed as the evidence that Jesus was "the Son". Considering the fact that the Hebrew Bible strictly prohibits human vicarious atonement, and as it also excludes the Christian scenario of "God coming to earth in the flesh", the pairing of these two texts is simply unbiblical.

Conclusion: Psalms 89:28[27] may be a valid "messianic prophecy", though it remains unfulfilled.

d. The Messiah would be a descendant of David

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.E.2.d-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.E.2.d-1 – Psalms 89:30[29] and Matthew 1:1

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 89:29	Matthew 1:1	Psalms 89:30
His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.	The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.	And I shall make his seed endure forever, and his throne as the days of the heavens.

God is still the speaker here, and He continues to review His original promise to King David. The psalmist again uses the Hebrew term זָרַע, this time in the 3rd-person, singular, masculine inflexion, זָרַעוּ (*zar'ō*), his seed, to refer to King David's descendants who will occupy his throne, which will also include מְשִׁיחַ.

Since the "fulfillment" text is the same as for Psalms 89:4-5[3-4], and with no new information provided in the "messianic prophecy", the relevant discussion in Section III.E.2.a applies here as well and is not repeated.

Conclusion: Psalms 89:30[29] may be a valid "messianic prophecy", though it remains unfulfilled.

e. The Messiah would be a descendant of David

The relevant texts from the KJV "Old Testament" and New Testament, and the corresponding Jewish translation for reference purposes, are shown in Table III.E.2.e-1, with the respective relevant portions of the passages shown in highlighted form.

Table III.E.2.e-1 – Psalms 89:36-37[35-36] and Matthew 1:1

"Messianic Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
KJV "Old Testament" Translation	KJV New Testament Translation from the Greek	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew
Psalms 89:35-36	Matthew 1:1	Psalms 89:36-37
35. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. 36. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.	The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.	36. Once (and for all) have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not fail David. 37. His seed will be forever and his throne is like the sun before Me.

God is still the speaker here, as He declares that the oath he made to King David, which is eternal and will not be altered, is that **his seed**, עַדְוֹ, i.e., King David's descendants, will exist to eternity, and so will his dynasty; all of which also applies to מְשִׁיחַ.

Since the "fulfillment" text is the same as for Psalms 89:4-5[3-4], and with no new information provided in the "messianic prophecy", the relevant discussion in Section III.E.2.a applies here as well and is not repeated.

Conclusion: Psalms 89:36-37[35-36] may be a valid "messianic prophecy", though it remains unfulfilled.

IV. SUMMARY

In this fourth in a series of essays on so-called "proof texts" in the Psalms, ten such texts from Psalms 55, 68, 78, 80, and 89, which are claimed to be Christian "messianic prophecies", along with their respective "fulfillment" texts from the New Testament, were investigated. The analysis addressed content, context, and correspondence between each pair of texts, in order to assess the validity of the claims. Cumulative results of all "messianic prophecy" and "fulfillment" pairs investigated thus far are summarized in Table IV-1. [Note: Results from the earlier essays are shown in a darker highlight, and current results are shown in a lighter highlight.]

Table IV-1 – Claimed "messianic prophecies" in Psalms 8, 16, 18, 27, 31, 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 45, 55, 68, 78, 80, and 89, and their "fulfillments"

Statement	Citations		Valid? ¹⁶	
	"Prophecy"	"Fulfillment"		
Infants would give praise to the Messiah	Psalms 8:3[2]	Matthew 21:16	NO	
The Messiah would be given authority over all things	Psalms 8:7[6]	Matthew 28:18	NO	
The Messiah would be resurrected	Psalms 16:8-10a	Matthew 28:6	NO	
The Messiah's body would not be subject to decay	Psalms 16:8-10b	Acts 13:35-37	NO	
The Messiah would be exalted to the presence of God	Psalms 16:11	Acts 2:25-33	NO	
The Messiah would come for all people	Psalms 18:50[49]	Ephesians 3:4-6	NO	
The Messiah's enemies would stumble and fall when they came for him	Psalms 27:2	John 18:3-6	NO	
The Messiah would be accused by false witnesses	Psalms 27:12	Matthew 26:59-61	NO	
None of the Messiah's bones would be broken	Psalms 34:21[20]	John 19:32-33	NO	
There would be plots to kill the Messiah	Psalms 31:14[13]	Matthew 27:1	NO	
There would be plots to kill the Messiah	Psalms 31:14[13]	Matthew 27:1	NO	
The Messiah would be accused by false witnesses	Psalms 35:11	Mark 14:55-59	NO	
The Messiah would be hated by many without cause	Psalms 35:19	John 18:19-23	NO	
The Messiah would be silent before his accusers	Psalms 38:14-15[13-14]	Matthew 26:62-63	NO	
The Messiah's offering of himself would replace all sacrifices	Psalms 40:7-9a[6-8a]	Hebrews 10:10-13	NO	
The Messiah would say the scriptures were written of him	Psalms 40:7-9b[6-8b]	Luke 24:44	NO	
The Messiah would come to do God's will	Psalms 40:8-9[7-8]	John 5:30	NO	
The Messiah would not conceal his mission from the congregation	Psalms 40:10-11[9-10]	Luke 4:16-21	NO	
The Messiah's betrayer would be a friend whom he broke bread with	Psalms 41:10[9]	Mark 14:17-18	NO	
The Messiah would speak with a message of grace	Psalms 45:3[2]	Luke 4:22	?	NO
The Messiah's throne would be everlasting	Psalms 45:7-8a[6-7a]	Luke 1:31-33	?	NO
The Messiah would be God	Psalms 45:7-8b[6-7b]	Hebrews 1:8-9	NO	
The Messiah would act with righteousness	Psalms 45:7-8c[6-7c]	John 5:30	?	NO
The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend	Psalms 55:13-15[12-14]	Luke 22:47-48	NO	
The Messiah would ascend into heaven	Psalms 68:19a[18a]	Luke 24:51	NO	
The Messiah would give gifts to men	Psalms 68:19b[18b]	Matthew 10:1	NO	
The Messiah would speak in parables	Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34-35	NO	
The Messiah would be at the right hand of God	Psalms 80:18[17]	Acts 5:31	NO	
The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:4-5[3-4]	Matthew 1:1	?	NO
The Messiah would call God his Father	Psalms 89:27[26]	Matthew 11:27	NO	
The Messiah would be God's "firstborn."	Psalms 89:28[27]	Mark 16:6	?	NO

¹⁶ A single entry indicates that the same answer applies to both "Prophecy" and "Fulfillment" claims. Two entries signify different answers for the "Prophecy" and "Fulfillment", respectively.

The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:30[29]	Matthew 1:1	?	NO
The Messiah would be a descendant of David	Psalms 89:36-37[35-36]	Matthew 1:1	?	NO

As the sample of claimed Christian "messianic prophecy" and "fulfillment" pairs continues to accumulate, there are now 33 such pairs, the previously noted pattern becomes even better defined – they focus on Jesus, the central figure in the Christian messianic vision, not on the conditions that will prevail in the world due to his accomplishments.