THE RECEPTION OF ISAIAH 6:9-10 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND CONTEMPORARY BIBLE INTERPRETATION

by

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DECLARATION

I (Anuschka Lottering) declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree *Master of Theology* at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

The author declares that he/she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

SUMMARY

This study investigates the reception of Isaiah 6:9-10 in the New Testament, in order to establish whether the interpretation of this authoritative text has remained stable, or has been altered through many hands and years. Furthermore, the question is posed, 'what does this mean (if anything) for contemporary Biblical interpretation?'

It is clear that the New Testament authors (i.e. Mark, Matthew, Luke and John) employed Isaiah 6:9-10 in different contexts and for different purposes. However, it is argued that these various interpretations do not violate the original sense of the verses as they appeared in the context of the book of Isaiah. Instead, it appears that the New Testament authors have recognized in these verses a resemblance to their own respective circumstances and have subsequently adapted Isaiah 6:9-10 in appropriate and relevant ways to their own respective circumstances. This is similar to what contemporary Bible interpreters do. In the end, it is acknowledged that a Biblical text needs to be interpreted in light of its original setting, but also in light of new contexts, if we take seriously the fact that the Bible is the living word of God. Thus, it is recognized that the Biblical text is the product of both human and divine authorship. As such, the Biblical text has a particular interpretation related to the specific historical context in which it originated, but the Biblical text also transcends this context and offers truth that remains relevant for generations to come.

Key terms:

- Old Testament in the New Testament
- Biblical Interpretation
- Isaiah 6:9-10
- Parables
- Obduracy
- Unbelief
- Deaf
- Blind

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Brief Outline of Topic

When reading and working with a Biblical text, the aim is foremost to determine what the meaning of the text is. For some (e.g. academic scholars) this might mean the "original" meaning of the text, as it was intended for its first audience (assuming that access to such an original meaning is indeed possible). For others (e.g. church leaders and members), the meaning of the text might be more about what a text means for the contemporary reader's life. It might be proposed that a combination of both these elements is important and necessary for proper Biblical interpretation. However, it might be understood that, when trying to conclude what the meaning of a text is, interpretation is "under way" – it is a process. One might easily accept that, when writing a sermon a good deal of interpretation is involved in unearthing the message(s) of the given text, but what about a translation of the same ancient Biblical text, or when the same Biblical text is cited by another Biblical author? Even with the best intentions to uncover the meaning of the original text, subjective and context-determined interpretation by the current reader will always be present to a lesser or greater degree.

This study will aim to examine one text, i.e. Isaiah 6:9-10, in multiple contexts, specifically as it has been cited in the New Testament (NT), in order to determine if the interpretation of the text has stayed the same through many hands and ages, or if the interpretation thereof has undergone alterations along its journey. Thus, Isa 6:9-10 will firstly be examined as it is found in the earliest sources: the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX). From there we will move on to see how the NT writers used Isa 6:9-10 in their own writings, in order to conclude whether these writers have quoted the text in its original form and stayed true to the original meaning,[1] or whether they have altered the text and/or interpreted the text in such a way that the initial meaning has changed or been elaborated upon.

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[1] The indication "original" meaning, is used to refer to the way that the text was understood in its original context. For example, how Isa 6:9-10 was understood when it first appeared in the book of Isaiah.

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Thus, the focus will be on the reception of Isa 6:9-10 in the respective NT texts. Due to the scope of the study, focus will be only on explicitly quoted instances of Isa 6:9-10 in the NT:[2] Mark 4:12; Matthew 13:14-15; Acts 28:26-27 and John 12:40. The text of Isa 6:9-10 is also alluded to in Luke 8:10 and Romans 11:8[3] (although authors differ with regard to the specific Isaianic allusion believed to be present here in Romans).[4] As allusions are beyond the current intended scope of this study, particular attention will not be paid to Romans 11:8, although mention may only be made thereof where necessary or interesting for the study at hand. Although the use of Isa 6:9-10 in Luke 8:10 can be better described as an allusion, rather than as an explicit quotation, attention will be given to Luke 8:10 when discussing Luke-Acts as a whole and its use of the Isaiah text. This will be done since Luke-Acts is seen by most scholars as one work consisting of two volumes, and if this is accepted, the manner in which the author "Luke" used Isa 6:9-10 in Luke 8:10, may prove to have bearing on the use, and consequent meaning, of the same Isaiah text in Acts 28:25-27.

1.2. Motivation for Study

The aim of this study is to showcase that merely one "correct" or "valid" interpretation of a particular text does not exist, but that its reception mutates according to different readers, times and contexts. Isa 6:9-10 serves as a good example since it is quoted on so many occasions in the NT and this ranges across several books. Thus, it offers the opportunity to investigate how one text has been cited and subsequently interpreted by a number of different authors who all viewed the text as being part of sacred and authoritative Scripture, yet understood it in different ways. Isa 6:9-10 is of further interest as it offers such a "difficult" message to the current reader. In this sense, it is interesting to note how various authors handled such a "difficult" text. The idea is not at all to provoke a conversation indicating that any interpretation of a

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[2] As indicated by the *Loci Citate Vel Allegati* in Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed.

[3] *Ibid*

[4] Apart from the New Testament, McLean (1992:86) indicates that Isaiah 6:9-10 (or either verse 9 or 10 alone) is also cited in the following sources: 4QpIs(b) (commentary on Isaiah) col 3; 1QH (Hymns of Thanksgiving) 7:2 and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* 12:2; and alluded to in the following: Second Apocalypse of James 60:5-6; Sibylline Oracles 1:361; Philo of Alexandria's *De Iosepho* 126; Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* 33:1; 69:4; 1QH 7:2 and 1QS (Community Rule = Manual of Discipline) 4:11.

Biblical text is relative, but rather to highlight the fact that even the NT authors, who we now accept to have also written sacred Scripture, worked from the same sacred material of their own day and yet understood it in diverse ways. Yet, we do not deem one book in the NT more important or more correct than another (or at least we should not). How then, do we reconcile the NT authors' different interpretations of the same text? This study intends to show that multiple interpretations of a given Biblical text can all be valid in their respective receptional contexts and can, in fact, each serve as another piece of the puzzle adding to the overall understanding of a text. Or to put it another way, each interpretation may bring more colour and detail to the same text, resulting in a richer understanding of that particular text. This certainly does not mean that *any* interpretation is valid, and so the difficulty arises when one must distinguish between those interpretations that serve the original intention of the text (or message) and those that go against it. It is, however, proposed that all the interpretations that are in line with the original sense of the message will complement each other, or at least not stand in opposition to one another. Nonetheless, it may be accepted that the original text of Isa 6:9-10[5] has set certain parameters to what can be permitted in terms of interpretation. Within these parameters though, there might exist different approaches to interpretation that all serve the original meaning or sense of the text and even illuminate it further.

1.3. Research Approach

The closest resemblance to the present study is the book by Evans (1989) entitled *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6:9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*. This work of Evans is quite comprehensive in its treatment of Isa 6:9-10, starting with an examination of these verses in the MT, at Qumran, the LXX, Targum and Peshitta, then moving on to Paul, Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, John and even adding a section on the interpretation of Isa 6:9-10 by the Rabbis and Church Fathers, and a short section regarding Gnostic literature. The present study focuses on Isa 6:9-10 in Biblical literature and, therefore, only brief notes on the Targum and Peshitta will be added where appropriate. Furthermore, the study at hand will not include an examination of these verses in the Rabbinic literature or that of the Church Fathers.

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[5] With the "original" text here is meant the text form from which an author worked. In the case of the NT authors, this relates to the Hebrew or Greek form of Isa 6:9-10, from which they quoted.

Although the latter two would surely offer interesting and valuable information, due to the limitations of the study, emphasis will be only on ancient Biblical instances where these Isaiah verses appear.

Evans (1989:15) described his book as a study in "comparative *midrash*". His aim was to investigate Isa 6:9-10 as it appeared, and was used, in various historical contexts and stages. He proposed that his study would offer insights into our understanding of various theological perspectives within early Jewish and Christian history. Further, the study also aimed to offer understanding into the meaning of the text as it is found in the NT. Evans' (1989:16) interest in the text, he says, is due to the belief that it epitomizes in a certain way the struggle to monotheize, that is, "to explain all of existence in terms of God and His sovereign will". Evans' study is of much value for the present study, as the study at hand also wishes to determine the meaning/understanding of Isa 6:9-10 in its various contexts (DSS, MT, LXX, NT). This is a very necessary first step in order to be able to determine whether the one text has remained solid or has morphed throughout the ages (which is the intention of the present study). Ultimately, this study wants to use Isa 6:9-10 merely as a test case to indicate how various faith communities have understood and interpreted the same authoritative text in differing ways. The reason for using Isa 6:9-10 is that it appears in such a variety of books within the NT, offering a better spectrum for the study. In the end though, the aim is to be able to draw this into the present by connecting it to Biblical interpretation today. That is, how does the acknowledgment of various interpretations of the same text from NT authors help or add to the contemporary Bible interpreter's understanding of Biblical interpretation in general? This last proposal is not of particular concern for Evans and is not discussed in his book. An article by Moyise, *Can We Use the New Testament in the Way Which the New Testament Authors Use the Old Testament?* has more to say on this particular topic, and will be incorporated into the study.

The main mode of this study will proceed in a synchronic manner in the sense that it will focus on the texts as we have them today. The focus will not be on discussing textual variants, although these may be mentioned where they are significant for the understanding of the text. Furthermore, although it does not constitute the primary focus, the historical context in which all of the various texts are thought to have

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originated will be investigated in brief. This will be done mainly in order to determine, as best as possible, the original meaning or intention of the various texts. Thus, a diachronic (historical critical) study of the texts under discussion will only be included, as far as it offers more information on the understanding of the meaning of those particular texts.

All of these texts that feature Isa 6:9-10 will be investigated individually, to determine the separate meanings in their specific contexts. It will be attempted to indicate which of the Old Testament (OT) texts (e.g. MT or LXX) the NT authors used or were influenced by when quoting Isa 6:9-10. It will also be considered how differently (or similarly) the NT writers have interpreted the same OT text. Ultimately, these findings will be taken into account when attempting to answer questions such as, "What do the ways in which the NT authors interpreted the same OT text mean for contemporary Biblical interpretation?"

1.4. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate whether various NT authors have cited, and thus interpreted, Isa 6:9-10, as sacred text, in various ways, or in a manner similar to each other. Where the Isaiah text has been cited and interpreted in different ways, the objective will be to establish how this has altered the original sense of the text (i.e. the meaning of the text as it was understood in the OT sources from which the NT authors quoted). The goal is to see if these different interpretations of Isa 6:9-10, should they exist, stand in continuity with the original sense, as well as with each other, or whether there are some of the interpretations that seem to contradict either the original sense or each other. It is anticipated that, if compared, even where differences in the quotation and interpretation of the Isaiah text are found, that "new" interpretations of the text augment the original sense, and each other, rather than contradict one another.

Ultimately, the intention is to indicate that different interpretations of a particular sacred and authoritative text have occurred even as far back as with the NT authors just as it continues to do so today. Again, it is stressed that by no means will an argument be made to say that *any* interpretation of a given text is valid. However,

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multiple interpretations of a text have the potential to be legitimate. The difficulty always surfaces when trying to determine which interpretations are really suitable or credible, and which violate the text. Although this is not an easy question to answer and may warrant a work of its own, the present study will merely attempt to showcase that there may exist multiple interpretations of a given text that can be appropriate. Yet it is believed that these interpretations, if truly permissible, will not contradict one another, but rather add a fuller understanding to the text and illuminate it from a different angle.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

2.1. Biblical Interpretation in General

The history of Biblical interpretation can be said to have begun as long ago as when the first Biblical traditions were created (whether it was laws, stories, proverbs, poetry, hymns, oracles or so forth) (Hauser & Watson, 2003:1-54). Already at the stage when bodies of tradition were grouped together, interpretation was present (Hauser & Watson, 2003:1). And when materials were conveyed from one generation to the next, interpretation was ever present[1] (Hauser & Watson, 2003:1). According to Hauser and Watson (2003:2), it was not necessarily the intent of the "transmitters" to change the meaning of material, however, inevitably the transmitters conveyed the material in the unique manner in which they understood it, even if they were not aware of this. On the other hand, it is also evident that there were some who deliberately altered the material to suit their own purposes (Hauser & Watson, 2003:2).

When it comes to the Biblical writers, Hauser and Watson (2003:4-5) warn against blindly believing that these writers were concerned with the "unity of Scripture". That is to say that the Biblical authors wrote texts that were intended as authoritative for the particular situations in which they found themselves and that built on older and respected traditions. These writers did not necessarily intend or envision that their texts would be read far beyond their present context for which it was composed.[2] It follows that if the Biblical writers mostly wrote for their contemporaries, they certainly would not have taken care to make their writings harmonious with other works that

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[1] In both oral and written traditions, interpretation occurred already in the early stages of transmission (Hauser & Watson, 2003:2).

[2] Hauser and Watson (2003:5) use the following examples to explain their point: When Jeremiah had Baruch write down words that he hoped would warn his contemporaries against impending doom, he most probably did not intend for these writings to be of value beyond the situation at hand. Also, when Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (as in 1 Cor) he addressed issues that were facing the congregation at that time. He did not necessarily anticipate that his letter would still be read (as authoritative) thousands of years later. Hauser and Watson (2003:5) even wonder if Paul might have been more careful in choosing his words if he knew that his letter would be microscopically scrutinized by generations of Christian interpreters for many years to come. Juel (2003:283) agrees that most of the NT writers did not see their own work as being on the same level as "the Bible" (i.e. Israel's Scriptures).

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would later be found alongside their own in the Bible as we have it today, since they did not foresee that their texts would be incorporated into such a body (Hauser & Watson, 2003:5).

Poythress (1988:83) makes the interesting assertion that, there exist two separate interpretations of any particular Biblical text: 1.) The first interpretation is to understand the text completely and only in light of the human author (this includes, for example, the author's characteristics, knowledge and social status); 2.) The second interpretation understands the same text in the light of the divine author (also in terms of his characteristics, knowledge and status). Poythress (1988:83) does highlight that this idea immediately brings up concerns regarding the possibility of these interpretations contradicting one another. Poythress (1988:83) observes that the Bible itself indicates that the human and divine authors actually point towards the other and affirm the presence and operation of the other. However, we should not assume that the human author was always necessarily aware of the full extent of the meaning of the message as intended by God (Poythress, 1988:85). Hawthorne's (1987:119) description of the interaction between human and divine authorship proves helpful: Hawthorne firstly affirms that Scripture is God's special revelation to humans - a trustworthy and authoritative message from God, necessary to properly understand who God is, what He does, as well as to understand our human existence. Hawthorne goes on to say,

> … I also affirm that this sacred text was written down by human beings in human language at specific junctures in time and in particular geographical locations, with all the limitations that humanness, language, space and time, societies and their cultures, impose on it. I affirm, therefore, that the Bible is a joint effort of both God and man in time and space—a product initiated by God and under his control, so that every part and form of it can be labelled "God breathed" … but also a product of different men, living at different times and in different places, having differing personalities and outlooks, fears, and aspirations, etc., so that every part and form also bears the stamp of humanness …

If we accept the above claims, we can agree with Whaling (2000:78) who asserts that scriptures[3] are not mere texts as any other texts; they may well be approached on a literary level as other texts, which may offer a certain sense of interpretation, but to

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[3] Whaling (2000:87-8) refers here to scriptures of religious communities in general and not merely "Christian" Scriptures. However, it is recognized that some of his contributions are also applicable to Christian Scripture in particular.

view these texts as merely "literature" in a secular sense is not adequate. According to Whaling (2000:78), scriptures "partake of transcendence and are viewed by religious traditions in that light." Also, very importantly noted by Whaling (2000:78-9), the interpretation of these scriptures actually changes as historical contexts and hermeneutical patterns change. So, a dialogue exists between a particular religious tradition and its scripture, which results in the same text, "under transcendence", being understood differently in different eras (Whaling, 2000:79). Thus, although particular texts are given transcendence by certain faith communities, the response of people to the text and the preservation and interpretation thereof in the particular community make the text a living thing that changes through the ages (Whaling, 2000:79). One might also consider that scriptures cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen as integral parts of the traditions from which they emerged and are embedded in continually[4] (Whaling, 2000:79). Dockery (1994:49) goes so far as to say that, only those who believe in and trust God can appropriately understand the Bible. Barr (1980:111) describes the Bible, as the document of believing communities, as follows:

> The organic relationship of the Bible with believing communities is on the surface clear. The Bible takes its origin from within the life of believing communities; it is interpreted within the continuing life of these communities; the standard of its religious interpretation is the structure of faith which these communities maintain; and it has the task of providing a challenge, a force for innovation and a source of purification, to the life of these communities.

Barr (1980:112) further makes us aware of the fact that, when speaking of believing communities in the plural, we should understand that this constitutes a plurality of "people of God". This can be seen in Israel and the church of Jesus Christ for example, but moreover there are various communities within the broader "church" itself. Barr (1980:112) believes that every such community ought to think and act with the church as a whole in mind. However, Barr (1980:112) does admit that it is not realistic or practical to think that the entire church thinks and functions as one organism. In this sense, Barr (1980:112) states that Scripture is a document of each believing community, albeit in slightly different ways. Beyond this, we also have various church denominations (Barr, 1980:112). And even further, we might consider also more informal communities that have a particular understanding of the Bible, as

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[4] Whaling (2000:80) does mention though that "scripture" is seen differently in different communities, and enjoys a higher status in some communities than in others.

well as streams of consciousness that are initiated by particular leaders, books, periodicals, conferences or theological centres (Barr, 1980:112-3). Focusing our attention on this diversity that exists among various believing communities, Barr (1980:113) continues to say that, in the Bible we find a similar thing, as the Bible itself was also a product of the believing community. So, Barr (1980:114) remarks that, even within Scripture, we find certain ideas that are generally hard to accept and would at a later time have been considered unorthodox. Scripture itself consists of different traditions that are sometimes in opposition to one another[5] (Barr, 1980:115).

When investigating Biblical texts and their interpretation, the matter of translation is another critical aspect that soon arises. Brock (1988:87) accurately remarks that, anyone who has attempted to translate a literary text has come to realize that "translation inevitably involves interpretation".[6] We can be sure that every time a translator encountered a word that could have more than one possible meaning, both being allowed by the context of the passage, the translator had to revert to interpretation in order to choose which word (or even form of a word) he was going to employ (see Brock, 1988:87-88). This problem was not solely faced by ancient translators – contemporary translators are also familiar with them (Brock, 1988:88). Even if the translator attempts to give as literal a translation as possible, he/she will not be able to completely avoid this factor (Brock, 1988:88). It is important to note though, as Brock (1988:88) expresses, that it is in cases where interpretation is "optional" and not required, that we can better discern the possible interests and concerns of the translator.[7] McLay (2003:45) further reminds us that, any translation of the Bible, whether it be the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, or a present-day translation, aims to meet the needs of a constituency. Thus, it is important to account for the fact that translators do not carry out their work in a

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[5] Barr (1980:115) mentions the following as example: the picture of Israel's destiny differs markedly between that painted in Deuteronomy and that in Jeremiah; the picture Acts gives of Paul's life and doctrine differs from what we learn from Paul's own letters; the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel of John diverges from that which we find in the Synoptic Gospels.

[6] See also Porter and Pearson (1997:539). Brock (1988:87) points out that, even when looking at the actual words for "translate" in Greek, Latin, as well as Hebrew and Aramaic, we find that these words also mean "interpret, explain".

[7] Brock (1988:88-89) explains that this "optional" interpretation can occur in various instances, for example: when a translator decides to "update" geographical details found in a text; or when the translator decides to use a specific rendering that guides the reader to understand the passage in a particular manner. These are only mentioned as examples - for further information on this sort of "optional" interpretation, see Brock (1988:89).

sociological and historical vacuum, but they create translations for a particular "community" (McLay, 2003:45). Because of this, the needs of the target audience will determine the type of translation that is produced (McLay, 2003:45).

Brock (1988:97) goes as far as to say that, since it can be agreed upon that an element of interpretation is always present in translation, it means that a translation cannot be stamped as good Biblical interpretation simply on the grounds of appropriate linguistic and textual skills and knowledge. It is also essential that the translator have insight into, and empathy with, the Biblical texts that he/she is translating (Brock, 1988:97). This statement shares a node of connection with Dockery's view previously mentioned, that appropriate Biblical interpretation can only proceed from those who believe in and trust God. Brock (1988:97) also argues that, although we might be able to say that the contemporary translator is better equipped in the former matter (linguistic and textual skills and knowledge) than the ancient translator was, it would be arrogant to assume that the contemporary translator is also ahead of the ancient translator in respect of the latter (having insight into and empathy with the Biblical texts being translated). This, Brock (1988:97) argues, is precisely why the ancient versions are still of interest today. Cook (2006:32) also acknowledges the complex nature of translation and brings to light a salient point, "… it is evident that any single translation cannot fully bring to bear the nuances intended by the original translator. One way of crossing this barrier is to provide additional information by means of applicable notes." This point is especially of importance for the study at hand, as it is accepted that no single interpretation necessarily encompasses the full meaning of a particular text, but that multiple interpretations of a text, from various angles, may all serve to better illuminate the one text.

In Biblical interpretation (ancient and contemporary) it is important to remember that the audience understands the material in a certain way that is dictated by their own perspective, whether they are aware of this or not (Hauser & Watson, 2003:3). Davies (2003:147) says that nowadays it is popular to state, "there are no texts, only interpretations". This is said in the light of the argument that the readers of a text determine the meaning of the text, rather than the author determining the meaning.[8]

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[8] Davies (2003:147) and Melugin (1997:39).

In this sense, texts do not have an intrinsic objective meaning.[9] Although Melugin (1997:50) maintains that all interpretations are the constructs of the interpreters, this should not lead us to submit to the idea that all interpretations are therefore completely subjective and capricious. Melugin (1997:50) affirms that not all interpretations are equally valid, rather it must be shown that a particular interpretation "fits" the text. The criterion remains though, that any such interpretation must indicate why its claim to fit the text is trustworthy (Melugin,1997:50). Ultimately, Melugin (1997:51) states that meanings of texts are not capricious, however, they do change as the communities that interpret them change. On the other hand, it may be emphasized that the material itself that the audience is reading, or hearing, will definitely set some limits to what is allowed with interpretation (Hauser & Watson, 2003:3-4). Dockery (1994:51) contends that, although all readings of the Bible will be influenced by the perspective of the reader, the Biblical text does still mediate an objective meaning, and thus, the text's indicators will limit the number of meanings possible for a given text. Barton (2010:38) further makes the case that the claim stating that the text is all there is, is unfounded, since the text bears witness to specific events and persons in history, of which, the most important is certainly the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Just because there may be a variety of meanings within a text(s), this does not mean that the meaning is relative to the individual interpreter (Wall, 2002:3-5). According to Wall (2002:5), it should ultimately be the core convictions of Christian confession, as well as the distinctive practices of the Christian community, that regulate a faithful reading of [the Bible].[10] On this matter we may end off by stressing that, it is undeniable that the readers of a given text affect the interpretation of that text, as every reader approaches the text from a unique perspective. However, this study, at the same time, proceeds from the standpoint that as a text itself appears, there exists certain limits to what sort of interpretation is possible for that given text.

When considering methods of interpreting a Biblical text, we can easily admit that the historical critical approach[11] has gained much support. Yet, although scholars can

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[9] *Ibid*

[10] Wall (2002:5) applied this statement to the faithful reading of Acts, but surely he would not appeal to the assumption that he believes this of the other Bible books as well.

[11] Barr (1980:30-1) explains his understanding of the historical critical method as follows: The "historical" component means that a text is read in such a way as to reconstruct spatial-temporal

agree that focus on the historical aspects of a text is necessary for a proper understanding of a given Biblical text, the danger also exists of overemphasizing the historical "gap" that exists between the NT world and the contemporary reader (see Barton, 2010:37). This can be done in such a way that a feeling of alienation arises whereby the reader feels too distanced from the text to hear it speak to them (see Barton, 2010:37). Another danger lies in focusing solely on a historical critical approach and thereby neglecting the use of any other approach, causing the text to be only valued as a historical source with the attempt to get to the "objective facts" within the text (Barton, 2010:37). Chilton (1984:164, 188, 192) concedes that historical criticism has clear limitations, and he further claims that it does not in itself substitute faith or theological discourse. On the other hand, though, even with all these potential dangers, Barton (2010:37) assures that it is not necessary to go over to the other side and do away with a historical critical approach altogether. Chilton (1984:164, 188, 192) agrees here that a historical critical approach to the Bible is proper and necessary, though he contends that the significance of the Bible has its value not solely in its historical and intellectual faculties. Barr (1980:42) further defends the historical critical reading of Scripture by stating that, it should not be seen as a merely secular alternative to theological interpretation, but it depends rather on "properly theological functions". So, a historical reading helps distinguish the actual meaning of Scripture from what has been traditionally assumed; furthermore, it also has an anti-Docetic function that keeps Biblical interpretation closer to reality (see Barr, 1980:42). Thus, Barr (1980:42) holds that a historical critical reading can have a positive theological function,[12] but he does confess (and is of the opinion that most scholars agree) that he does not view it as a directly theological operation which in and of itself functions to uncover the inner revelation of Scripture. Barton (2010:39) offers an additional reason why historical criticism is theologically important: historical criticism can make us aware of the culturally conditioned nature of the NT text and the subsequent interpretations thereof (including our own). Barton (2010:39) is of the opinion that this can help avoid

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events in the past, focusing on matters like the actual sequence of events and the sequence of events by which the text originated. The "critical" component comes in as it is accepted that there is the possibility of the events not actually having occurred as described in the text. It could be that the events happened differently or even that the text was written at a different time or by a different author. Barr (1980:30-1) argues that a genuinely historical inquiry into a text is by nature also critical and thus he prefers to speak merely of a "historical reading". As most scholars refer to this approach as a "historical critical" method though, this study will continue to refer to it as such.

[12] See also Barton (2010:38).

confusion between the words of the text and the living Word of God, to whom the text testifies – since, after all, Christians are called to believe in Christ and not the Bible as such. The Christian faith is not, in actual fact, built upon the Bible or Biblical inspiration, but rather on persons of the past, especially Jesus Christ (Barr, 1980:125). The Bible, therefore, acts as the primary source about these persons and events (Barr, 1980:125). As Barr (1980:126) also noted, "The true believer is a believer in God and in Christ, not in the first place a believer in the Bible". The function of the Bible in the believing community, is not, and should not essentially be, to provide accurate information or true theological interpretation of the past, but the Bible should offer paradigms in which future times can be illuminated from the viewpoint of the texts of the Bible. Moreover, historical criticism can help avoid confusing the meaning of the text with the meaning assigned to it by a particular church or interpretative community (Barton, 2010:39). In the end, we must bear in mind that theological evaluation cannot stand alone, operating independently from literary and historical factors (Barr, 1980:44). In this regard, Barr (1980:45) concludes that historical critical reading and theological evaluation are so closely related that neither can proceed properly without acknowledging the other. In Barr's (1980:45) own words,

> Historical [critical] reading does not provide, and should not provide, the basis or logical foundation upon which theological evaluation must be built; but no useful theological evaluation can be carried out if it denies, evades or obviates the fact that this other direction of interpretation is also being validly carried out.

We may agree with Dockery (1994:49) who remarks that, if the Bible is indeed accepted and interpreted as a sacred text, revealed by God, then the interpretation thereof should not only be concerned with the grammatical and historical aspects of the text, but the theological level must also be taken into consideration. Although it is certainly important to take into account the particulars of the language of these texts as well as the historical circumstances in which they originated, if we proclaim that we read the Bible as believers in faith, and not merely as a collection of historical literature, then surely, we read the Bible with the acceptance that it did not only mean something in the context in which it originated, but that it still has value for us today. In this way, the Bible goes beyond its linguistic and historical features and is still accepted as authoritative today, and must, accordingly, be handled in that way and not be reduced to a mere historical document. As Dockery (1994:49) declares, what

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is essential in such a perspective is that the Holy Spirit is required. Although the present study is academic in nature, the very nature of the Bible itself is such that this point cannot be ignored when studying the Bible. One could easily ask how it can be rightly ascribed what the work of the Holy Spirit is. Dockery (1994:49-50) argues, on this point, that the church is the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses to provide accountability in terms of Biblical interpretation, and guards against wrongful interpretation of texts that head towards individualistic, self-serving conclusions. Importantly, Dockery (1994:50) clarifies his understanding of the "church" (of Jesus Christ) as "a worldwide fellowship that crosses cultural boundaries". Dockery (1994:50) thus maintains that interpretation must make sense to believers in a local setting as well as to other believers worldwide who are all part of the body of Christ. Barton (2010:34) articulates it comprehensively:

> Reading the NT today is a necessarily – though by no means exclusively – historical task. This is not to say that only trained historians can read the NT or that the NT can be read only as a source of historical information. Both inferences are patently untrue. As part of the canon of Christian Scripture, the NT is read above all by members of the various Christian faith communities as a constitutive part of their worship and discipleship, because the Bible is the book of the church. As such, it is read with the primary goal, not of discovering historical data, but of growth in the knowledge and love of God. This goal is pursued on the well-founded theological assumption that the overriding function of Scripture is to bear witness to God and to the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, a revelation that is enlivened and made effective by God's Spirit.

Moyise (2002:644) starts his article, entitled *Can we use the New Testament in the way which the New Testament authors use the Old Testament?* by stating that, the task of exegesis has always been to try to distinguish between that which has bearing on the particular situation from which the Biblical authors wrote, and that which is of enduring significance.[13] This leads Moyise (2002:645) to the question whether we can today use the same exegetical methods that the NT authors used, or whether their exegesis belongs to the particulars of the 1st century. Moyise (2002:651) contends that, "We no longer hold the same presuppositions as they [the NT authors] did." However, Moyise (2002:651-2) does not agree with scholars who

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[13] Moyise (2002:644) uses the example of 1 Cor 7, where Paul proclaims that people should not marry since the end is near, but that they should rather focus on the work of the Lord. However, when it turned out that the Lord did not come immediately, the Christians of a later period had to determine whether Paul's instruction was particular advice for the first-century Christians or whether Paul argued that celibacy is always the higher calling (Moyise, 2002:645).

argue that our exegesis should be limited to modern historical, philological and grammatical analysis. Moyise (2002:652) points out that, although such a proposal is understandable in the light of (both ancient and contemporary) commentators who get too "creative" with the text, it has serious implications. If we accept that our exegesis should be limited to only historical, philological and grammatical modes, we contend that the NT is an ancient text, which might have proven very useful for 1st century circumstances, but that it is certainly not a living text that can speak to subsequent generations (Moyise, 2002:652). According to Moyise (2002:652) though, the whole purpose of still engaging in Biblical interpretation is to show that the text, although ancient, *does* speak to new situations. If this were not the case, Moyise (2002:652) aptly remarks, we might as well give the Bible over to a museum.

In the end, we are left with questions as to how Biblical texts should be approached and interpreted. Boring (1995:90) proposes that a text should firstly be allowed to speak to the people of its own time, to whom it was directed and whose concerns it directly addressed.[14] But then, as is the conviction of the church in all ages and the very reason why Biblical studies and preaching from the Bible persists, if found that the Gospel also speaks to the contemporary reader's concerns, we can be sure that it is then the authentic message of the Bible being spoken to us and not merely a reflection of our own desires, ideologies, and concerns (Boring, 1995:90). Yet, as acknowledged by Boring (1995:90), because all interpretation inherently consists of subjective elements, this makes it impossible to have a perfect distinction between the ancient meaning of a text and what it is believed to mean in a contemporary setting. However, it does not mean that the quest for ascertaining as closely as possible what the original meaning of a text was, should be abandoned (Boring, 1995:90). Melugin (1997:54) does argue though, that these "original meanings" should not necessarily carry more weight than later interpretations, since these meanings are also constructs of the interpreter. In Melugin's (1997:54) words,

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[14] Boring mentions this specifically in relation to NT texts in his commentary on Matthew. Guelich (1989:xxxv) notably points out that, because that which is said in Scripture has been formed by the writer as well as the readers and the socio-historical context in which the writing took place, and since the contemporary reader is far removed from that original setting, to properly discern what the text really "said", we must use every possible literary and historical means to come to a more accurate understanding of what the Scriptures really said as it was written by inspired writers. Guelich (1989:xxxv) applies this particularly to the Evangelist who wrote Mark, but his comments can surely be understood as referring to Scripture in general as well.

> To do so [attribute more meaning to the "original meaning" of a text than later interpretations] would marginalize the significance of the role of the Spirit as scholars in communities of faith undertake the task of Biblical interpretation. The role of the Spirit in the life of the church's interpretation of scripture should by no means be treated as outside the purview of scholarly interpretation but should instead become an important aspect of what Biblical scholars in communities of faith consider.

Van Eck (2008:1176) aptly suggests that the Bible should be read in a critical manner. Under a "critical" approach to the Bible, Van Eck (2008:1176-7) understands the following: Such an approach acknowledges that there exists a historical distance between the reader and the text, so a critical reading is modest in terms of the possibilities of meaning for the Biblical text – no reading is seen as final, but others' readings are respected. Since texts are the products of particular social systems, there exists a cultural distance between the text and reader. As such, one must take care to read the Biblical text in a culturally sensitive manner. Literary exegesis is important for a critical reading, as it is believed that the Biblical text (as other texts) wishes to communicate something to the reader. The way in which a text is composed/structured tells us something of how the particular text attempts to communicate. The Bible contains metaphorical language, and thus should not merely be read in a historical or literal manner. A certain ethic in how the Bible is read is important, because the Bible is read *with* others as well as *for* others. Finally, in terms of ethical questions faced by the contemporary reader, the ethical or moral principles that stand in continuity with the "Jesus-case/Jesus-matter"[15] should be seen as the key.[16]

Just as Paul could not return to a Pharisaic interpretation of the Bible, so the contemporary Bible reader cannot return to a pre-critical exegesis (Moyise (2002:658-9). It seems though, that Moyise (2002:658-9) proposes that a "Trinitarian" exegesis might hold the key. Moyise (2002:658-9) regards Vanhoozer's suggestion of how interpretation should commence as a Trinitarian approach: such an interpretation involves "the stability of the Father's creation (interpretations should *extend* the meaning of texts but not fundamentally *alter* them), the incarnation

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[15] Under "Jesus-case/Jesus-matter" (*Jesus-saak)*, Van Eck (2008:1177) understands the following: equality of all people before God, being accommodating towards others, a non-sexist attitude, the rejection of hierarchical power structures, and God's presence with all people.
[16] Van Eck (2008) proposes a critical reading of the Bible, against fundamentalist and foundationalist approaches. For more one these approaches, see Van Eck's (2008) article *Een teks – meerdere betekenisse: Hoe lees ons die Bybel?*

(interpretations should make Christ present) and the Spirit (interpretations should edify the community and show forth the Spirit's fruits)." Finally, with any approach to Biblical interpretation, it may serve us well to remember that all approaches will inevitably have positive aspects that may contribute to a better understanding of a given text, yet none of these are perfect and so they will all have potential pitfalls or shortcomings. The important aspect, then, seems to be to employ various approaches in unison, in order to help illuminate the text from multiple angles and make the understanding of a particular text all the more vivid.

Having considered all of the abovementioned elements, we might propose the following: Firstly, we must acknowledge that interpretation of a Biblical text is inevitable, even when only attempting to translate a text. As such, we should rather heed our means of interpretation, instead of trying to deny its operation. If we accept that the Bible was in fact written by human authors, and in particular contexts, we can affirm that a historical critical examination of a Biblical text is indeed valuable and even necessary in order to ascertain, as far as is possible, what the author intended to convey in his particular context. As O'Day (1995:507) puts it, "Awareness of the social, historical, and cultural contexts out of which [the Biblical texts[17]] emerged … is essential not only for understanding what texts meant 'then', but also for determining what texts mean 'now'." However, if we further accept that the Bible is not merely the work of human authors, but also divinely authored, we must contend that a mere historical critical reading of a Biblical text will not reveal the entire meaning of a particular text. Accepting that the Biblical texts are also divinely inspired, we may acknowledge that this divine authorship also affords a particular meaning to these texts and this will set limits to what is permissible in terms of understanding by various interpreters. So, for an appropriate understanding of a text, both the human and divine authors need to be taken into account. It is argued that, as such, Biblical texts (having also been divinely authored) are living texts that have the capacity to speak to generations far beyond their original audiences.[18] Yet, this occurs within a

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[17] O'Day (1995:507) applies this statement to the Gospel of John, but it may be regarded as relevant for all Biblical texts.

[18] Barr (1980:60) makes the notable remark that, usually revelation is seen as preceding Scripture, and so also the church, with the following schema God → revelation → Scripture → church. However, Barr (1980:60) argues that a newer model should be used, more in the lines of God → people → tradition → Scripture. In this newer model, revelation should not be understood as being attached to one "phase/section" specifically, but rather as coming from all the stages (Barr, 1980:60). According to

faith community that is open to hearing the Bible speak to them.[19] In the end, even when led by the Holy Spirit, contemporary interpreters may arrive at different interpretations of a text. But it need not be the case that only one interpretation is accepted as correct or legitimate. Rather, it is claimed that, through interpreters, having received revelation from the Holy Spirit, different interpretations bring to the table a particular angle on a text and, when taken together, all these different angles serve to enrich the understanding of a particular text. It is, however, also affirmed that if these interpretations are legitimate, they will not be in contradiction to one another, but rather serve to augment one another.[20]

2.1.1. Interpretation in the Hebrew Old Testament (MT)

Black (1986:2-3) significantly remarks that it has been suggested that the reinterpretation of Scripture is a process of growth that was even present in the OT itself.[21] Even within the OT we can glean hermeneutical progression where the accounts of God's dealings in the past served as models for later accounts concerning his current and future acts (Ellis, 1991:46). We might also note that sometimes the sacred literature was even conformed towards the contemporary or future application where it was believed that it was being or would be fulfilled (Ellis, 1991:46-7). Within the same perspective, we can consider the early Christians' understanding of the OT and the actualization thereof to their own time (Ellis, 1991:47). We find a process of "rewriting" already in the OT, for example where Deuteronomy acts as a reworking and reapplication of traditions found in Exodus; or

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Barr (1980:60), our understanding of Scripture has been dominated too much by "the past", and the functioning of the Bible should instead be directed more towards "the future". Barr (1980:60) notes that, even where the Bible is on the surface narrating the past, the writers' interests actually lay with the future.

[19] Barr (1980:124) is rather of the opinion that Biblical interpretation should be open to the comment and discussions from any quarter that is competently informed. I (*AL*) do not disagree in principle with Barr's (1980:124) statement: "The ability of the Bible to speak afresh to men of faith and to the community of believers is in part dependent on the openness of that faith to insights and arguments that come from beyond itself." However, I do not agree with Barr's (1980:124) assertion that "… the idea that a document of faith can be interpreted only from within faith is an impossibly solipsistic position, carried to its logical conclusion, it could only mean that no one could say anything about any ideological position which he himself did not share". We can certainly gain valuable insights into the Bible from other fields, but the fact remains that the Bible is, at its core, a document of faith and for a proper understanding of the text it should be treated as such.

[20] Where it is noted that even the Bible features certain interpretations that stand in opposition to one another, we might return to the idea that we must determine which messages in the Bible are bound to the circumstances in which they were written, and which messages contain enduring truth.

[21] See also Boring (2012:56).

Chronicles serves as a reinterpretation of Samuel-Kings.[22] Rewriting is also present within the manuscript tradition of a particular book, for example in Daniel (Ellis, 1991:48). Later canonical writers seem to have also, on occasion, brought older writings into the present by a contemporary exposition and application thereof[23] (Ellis, 1991:49). As example, Ellis (1991:49) mentions Ezekiel 16 as an allegory that is based on themes from past books; and Psalm 132, which seems to be a "*midrsashic* reflection" upon 2 Samuel 7. Others have also suggested that a similar reinterpretation took place between First- and Second-Isaiah (see Black, 1986:2-3).

2.1.2. Interpretation in the Greek Old Testament - Septuagint (LXX)

In the history of Biblical interpretation, it is evident that in many instances it was necessary to reinterpret Scripture significantly, in order to make the text more applicable for the context in which it was desired to be understood (Hauser & Watson, 2003:15). The Septuagint (LXX), which adapted the Hebrew Scriptures to fit a new worldview, is a prime example to showcase how interpretation, focused through translation, took place in a believing community (Hauser & Watson, 2003:15). When reading the LXX, it is evident for example, that the translators were influenced by the Hellenistic environment that surrounded them (Hauser & Watson, 2003:13).

According to Brock (1988:90), by the end of the 2nd century BCE, an awareness had unfolded that the original Greek translations of "the law, prophets, and other writings" were not sufficient representations of the original Hebrew. We must bear in mind that these early Greek translators had no precedent when undertaking their work to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (Brock, 1988:90). However, it is believed that the Pentateuch was the first Scriptural material translated into Greek and that this occurred sometime during the 3rd century BCE in Alexandria, Egypt (Greenspoon, 2003:81). The Pentateuch, thus, may have acted as a model for the later translations of the Hebrew Scriptures (Hauser & Watson, 2003:13). But these translations were not all carried out by the same person or even during the same

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[22] Ellis (1991:47-9) and Boring (2012:56); see also Black (1986:2-3) and Davies (2003:155).
[23] Interpretations in these early times were not necessarily interpretation of a finished written document, but may rather be understood as the rewriting and restatement of an earlier theme (Barr, 1980:117).

timeframe, resulting in a lack of uniformity in method and style (Hauser Watson, 2003:8). Some translations were more literal (e.g. the Pentateuch), whereas others were compiled more freely (e.g. Job).[24] If a translation aimed to stay close to the Hebrew, it did not necessarily flow very well in the Greek, while if focus was on providing a better Greek style, there was always the risk of deviating from the intention of the Hebrew original (Hauser & Watson, 2003:13). Even when admitting that translators of the LXX made use of an array of methods in their own translating (e.g. ranging from very literal word-for-word translation, to very free translation), Greenspoon (2003:106-107) importantly remarks that, these translators attempted to render the Hebrew text in a comprehensible and relevant manner for their respective communities. Greenspoon (2003:107) believes that all of these translators viewed themselves as being part of the same sacred mission, that is, that the text they were working with was holy and the translation they would produce would act as their generation's "Bible". Aejmelaeus (1991:23-36), however, warns that we must be cautious in referring to the intention of a translator, as it is not possible to enter the mind of that translator and discern their intention. She further argues that to speak of the translator's "translation technique", is actually to use an unfitting term applied by contemporary readers, since the translators of the LXX did not have an established pre-set technique that they attempted to follow in their translation. Ultimately, Aejmelaeus (1991:33) says that the Greek text of the LXX (whether it is deemed good or bad, correct or incorrect, intentional or unintentional) should be read and interpreted based on the meanings and rules of Greek and according to what was most probably understood by an original native Greek speaker. She holds that the LXX should not be interpreted according to the Hebrew original or according to the possible intention of the translator (Aejmelaeus, 1991:34). Her argument is that, if the translator had a specific intention with the text, it comes across through the Greek text (Aejmelaeus, 1991:34). She believes that generally the translators were simply

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[24] Hauser and Watson (2003:13) and Steyn (1993:36). In discussing translation technique, McLay (2003:47) defines a "literal approach" to translating as a "mechanical reproduction" of every particular element of the text being translated, while using the same word order and consistently making use of lexical equivalents. Such a translation is thus characterized by *formal equivalence* to the source text (McLay, 2003:47-48). On the other hand, there are translations that can be described by *dynamic/functional equivalence* ("free" translations), where the translation has "successfully transferred the meaning and intention of the source text into the target language" (McLay, 2003:48). Here the translator still intended to get across the "meaning" of the source text, but was not intent on having it conveyed in a word-for-word equivalence (McLay, 2003:48).

concerned with the meaning of the original, and they did not purposefully aim at a word-for-word translation (or otherwise) (Aejmelaeus, 1991:26). Rather, when we identify an LXX translation as being quite literal, Aejmelaeus (1991:26) says this "literalism" was not achieved because the translators had a "policy" to do so, but instead it occurred because it was an "easy technique" of translating. According to Aejmelaeus (1991:26), it was only later, in the times of the recensions, and in particular that of Aquila, that the method of literalism as a conscious way of translating originated, since it was believed that such a method would produce good and accurate translations.

In this manner, the "literalism" originated from many who sought to offer "corrections" to the LXX to bring it into closer accord with the Hebrew (Brock, 1988:90). This approach had its culmination in the sophisticated literalism of Aquila in the early 2nd century CE (Brock, 1988:90). And so, literal, word-for-word translation had come to be regarded as the ideal for the "faithful" Biblical translator (Brock, 1988:90). This style was also adopted by the early church and became the norm for nearly all translation until the end of the Middle Ages (Brock, 1988:90). But a very interesting observation is made by Brock (1988:90), who states that this sort of "literal" translation of the Scriptures was diametrically opposed to the principles to be used in translating non-Biblical literary texts, as laid down by Cicero and Horace. Their practice was alternatively to translate *sensu de sensu* instead of the *verbum e verbo* literal approach (Brock, 1988:90). Thus, the literal translator, *interpres*, did not aim to do away with any obscurities or ambiguities found in a text, he rather attempted to pass on the text to his readers as it was, with the difficulty of the text intact (if there were any present) (Brock, 1988:90-91). On the other hand, the *expositor* did not merely attempt to translate, but also endeavoured to elucidate the text he was offering to his readers (Brock, 1988:91). The *expositor* is in this regard more similar to the contemporary translator, being reader-oriented, whereas the *interpres* is oriented more towards the source text (Brock, 1992:312). In other words Brock (1988:91) says, "… the interpretative *expositor* aims to bring the source text to his readers, whereas the literalist *interpres* seeks to bring the reader to the source text."[25] According to Brock (1988:91), we can see that virtually all Biblical translators

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[25] For an elaboration on the description of the *expositor* and *interpres* modes of Biblical translation, see Brock (1992:312-3).

since the 16th century CE had turned to the classical ideal of the translator as *expositor*.

Additional issues that warrant consideration when working with the LXX, are as follows (Hauser & Watson, 2003:14): 1.) We do not have access to a copy that can be directly connected with the original translators. 2.) There is a lack of certainty regarding the original Hebrew texts that lay behind these Greek translations.[26] 3.) Later scribes complicated the matter when they altered it to be more in accord with the developing standard Hebrew text. 4.) There are questions regarding whether the later forms of the Greek text should be considered revisions or new translations.

It is important to remember though, that not all who used the LXX felt it in need of "correction" (Brock, 1988:91). Some fervently claimed that the LXX Pentateuch was on equal grounds with the Hebrew original in terms of its authority (Brock, 1988:91). This approach is to be seen in the *Letter of Aristeas* (probably dating from the late 2nd century BCE) (Brock, 1988:91). Such an approach was also followed by Philo, who described the translators as "prophets" (Brock, 1988:91-92). Subsequently, this view was adopted by the early church (and Church Fathers) and any perceived difference between the Greek and Hebrew could easily be explained on the basis of the fact that the translators themselves were "prophets" who were at work when translating (Brock, 1988:92, 96).

Even now when working with the LXX, it is crucial to recognize that, when considering it in its entirety, it contains various styles, which can be attributed to a different handling of the Hebrew or Greek (Greenspoon, 2003:82). Furthermore, differences in interpretation are also evident (Greenspoon, 2003:82). Clearly it does not seem that there was any sort of "committee" that attempted to bring unity to this diverse collection of material (Greenspoon, 2003:82). So, when analysing a particular book (or part of a book) within the LXX, we must remember that the conclusions we draw in terms of interpretative elements, may not simply be transferred to another book as well (Greenspoon, 2003:82). Finally, we must remember when working with the LXX, especially when trying to establish possible use therof by the NT writers, that by the time the NT texts were being written, there were different versions of the

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[26] See also Greenspoon (2003:82).

LXX in circulation (Steyn, 1993:37). Therefore, we cannot actually talk of "a" or "the" LXX (Steyn, 1993:38).

2.1.3. Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)

It has been pointed out that the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)/Qumran Scrolls were copied somewhere between the 3rd century BCE and the 1st century CE, making them much older than the oldest known Greek codices of the Bible (dating to the 4th century CE), and also in many cases older than the earliest extant copies of the MT[27] (as much as by a millennium).[28]

Brownlee (1951:54) makes the remarkable comment that, the Qumran sect "had its birth in Biblical interpretation,[29] for the founder of the sect, called the Teacher of Righteousness, was primarily the expounder of God's Word". In the words of Chester (1988:141): "The whole of the Qumran literature is saturated with Scripture", and Biblical writings[30] seem to have had fundamental importance for the community's entire existence.[31] VanderKam (2012:25) further tells us,

> At the time when the communities associated with the scrolls were active, the books
> known today as the components of the Hebrew Bible/Protestant Old Testament were,
> with one exception (Daniel), already old. Despite their age, or perhaps partly because
> of it, many of these books were thought by the writers to have extraordinary value for
> present concerns, a value so remarkable that they were believed to be authoritative in

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[27] I.e. the Leningrad Codex, late 9th century CE, and the Aleppo Codex, early 10th century CE (Blenkinsopp, 2006:90).

[28] Stuhlman (1997:184) and VanderKam (2012:7); see also Moyise (2001:9-10), who proposes a range for the DSS of around 100-50 BCE.

[29] Friebel (1981:13) confirms that the Qumran community had Biblical interpretation at its foundation. VanderKam (2012:26) further says that, when looking at the scrolls themselves, it is evident that Scriptural interpretation was continuously applied within the community.

[30] Davies (2003:144) warns that when talking about the Qumran community's use of Scripture we must be careful to use the term "Biblical", since there was not at the stage of Qumran literary activity (ca. 3rd century BCE – 1st century CE) a "Bible" as we know it. Davies (2003:144) reminds that, there was no single canon of Scripture at that point. In saying this, Davies (2003:144) does, however, make it clear that we can confidently say that the Qumran community did in fact have "authoritative writings" and he calls these "Scriptures".

[31] Brownlee (1951:60) also points out that, many scholars regard the sectarian literature of the Qumran community as being saturated with Biblical phraseology. VanderKam (2012:26) calls the Qumran scrolls Scripturally-saturated literature, not merely containing explicit quotations to Scriptural texts, but also featuring paraphrases, allusions and commentary on these texts. Of the more than 900 manuscripts identified, about 200-210 can be classified as copies of one or more Scriptural books, meaning copies of works that eventually became part of the Hebrew Bible (VanderKam, 2012:1).

the contemporary situation – a fundamental assumption that bears repeating and whose importance can hardly be over-emphasized.

Moreover, every member of the sect was also viewed as an expounder (*doresh*) of the Torah (Brownlee, 1951:56). Continual study of the Scriptures was fundamental to the Qumran community and the sharing of this interpretation with the community, as a whole, was very important (Friebel, 1981:13). According to the Dead Sea Manual of Discipline (DSD), every settlement of the sect had to have a place that was dedicated to studying the Torah (Brownlee, 1951:56). It is significant that the manner of Scriptural interpretation employed by potential members was to be assessed firstly in order to see if it aligned with the norms regarding Scriptural interpretation as practiced in the community.[32] This practice was contrary to that of their opponents (believed to have been the Pharisees and Sadducees in all probability) (Brownlee, 1951:57). However, once a person was accepted as a member of the sect they enjoyed equal status with the rest of the group, with regard to Biblical interpretation (Brownlee, 1951:58). The opinions of the individual exegetes were all submitted to the group at large for approval, which was apparently gained by acquiring the majority of the vote (Brownlee, 1951:58). The decisions of this larger body were also final in matters regarding faith and practice (Brownlee, 1951:58).

The Qumran community was constantly engaged with Biblical texts; copying them, translating them, and also offering comments upon them (Chester, 1988:141). Interesting to note, as pointed out by Chester (1988:141-2), is that even with copies that were made of Biblical books, we can see evidence of preferred readings at particular instances, which indicates that a particular interpretation of a text was undertaken. Brownlee (1951:60) even argues that when engaging with, and interpreting Scripture, the community did not take anything over from Scripture without modifying or interpreting it in some way. We also find in the Qumran texts techniques like typology, allegory, catch-word links, quotations from variant texts, altering of quoted texts, and interpreting texts in unorthodox ways (Moyise, 2001:19). The community also did not clearly distinguish between their *pesharim*[33] and other

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[32] Brownlee (1951:57) and Friebel (1981:13).

[33] In the *pesharim* a Biblical text was cited, followed by an interpretation (*pesher*) of that text (Flint, 2003:296-7; see also Chilton, 1988:122 & Friebel, 1981:13). According to Friebel (1981:16), the main concern of the *pesharim* was the interpretation of contemporary events in light of the community's perspective regarding God's activity in history. So, the *pesharim* dealt with eschatology, which the community believed was being realized in their present time (Friebel, 1981:16).

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writings they produced in their interpretation of Scripture (Chester, 1988:142). When looking at the ways in which these texts were transmitted, revised, glossed, and commented upon, it seems that the Qumran community did not treat these writings as "sacred" in the sense that it was not to be altered (Davies, 2003:144). It is essential to observe that the Qumran community believed all the prophetic utterances of the Scriptures were, and would be, fulfilled in them (Friebel, 1981:16). This may have been presupposed to such an extent that it was believed the prophets' words were not relevant in the prophets' own time, but were cryptic messages only now revealed to the Qumran community (Friebel, 1981:16). However, Friebel (1981:17) maintains that it is not entirely certain whether the Qumran community understood the prophetic literature of the Scriptures to be only related to their own community or whether they may have seen a double meaning; for the original audience and their present community. Within the *pesharim* though, it is clear that the focus is always on the relationship of the particular text to the Qumran community's own contemporary situation and setting (Friebel, 1981:16). It seems that the Qumran community did not limit their interpretation by the historical circumstances of a particular text (Friebel, 1981:16). According to Hauser and Watson (2003:18), the DSS writers infused their Scriptures with their own sectarian understanding, which was saturated with Biblical language and built on the theme of apocalyptic eschatology.[34] Davies (2003:164) firmly contends that, to the Qumran writers, there was "*no fundamental conceptual distinction* … between a Scriptural text and a sectarian interpretation". This is so because they viewed their interpretation as merely intending to make clear/uncover the true meaning of Scripture, as was being fulfilled in their lives.[35] To them, their interpretation merely made clear what was already present in the text (Hauser & Watson, 2003:19). The lines between sacred texts and the interpretations thereof, in terms authority, were quite unclear (Hauser & Watson, 2003:18). Ellis (1991:70) argues that, unlike the Rabbis, the Qumran and NT writers had a common eschatological perspective, understanding that the end time was quickly approaching and that they themselves were the "last generation" on

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[34] According to Evans (1989:53), the Qumran community's apocalyptic-eschatological hermeneutic is what led them to take the prophetic elements of Scripture as meant for them (the community of the last days), and so they interpreted the prophetic literature according to their own experiences.

[35] Davies (2003:164) and Hauser and Watson (2003:18).

whom the OT prophecies were being fulfilled.[36] Both the Qumran community and the NT authors believed that they were living in the age of fulfilment, and thus, they saw it fitting to directly apply Scripture to those involved in the final eschatological events: their own people, events and circumstances (Moyise, 2001:128; 2002:646). Furthermore, Moyise (2001:128) explains that both communities saw the establishment of their own community as a fulfilment of the promises God had made to Israel and they were convinced that judgment would soon come over the opposition. These communities also seemed to have used many of the same exegetical techniques (Moyise, 2001:128; 2002:646). And even more noteworthy, is the fact that they often used the same texts (Moyise, 2001:128). Thus, it seems that these two communities applied the same methods and techniques of Scriptural interpretation, but with different presuppositions (Moyise, 2001:131). The NT writers interpreted the Jewish Scriptures in light of the Christ-event and the establishment of the church.[37] Hauser and Watson (2003:22) do not argue that the NT writers understood themselves as writers of "Scripture", but they do contend that these writers definitely believed they had part in a subsequent revelation from God. The Qumran authors viewed the same Scriptures through the lens of the Teacher of Righteousness and the establishment of the Qumran community[38] (Moyise, 2001:131).

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[36] VanderKam (2012:156) agrees that both the Qumran and NT communities viewed the prophecies of the OT as being fulfilled in them, even though it had been written long before. Moyise (2001:9) also states that the Qumran community shows important parallels with the NT writers in terms of their Scriptural interpretation, especially with regard to the tendency to see their own history and key figures as the fulfillment of Scripture.

[37] Moyise (2001:131); see also Hauser and Watson (2003:21).

[38] Moyise (2001:131-2) asks the following question relating to validity of interpretation: "Did the two communities simply find in the scriptures what they wanted to find? In other words, is ancient exegesis a serious attempt to discover what is in the text or an apologetic strategy to defend views arrived at on other grounds?" On this matter there are varying viewpoints (Moyise, 2001:132): some scholars believe that the parallels of Scriptural interpretation between the Qumran and NT authors are rather superficial; others believe that the eschatological interpretation of these two communities were in fact very different; to some, Christological exegesis is understood as something quite different from the exegesis employed at Qumran, Christological exegesis being more concerned with involvement in a type of spiritual transformation than a particular method being followed.

2.1.4. Interpretation in the New Testament (NT)

It has been proposed by many that the "natural" or "literal" meaning of a text, which can be determined by grammatical-historical exegesis, is the real meaning of a Biblical text (McCartney, 1988:102). Although this approach provides a level of control over Biblical interpretation, it must be admitted that it also lays restrictions on the Biblical texts (McCartney, 1988:102). One reason why such an approach is problematic, is that the Bible does not showcase interpretation within itself in a manner completely consistent with the guidelines of the grammatical-historical approach[39] (McCartney, 1988:102). Although the way in which the Bible made use of itself might differ vastly from how the Bible is used in contemporary situations, McCartney (1988:102) suggests that the Bible's use of itself provides us with the richest path to understanding the Bible's self-hermeneutic and proposes that the Bible offers us material for establishing a Biblical basis for our own hermeneutic. In McCartney's (1988:103) view, the problem with assessing the NT's use of the OT, does not really lie in the way the NT authors used the OT, but rather stems from our expectations of how the NT authors ought to have used the OT.

Hays and Green (2010:126) are of the opinion that virtually every NT writing bears the signs of dependence on the OT, even if the pattern of dependence varies.[40] Rodgers (2012:ix) agrees that, whether a formal quotation, allusion or echo of the OT, we can find on almost every page of the NT a reference to the OT. Rodgers (2012:ix) concurs that, it is difficult to understand the NT texts without understanding the varied means in which the NT writers made use of the OT. In relation to Isaiah

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[39] McCartney (1988:103) admits that the grammatical-historical approach to Biblical texts is certainly the most basic part of the foundation for correctly understanding any Biblical text. However, McCartney (1988:103) also warns that the belief that the grammatical-historical approach offers the exhaustive meaning of a given text seems to have originated from post-Enlightenment rationalistic presuppositions rather than from the Bible's understanding and interpretation of itself.

[40] Hays and Green (2010:126-8) lay out different ways in which the NT writers made use of the NT:
   1.) The most obvious is direct citation, which may or may not be introduced by an introductory formula.
   2.) Sometimes the NT shows dependence on the OT through the use of summaries of OT history and teaching (e.g. Paul's sermon in Acts 13:16-41).
   3.) The OT was also used by the NT writers as type-scenes in narratives. Type-scenes comprise a sort of repetition in narrative, an episode may be laid out in a set sequence of motifs, and it can often be associated with recurrent themes. So basically, these type-scenes reiterate similar events (e.g. birth announcements or the trial in the wilderness) by making use of a shared inventory of actions.
   4.) The NT writers also often used allusions or linguistic echoes of the OT (e.g. in 1 Cor 11:7-10, where Paul alludes to the creation story of Gen 1-2).

specifically, Evans (1997:651) observes that, "Isaiah is represented—often extensively—in every New Testament writing that makes significant use of the Old Testament".[41] Rodgers (2012:32-3) indicates that, especially when we take one OT text that is used in different places in the NT, we can often see that the different NT writers applied the same text to different elements in their Christian preaching, teaching, and apologetics (as will shortly be illustrated in the case of Isa 6:9-10).

Hauser and Watson (2003:5) observe that when the NT authors quoted or alluded to OT texts, they did so not with the idea of articulating the comprehensive unity of Scripture, but they rather made use of OT texts to support their own arguments.[42] Regarding the NT itself, Barr (1980:118) makes a very valuable point: The core of the NT faith in early times was not a written document, but existed in the preaching regarding Jesus Christ as crucified and risen Messiah. When the NT documents were written it was not necessarily envisaged that they should become a document that was parallel in type or authority to the already existing Scriptures. Within the NT, the quotations and allusions to the OT are numerous and very diverse, ranging from close affinity to the text being quoted or alluded to, to very loose paraphrases (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). Hays and Green (2010:125) say of the NT writers that they quoted texts in various ways, indicating that they felt eclectic freedom to select, from a variety of text forms available to them, the reading that was most suited to their purposes in a specific instance.[43] These NT writers even at times adjusted the OT language, already working on the interpretative task (Hays & Green, 2010:125).

The manner in which the writers of the NT, and the early church, used the Scriptures of Israel shows both a continuity and divergence from reinterpretation and adaptation of the Jewish Scriptures that existed under the Jewish community (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). The continuity is present in the way that the early Christians, who had come from a Jewish background, interpreted the Scriptures according to traditional

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[41] There are NT books that do not cite or allude to Isaiah, such as 2 and 3 John and the Pastoral Epistles, however these books, for example 2 and 3 John, do not contain anything from the OT and the Pastoral Epistles represent very little of the OT (Evans, 1997:651).

[42] As an extreme example Hauser and Watson mention 1 Cor 9:8-10.

[43] Hays and Green (2010:125) argue that, in this way, the NT writers provide historical precursors for the contemporary preacher and teacher who also feels the freedom to choose, from a variety of (English) Biblical translations, the reading that at a particular moment is most suited to their homiletical and pedagogical aims.

methods (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). They did not, at that stage, view themselves as forming a new religion (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). In this sense, the OT was sometimes interpreted according to the plain/literal sense; used in *midrash*, where the historical and literary contexts of the texts being interpreted were not taken into consideration; interpreted according to typology, where one looks within the OT for prototypes or foreshadowing; sometimes principles were sought out in the OT that could be applied in new situations; and finally, there was the allegorical method of interpretation (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38-40). The divergence, however, came in because the church that read the Scriptures was now lead by different convictions (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). The Scriptures were interpreted in a Messianic sense, believing that the prophecies found in the OT referred to and were fulfilled in Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Hauser & Watson, 2003:38). What is well worth noting though, is that in all methods of using the OT for Christian interpretation, intertextual connections (also adopted from the interpretative traditions of Israel) play a significant guiding role (Hauser & Watson, 2003:40). Hays and Green (2010:128) understand under intertextuality that "every text embodies the interplay of other texts and so exists as a node within a larger literary and interpretive network". Brawley (1995:6) says that, conventionally a text that depends on a precursor has often been evaluated in terms of how the successor text reflects the literary and historical context of the text on which it relies. Brawley (1995:6) aptly expresses though that, "… when one text takes on the task of interpreting by appealing to a precursor, each text sings in its own voice even as its voices also sing in unison, in harmony, or in discord with voices of the other". Brawley (1995:8) contends that, with intertextuality, the focus is no longer to determine how faithful a successor text is in keeping with its source, but rather the emphasis is on how the two texts reverberate with each other.

Jesus and his community appealed to writings they viewed as sacred and authoritative, in order to indicate divine sanction for their own messages (Ellis, 1991:5). It is clear that the writings they used (i.e. Scriptures), were believed to still carry authority for the continuing lives of the people of God (Ellis, 1991:5). Since Jesus and his community viewed the Scriptures as sacred and authoritative, it is interesting that they nevertheless felt the freedom to amend these texts when they

quoted and alluded to them[44] (Ellis, 1991:5). Hengel (1990:21) reports that, after Jesus had come, the understanding of the eschatological as a present state made for a reorientation in how Scripture was understood. Where traditional Jewish exegesis understood the Torah at the centre with the prophets as expositors thereof, this view was reversed, now believing that the entirety of Scripture was actually prophecy that looked forward towards fulfilment (Hengel, 1990:21). From this new eschatological vantage point for the understanding of Scripture, the main focus in communication with contemporaries was to show that the crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah happened in fulfilment of Scripture (Hengel, 1990:21). Important to remember though, is that at the heart of Christian exegesis does not merely lie a particular method, but a person, Jesus Christ (Moyise, 2002:652).

In analysing the NT use of the OT, Hays and Green (2010:130) state that there exists no fixed method, but that there are certain basic presuppositions and procedures that may be taken into account:

1.) It must be remembered that at the time the NT authors were writing, there was no complete "Old Testament", which was seen as the first and incomplete portion of the Bible. Rather they merely made use of the Scriptures (ἡ γραφή) - the sacred texts of Israel – that only later became known as the OT. As the basis of authority, the NT writers' arguments had to proceed theologically from these Scriptures.

2.) As the text and canon of the OT was not yet fixed by the 1st century CE, it cannot be determined precisely what text forms of the Scriptures the NT writers might have known and used when writing their own texts.

3.) Within 1st century Judaism, there were a great number of alternative interpretative methods and traditions that were known and practiced, some of which were contrasting. It is thus inaccurate to speak of "Jewish exegesis" or "Rabbinic exegesis" as though it were a monolithic phenomenon.

4.) Like other interpretative communities, the NT writers represent a distinctive hermeneutical development that emerged within the first century. Yet, early Christians would have shared certain assumptions and practices with other Jewish communities. An interesting example in this regard is how, similarly to

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[44] Tull (2010:30) believes that the NT authors' citations were characterized both by a respect for the writers of the Jewish Scriptures, as well as creative freedom.

the writers of the DSS, some of the NT writers worked with an eschatological hermeneutic that enabled them to read ancient texts as directly related to contemporary events. However, in terms of their Christological hermeneutic, the early Christians set their exegesis apart from that of their Jewish contemporaries. Of further great importance is that, even within the NT itself, there exist divergent interpretative strategies.

5.) Finally, the NT writers' use of the OT cannot simply be explained by discovering parallels in contemporary sources.

A final point to mention is the source(s) from which the NT writers worked. According to Juel (2003:283), the assumption that the NT community often read their "Bibles" (i.e. Israel's Scriptures) in Greek, means that the interpretation of the Greek version of Israel's Scriptures is more crucial for understanding the Greek NT than is the understanding of Aramaic and Hebrew. It is commonly accepted that the LXX was the source that the NT writers mostly used when quoting the OT, yet Hauser and Watson (2003:14-15) say that it is not so simple:[45] With the discovery of the DSS it was found that there were various Biblical texts that came very close to sources that also lay behind the LXX (where the LXX differs from the MT). Thus, it is possible that the NT writers were quoting from and translating a Palestinian Hebrew text that was closely related to the LXX's source, rather than quoting the LXX itself. It is also quite possible that the NT writers did not have a written copy of their (Greek or Hebrew) source(s) with them and thus quoted from memory, which could have easily led to errors. Also, the LXX did not exist in a single unified form, so variations in the text is possible. Steyn (1993:36) asserts that, when investigating the use of the OT in the NT, we must always remember that the writers of these times did not have bound copies of an "OT", "NT" or "LXX" at hand. Such manuscripts were scarce at the time and almost exclusively used by scribes and religious leaders (Steyn, 1993:36). Furthermore, the Greek NT (NA 28) and the LXX (Göttingen), which we use today are reconstructed texts (Steyn, 1993:36). So, Steyn (1993:36) heeds, "The identification of certain changes or differences between "the" NT reading … and "the" LXX reading must therefore be done extremely carefully."

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[45] See also Greenspoon (2003:103-104).

CHAPTER 3
THE MASORETIC TEXT (MT)

3.1. Background

The book of Isaiah tells of YHWH's plan and interaction with His people through almost three centuries, starting with the years in which the historical prophet Isaiah lived (Watts, 2005:xlv). There exists major consensus that the entire book of Isaiah was not authored by the prophet himself, which can be gleaned from various aspects of the book, but is most easily seen in the fact that the later portions of the book reflect events that clearly occurred in a time after that of the prophet Isaiah.[1] Because the book developed over such a immense period of time, incorporating the work of multiple authors and editors, it makes for a very complex text to analyse (Tull, 2010:14). Generally the book of Isaiah is seen as consisting of three different parts: First-Isaiah/Proto-Isaiah (chapters 1-39), Second-Isaiah/Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40-55), and Third-Isaiah/Trito-Isaiah (chapters 56-66).[2] First-Isaiah is generally believed to actually stem from the 8th-century prophet, Isaiah son of Amos, who was active in Jerusalem during the second half of the 8th century BCE.[3] The book of Isaiah itself, as well as 2 Kings, also locates Isaiah 1-39 in the second half of the 8th century BCE (Tucker, 1994:35). Important factors that played a part in shaping the text were the rise and fall of ancient Near Eastern empires (Tucker, 1994:36). This includes the Assyrian Empire, between 742 and 701 BCE (Brueggemann, 1998:3-5). Chapters 1-39 also include some passages that are not from the 8th century, but rather come from as early a time as the 5th or 4th centuries BCE (Tucker, 1994:35). Moreover, the material includes traditions that go as far back as the time of David, around 1000 BCE (Tucker, 1994:35-6). There are even sections within First-Isaiah that some argue dates from a period later than that of the 8th-century prophet (see Roberts, 2015:4). Chapters 40-55 can be dated somewhere between 550 and 539 BCE, based on the two references to Cyrus the Great (44:28; 45:1) of the Persian empire,

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[1] Tull (2010:12-13); see also Brueggemann (1998:3-5). For a more elaborate discussion on why it is believed that the entire book was not the work of the prophet Isaiah, see Tull (2010:11-19). See also Brueggemann (1998:3-5) for a discussion on the three major approaches that have been followed in the study of the book of Isaiah.

[2] See Brueggemann (1998:3-5); Robinson (1998:168); Tucker (1994:28) and Tull (2010:18).

[3] Roberts (2015:3); Tucker (1994:36); Tull (2010:4); see also Brueggemann (1998:3-5).

and the message of comfort it offers to a dismayed Jewish community that is portrayed as being under Babylonian bondage (Babylon being the dominant enemy depicted in Second-Isaiah).[4] Chapter 56-66 are usually dated later than that, around 520 BCE, since this section presupposes an audience and writer(s) no longer in Babylon, but back in Judea, working to reshape the faith community after its long period of exile.[5] The distinction between these sections of the book of Isaiah is usually made due to the great difference in historical context and literary style of the material when these sections are compared.[6] The present study is concerned primarily with First-Isaiah, as the text under discussion (Isa 6:9-10) falls within the first 39 chapters of the book.

Although the book of Isaiah does not offer much biographical data on the prophet Isaiah, Tull (2010:6-7) mentions the following information that can well be gathered from the text: Isaiah lived in Judah's capital city of Jerusalem where he had access to the rulers of Judah.[7] Because of his residence in Jerusalem, a deep concern for the Davidic city can be observed in his words.[8] It seems that he was married to a woman referred to as "the prophet/prophetess" (הנביאה, 8:3) by whom he had at least two sons (7:3; 8:3)[9] and perhaps also a third (7:14). It also appears as though Isaiah was surrounded by a group of "disciples" (Isa 8:16) who would have collected his words.[10] Furthermore, since Isaiah is depicted as being literate, articulate, theologically

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[4] Roberts (2015:3); see also Brueggemann (1998:3-5).

[5] See Brueggemann (1998:3-5) and Roberts (2015:3-4).

[6] *Ibid*

[7] So also Roberts (2015:4).

[8] The contact with the royal court seems to have majorly influenced the prophet regarding the royal theology that existed in the Davidic court (i.e. the Zion tradition) (Roberts, 2015:4). Regarding the Zion tradition, Roberts (2015:4) says the following: The Zion tradition was both a political and a theological construct. Three important aspects of this construct were: 1.) The acceptance that YHWH was the imperial God, king of all the gods as well as ruler over all the nations. 2.) Belief that YHWH had chosen David and made a covenant with him, promising that someone from his house would always occupy the throne and act as YHWH's ruler on earth. 3.) And the claim that YHWH had selected Jerusalem as his earthly dwelling place, ensuring the security of the city. Regarding this theological construct, especially concerning YHWH's dwelling in Jerusalem, Isaiah seems to have differed somewhat from his contemporaries in the sense that he laid more emphasis on the responsibility to keep the city pure and fit for YHWH to reside there, by upholding justice and righteousness (Roberts, 2015:5). Although this responsibility was also part of the popular theological tradition, said tradition sometimes stressed God's commitments to the city over against the obligations of the king and his court (Roberts, 2015:4). Even though the Zion tradition was the main theological influence on Isaiah's thoughts, Roberts (2015:5) proposes that a secondary influence was that of the Deuteronomisitc Mosaic covenant theology.

[9] See also Tucker (1994:36).

[10] Tucker (1994:36).

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confident, and familiar with royalty and the Temple, it seems that he was part of the privileged class of Jerusalem. Yet he was clearly not afraid to speak out against the injustices of the upper class, as we see in the major themes of "justice" and "righteousness" that are heavily present in the book.[11] Tull argues that Isaiah was utterly convicted of having been called to deliver a harsh message that went against the expectations of his community. Isaiah's preaching started in an era where Judah and Israel were relatively independent from foreign rule. Throughout the book it is clear though that this situation changed drastically. By the time of Hezekiah's reign, Israel had been destroyed and almost the entire Judah outside Jerusalem shared their fate.

Amidst the Syro-Ephraimitic war (Judah's war with Syria and Israel), Isaiah the 8th-century prophet called upon Judah to trust in YHWH, but the people and the king opted instead to rely on Assyria in their crisis (Brueggemann, 1998:8). The prophet viewed this submission to Assyria as a rejection of YHWH, which resulted in YHWH's judgment over the city of Jerusalem (Brueggemann, 1998:8). The prophet, however, had a remaining trust in the fidelity of YHWH and thus, amidst the harsh judgment, a message emerges of YHWH who will utterly renew things, not based on the people's deservedness, but based on His own grace (Brueggemann, 1998:9).

Theologically, the book of Isaiah has a particular perspective on reality that understands YHWH at its centre[12] (Brueggemann, 1998:10). According to Brueggemann (1998:10), it is difficult to be sure how much of the hopeful material in the book comes from the 8th-century prophet and how much is there due to later editorial additions. Yet, Brueggemann (1998:10) is of the opinion that the prophet certainly seems to stand within traditions where hope, even in the face of dire circumstances, is still possible. Brueggemann (1998:8) further states that the editorial work done to the book of Isaiah over an immense period, has reformed the prophetic

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[11] See also Tucker (1994:36).

[12] In terms of the theology in the book of Isaiah, Goldingay (2009:168) identifies the following seven dominant themes: 1.) Revelation through divine initiative with the prophet fulfilling mediation, and the ongoing significance of YHWH's words. 2.) YHWH as the upright and merciful Holy One of Israel. 3.) Israel as the people of YHWH, and Jerusalem as the city of YHWH (both rebellious but chosen). 4.) A remnant of Israel, who will survive by the grace of YHWH and who is challenged to responsiveness. 5.) The destiny of nations, empires and their kings. 6.) The sovereign divine will and human responsibility. 7.) And finally, the day of YHWH to come, and the David to come. For a discussion on these theological themes, see Goldingay (2009:168-190).

utterances contained in the book in such a way that their theological message became durable and canonical within Judaism. Thus, the theological claims of the book reach beyond the 8th-century[13] (Brueggemann, 1998:8).

3.2. Isaiah 6

Chapter 6 of Isaiah starts by telling that Isaiah[14] had seen (a vision of) the Lord in the year that king Uzziah had died. The chapter goes on to describe exactly what Isaiah saw: The Lord sitting on a high throne with his robe filling the Temple. There were six-winged Seraphim around him calling out that he was 'holy, holy, holy, the Lord of hosts' and that His glory filled the earth. The foundations of the threshold shook from the sound and the Temple was filled with smoke. At this, the prophet thought that he was done away with, since he, a man of unclean lips among a people of unclean lips, had seen YHWH. But instead, one of the Seraphim came to the prophet and touched his lips with a burning coal from the altar, taking away his guilt and sin. In this heavenly assembly, the Lord asks whom he can send, to which the prophet volunteers eagerly. The Lord then sends Isaiah to the people with the message that they should listen, but not understand, and see, but not perceive. The prophet is further instructed to harden/fatten the heart of the people, dull their ears and shut their eyes, so that they would not see, hear, understand and turn back and heal themselves. To this commission, the prophet responded by asking "How long, Lord?" (6:11).[15] The Lord answered by saying 'until cities, houses and the entire land had been made desolate and he had sent the people far away'. The chapter ends with an enigmatic verse, stating that even if a tenth were to remain, that remainder would burn again, like a terebinth or an oak of which the stump remains even when it is cut

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[13] However, it seems to go too far to say, as Brueggemann (1998:5) does, that the book of Isaiah is 'generative and suggestive' and 'open for being drawn into a variety of interpretative models, of which the Christian faith are among many'. Brueggemann (1998:6) proposes that both Jews and Christians should recognize that the book of Isaiah is generative and thus open to more than one line of direction. After claiming all this about the book of Isaiah, Brueggemann (1998:7) still states the following though: Isaiah continues to have power among us, not because of historical critical judgments or canonical discernments, but because of the theological *stuff* of the text. Brueggeman asserts that this text tradition, which insists that the Holy One is central, is in fact a "Gospel", "It is news about what God has decided, decreed, and is doing that makes a decisive difference in the world."

[14] The subject of the chapter is not explicitly indicated, but it is generally accepted that the prophet Isaiah is in fact the subject.

[15] Any translations in this study that are not my own (*AL*), have been taken from the ESV, unless stated otherwise.

down. The reader is left with the words "The holy seed is its stump" (6:13). Due to textual difficulties, the precise meaning of v. 13 is difficult to ascertain, and so it is uncertain if the last verse of the chapter offers a glimmer of hope or not.[16]

Many scholars[17] believe that Isaiah 6 is a "call narrative" or inaugural vision, where the prophet is called into vocation. If this is the case it seems strange though that the account does not appear at the beginning of the book as can be found in the cases of Ezekiel and Jeremiah for example.[18] The report of the prophet's call here is also awkward, because it interrupts a "previously established collection of the prophet's speeches" (Tucker, 1994:101). There are, however, other scholars[19] who do not believe that chapter 6 is a call narrative similar to that of other prophets. It has been pointed out that the word "send" (אשלח) is never used in a "call", but is always found in connection to a particular message or mission, as is rather the case in Isaiah (6:8).[20] Watts (2005:104) also indicates that there is no suggestion that this occurrence is the first prophetic vision or experience that the prophet encountered. According to Tull (2010:6), parallels with 1 Kings 22 (that will be elaborated on shortly) also suggests that Isaiah 6 is not a call narrative, but that Isaiah was, like Micaiah, already "a recognized spokesperson for the divine".[21] Roberts (2015:91) admits that the Micaiah passage is not a call narrative since he was already a well-known prophet at the time, however, he does not agree that the Isaiah vision should be discarded as a call narrative. Evans (1989:22), on the other hand, proposes that Isa 6 should be regarded as a commission of judgment, rather than a vocational call.

In any case, it seems that Isaiah's visionary report does share some common features with certain OT vocation reports, including that of Moses (Exod 3:1-4:17),

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[16] Roberts (2015:101) and Tucker (1994:103).

[17] E.g. Foster and Shiell (1997:260); Lind (1997:317); Pao and Schnabel (2007:305); Roberts (2015:91) and Tucker (1994:36). See also Berges (2012:80); Blenkinsopp (2000:223); Sweeney (1996:134) and Wildberger (1991:252). According to Gray (1975:99), there is no reason to doubt that chapter 6 is an account of the prophet's autobiography (of which we find further accounts in 8:1-18 and perhaps also in 7:1-16).

[18] See Tucker (1994:101) and Watts (2005:104). Seitz (2004:377) says that it became easier to consider chapter 6 as a call narrative once it was accepted that the literary unfolding of a book need not necessarily match the temporal reality to which it referred.

[19] E.g. Dumbrell (1984:4); Köstenberger (2007:479); Sweeney (1996:135) and Watts (2005:104).

[20] See Köstenberger (2007:479).

[21] See also Evans (1989:22).

Gideon (Judg 6:7-40), Jeremiah (Jer 1), and Ezekiel (Ezek 1-3).[22] Each of these individuals have an encounter with God in these reports, whether it be directly or through a messenger; all are commissioned to do or preach God's will; and in all instances there is a ritual act or sign that symbolizes the person's designated role (Tucker, 1994:101). Moreover, all of these people who were called by God, except Ezekiel, at first object to the call, but are then reassured by God (Tucker, 1994:101). In the Isaiah narrative though, the prophet responds rather eagerly when the Lord asks whom to send (Uhlig, 2009:67). Landy (2015:78) is of the opinion that, in this sense Isaiah is unique among the prophets in responding to God's call with the willing words "Here I am! Send me." Isaiah 6 also shows affinities with the vision of Micaiah, son of Imlah, in 1 Kings 22, which speaks of a similar throne room scene.[23] Other passages that also show similarities in this regard are Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6 and Zechariah 3:1-5.[24] Evans (1989:22) further views the Amos account in Amos 7-9 as being in close parallel to Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6. Amos 9:1-10 also speaks of the destruction that will come over Israel, but it is followed in vv. 11-15 with the restoration of Israel that will come thereafter. In terms of God causing a hardened state within people, the account of the hardening of the Pharaoh's heart (Exod 8:32) comes to mind as well.[25] Theologically, the Isaiah passage is just as difficult as the narrative of the hardening of the Pharaoh's heart, if not more so, since Isaiah's commission is aimed against God's own chosen people (see Sawyer, 1996:36). It seems though, that the closest resemblance to the Isaiah vision in chapter 6 is Micaiah's vision in 1 Kings 22:19-23.[26] In this account, Micaiah also sees a vision of the Lord on his throne, surrounded by the host of heaven. The Lord then asks who will go to entice Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead. A spirit then volunteers to become a lying spirit in the mouths of all Ahab's prophets. The Lord allows the spirit to go and do as he proposed, saying that he will succeed.

When comparing the visionary report of Isaiah to the call narratives or similar visionary experiences of other prophets we may note the following: The function of

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[22] Coggins (2001:443); Lind (1997:317); Ossai-Ugbah (2011:137); Tucker (1994:101) and Williamson (1994:32).

[23] Roberts (2015:91, 100) and Tucker (1994:101); see also Gray (1975:102) and Watts (2005:104).

[24] Watts (2005:105); see also Tucker (1994:101) and Tull (2010:141).

[25] Köstenberger (2007:480) and Watts (2005:109).

[26] Evans (1989:22) and Roberts (2015:91); see also Watts (2005:109).

the Micaiah account in 1 Kings 22 can be described as polemical,[27] i.e. the king was not fond of the message that the prophet Micaiah had delivered, and the prophet then relates his vision in order to legitimate his message against the more favourable, yet false, prophecies of the other prophets (Roberts, 2015:91). The Amos narrative can be said to have a similar polemical function (Roberts, 2015:91). When the priest Amaziah ordered the prophet Amos to go elsewhere to prophecy (Amos 7:12-13), the prophet justified his refusal to follow this command by pointing towards the commission he had received from God.[28] Isaiah also faced opposition, and his account of his visionary experience probably also functioned polemically, since the prophet (similar to Micaiah) had to legitimate his harsh message and explain why the people rejected his message;[29] did not receive salvation; and why God's work was only slowly realized (Roberts, 2015:92, 102). Evans (1986:145) even argues that the paradox of Isaiah's message of judgment on the one hand and repentance on the other, actually serves to portray Isaiah as a true prophet, over against false prophets (which is similar to the Micaiah account). The call narratives of Jeremiah and Ezekiel[30] can also be said to serve a similar function to Isaiah 6, even though they do not occur in a similar narrative setting as that of Isaiah (Roberts, 2015:92). Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel legitimated their own messages against contradictory messages from other prophets, who they claimed were not speaking God's word, as they did not stand in His council and was not sent by Him, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel were (Jer (6:12-15); 23:16-32 & Ezek 13:1-23).[31]

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[27] Roberts (2015:92), however, does not claim that the call narratives or the report of Micaiah are solely polemical. He contends that the function of these visionary experiences are to convey rich messages about God and indicate a more serious impact on the prophets' theological standpoints than is necessary for their polemical function (Roberts, 2015:92).

[28] Roberts (2015:91); see also Tucker (1994:102).

[29] See also Uhlig (2009:81).

[30] Tucker (1994:101) articulates that Isaiah 6 shows a close parallel with Ezekiel 1-3 - both report visions of the Lord's heavenly throne. Isaiah and Ezekiel do not see God directly, but both find themselves just on the edge of the divine assembly, able to overhear the discussion (Tucker, 1994:101). This type of scene is also found in other ancient Near Eastern traditions that speak of a heavenly court (Tucker, 1994:101).

[31] Roberts (2015:92); see also Tucker (1994:101-2).

3.3. Isaiah 6:9-10[32]

וַיֹּאמֶר לֵךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לָעָם הַזֶּה שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמוֹעַ וְאַל־תָּבִינוּ וּרְאוּ רָאוֹ וְאַל־תֵּדָעוּ׃ 9

הַשְׁמֵן לֵב־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאָזְנָיו הַכְבֵּד וְעֵינָיו הָשַׁע פֶּן־יִרְאֶה בְעֵינָיו וּבְאָזְנָיו יִשְׁמָע וּלְבָבוֹ יָבִין וָשָׁב וְרָפָא לוֹ׃ 10

9. And he [the Lord] said: "Go and say to this people: "Listen (in order) to hear, but do not understand, and look (in order) to see,[33] but do not perceive."
10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make his ears dull, and shut his eyes, lest he sees with his eyes and hear with his ears and his heart understand and turn back[34] and heal himself."

The reference to the people of God as "this people", should probably be read in a sarcastic light implying contempt, which reflects a tension already observed in 1:3, stating that 'Israel does not know', but still they are called 'my people'.[35] Both protases in v. 9 contain qal imperatives, which are followed respectively by their infinitive absolute forms (שמעו שמוע and וראו ראו) (Evans, 1982b:415; 1989:18). Here it has been translated as "listen (in order) to hear … look (in order) to see". The infinitive absolutes can be seen as intensifiers, with the possible translation "truly hear … truly see",[36] and/or as indicating continuous action, with a possible translation "listen constantly … look regularly" (cf. NIV "be ever hearing … be ever seeing").[37] This makes it clear that the MT is not referring to an already present state of the people (although they may already have been hard-hearted), but v. 9 should be best understood as a divine command for hardening to occur (McComiskey, 2008:64). Against arguments stating that the text should be viewed as descriptive (e.g. "they listen, but do not hear … they look, but do not see") rather than imperative, Evans (1989:18) notes that, if this were true it would be rather strange that later writers would alter the descriptive forms into the imperative. Conversely, we see the

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[32] Hebrew text from: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

[33] The translation "Listen (in order) to hear … look (in order) to see …" has been chosen to retain the sense of the imperatives that are followed by infinitives.

[34] According to Watts (2005:109), the word שוב is the regular word to indicate repentance, thus the "turn back" should clearly be understood in this manner.

[35] Bartelt (2013:20); see also Evans (1989:18); Gray (1975:109); Oswalt (1986:188) and Robinson (1998:175).

[36] So Blomberg (2007:47).

[37] So Watts (2005:101-2). Evans (1989:18) and McComiskey (2008:64) agree that it acts both to emphasise and indicate continuous action.

opposite being done by later scribes, since the imperatives make for a very difficult message (Evans, 1989:18). The verbs of the apodoses are negative jussives that express prohibition (אל–תבינו and אל–תדעו) (Evans, 1982b:415). They have been translated here as "but do not understand … but do not perceive". Evans (1989:18) contends that "do not understand" and "do not perceive" both appear as qal imperfects and definitely have imperatival force, as can be gleaned from the particle אל.

The first three phrases of v. 10 feature hiphil imperatives (השמן "make fat," הכבד "make dull" and השע "cover up/shut"), which have a causative function (Evans, 1982b:415; 1989:18). The purpose (פן) of the prophet's message is indicated in the second part of v. 10 (Evans, 1982b:415; 1989:19). Thus, the prophet should actively *cause* the people's heart to become fat, ears to become dull and shut the people's eyes, *so that* they do not turn and heal themselves. According to McComiskey (2008:64), the *crux interpretum* of verse 10 is the Hebrew conjunction פן "lest". Regarding the use of this conjunction in the MT, McComiskey (2008:64) observes that in every instance, that which is introduced in the פן clause is to be considered "disadvantageous, something to be avoided". In every instance, פן may thus be understood as "lest", meaning "for the aversion of" (McComiskey, 2008:64-5). This understanding excludes the possibility that פן should be understood in v. 10 as meaning "perhaps" in a positive sense,[38] expressing a hope that Judah might well repent and be healed[39] (McComiskey, 2008:65). These considerations, regarding the language of these verses, lead to the difficult message that God actually does not want the people to repent, but wants to use Isaiah to actively prevent them from repenting.[40] Based on the force of פן, many commentators agree that the agency of the hardening finally lies

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[38] Such an interpretation has been put forward by some scholars, like Synge (1980:56), who uses the argument to indicate how the NT authors saw a message of despondency followed by hope in Isa 6:9-10. If this is accepted, a translation like the following is proposed: "… *perhaps* they will see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn …" (Synge, 1980:56). However, when considering the Hebrew language and understanding the first part of v. 10 with imperatives, a translation of "perhaps" for פן does not make sense (i.e. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make his ears dull, and shut his eyes, *perhaps* he sees with his eyes and hears with his ears and understands with his heart and turn back and heal himself."). It does not make sense that God would order the prophet to make the heart fat and ears dull and shut the eyes, so that the people could perhaps see. A translation of "lest" seems much more appropriate here. For the possibility of "perhaps", it also seems that the verbs for "see", "hear" and "understand" in the latter half of v. 10 would be better understood in a future tense (i.e. "perhaps he *will see* …"), which is not the case.

[39] Sawyer (1996:36) agrees that the mission given to Isaiah in 6:9-10 is of absolute rejection.

[40] McComiskey (2008:65); see also Tucker (1994:103).

with God,[41] who would in any case still be justified to act in such a way since the people persisted wilfully in their obduracy (McComiskey, 2008:65). The prophet then, as the one sent by God to convey the message of hardening, can be understood as participating in this active role of hardening.[42] Foster and Shiell (1997:261) agree that the role of YHWH is evident in these verses, but do not concede that this includes agency on the prophet's part. However it might be viewed, this does not clear up the theological difficulty of God actively wanting to harden his own people.

It has been pointed out[43] that the command given in Isa 6:9-10 is logically impossible to fulfil or self-contradictory, since, in order to obey the command "do not understand", it is necessary to first understand. The motifs of "hearing", "seeing", "understanding" and "knowing" can be found throughout the vision of Isaiah (1:3-42:16-20),[44] and even the entire book.[45] In addition, apart from Isa 6:9-10, the theme of Israel's obduracy in terms of sensory malfunctioning (e.g. deafness and blindness), can also be seen throughout Isaiah (e.g. 29:9-10; 42:18-21; 43:8; 44:18; 63:17)[46] and even throughout the rest of Scripture (e.g. Exod 32:9; 33:3-5; Deut 28:28; 29:4; 2 Kgs 17:14; Neh 9:16-17, 29-30; Pss 78; 115; 135; Jer 5:21-23; Ezek 12:2-3; Zech 7:11-12) (Watts, 2007:152). Isa 6:9-10 specifically has correspondence in Deut 29:4, which also features the combination of "heart", "eyes" and "ears" (Tull, 2010:146).[47] Evans (1989:51) explains that this Deuteronomy text is an attempt to explain the unreceptivity of humans to divine revelation, but true understanding is only possible if God offers humans a mind (or "heart") to understand. Bartelt (2004:330) is also of the opinion that the human senses do not by themselves have the capacity to perceive, but they have to be opened by the power of God to be able to truly perceive. Evans (1989:51) continues to point out that Isa 6:9-10, on the other hand, explains obduracy as something actively created by God himself, which might make for a more severe message.[48] Yet Evans (1989:51) concludes that, whether it

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[41] See Köstenberger (2007:480) and Marshall (2007:601).

[42] Carroll (1997:83); see also Watts (2005:109).

[43] E.g. by Landy (1999:70) and Tull (2010:146).

[44] Watts (2005:108).

[45] Carroll (1997:79-93).

[46] See also Uhlig (2009:63; 71-8) for more on the hardening motif in Isaiah.

[47] Evans (1989:50) agrees that when considering the obduracy passages of Isaiah, 6:9-10 shows the closest affinities with Deut 29:2-4.

[48] See also Sawyer (1996:36) and Tull (2010:146).

is deprivation of a receptive mind/heart, or the direct imposing of obduracy, it is one and the same process. In the end, the important factor is that in both cases God is sketched as the active agent, either in withholding proper understanding or creating obduracy (Evans, 1989:51).

It seems that Isaiah 6 is often employed in sermons about willingly responding to God's call or commission, and surely, we find inspiration for such a message in the chapter (Bartelt, 2013:20). However, often the sermon also ends directly after Isaiah has responded willingly, yet this is not the complete message of chapter 6.[49] In fact, the rest of Isaiah 6, after the prophet volunteers to be sent, actually contains the mission to which the prophet has been called, and what a difficult mission it is (Bartelt, 2013:20). Brueggemann (1998:61) offers a good description of the meaning of Isaiah's message: "The intention of the decree of YHWH is that Judah and Jerusalem should be narcoticized so that they will not be healed. God wills an unhealed people!" The fact that church lectionaries and sermons often appeal to Isaiah 6 only up until verse 8 simply showcases the awkward feelings that believers have towards the difficult words in 6:9-10 (Tucker, 1994:105).

To make sense of the fact that God seems to want to harden the people and keep them from repentance, McComiskey (2008:65) proposes that it seems as though the ultimate goal with the hardening is to ensure that the exile takes place. The exile being the decided punishment God wants to effect for Judah's sins, and the hardening ensuring that this exile indeed occurs (McComiskey, 2008:65). Pao and Schnabel (2007:305) also observe that the connection between sin and exile, as seen in 6:11-12, can already be gleaned in 5:13 and later in 27:8-13 (and potentially 49:20-21). In this regard, McComiskey (2008:65) offers an interesting perspective - since God is merciful by nature, He would "have" to relent if the people actually repented, but it was actually His just intent to punish them, and for this reason He hardens them to ensure that the punishment actually takes place (the exile definitely occurs). In addition, it is important to note, as Tull (2010:147) points out, that when looking at chapters 1-5, it is clear that the command given to the prophet is intended not intended to prevent the people from a compliance they wanted to show, in order to curse them unfairly. In fact, it seems to be quite the contrary, as we can see later

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[49] Bartelt (2013:20); see also Tucker (1994:105).

in Isa 7:4-7, where Isaiah is instructed to give a markedly different message of reassurance and hope (Tull, 2010:147). Thus, the message that Isaiah spoke, would have brought life and healing if the people heeded it, but because the people did not listen, did not trust God and relied on oppression, the rejected message only intensified the judgment (Isa 30:8-17) (Roberts, 2015:102). According to Tull (2010:147), this command that the prophet had to carry out may be better understood as a paradoxical intervention that should provoke the hearers to respond, since clear-cut communication had not achieved this.[50] Roberts (2015:102) proposes that God does not desire to purge Jerusalem, but that He actually desires the transformation of the wicked. The message that the prophet is ordered to convey, can thus be seen as the last resort effort to get through to the listeners so that they might actually hear[51] (Roberts, 2015:102). Finally, the severe judgment in Isa 6:9-10 can be understood in the light of the harsh historical reality that Israel and Judah experienced during the Assyrian attacks from 734 to 612 BCE (Watts, 2005:110). Despite many attempts to soften the harsh message that appears to be present in Isa 6:9-10, we have to contend that the message of these verses was in fact quite severe. Even though McComiskey's (2008:65) proposal does offer a creative and plausible interpretation of Isa 6:9-10, we must still ask whether or not this is merely another attempt at softening a message that is not very difficult to understand, yet very hard to accept.

Beuken (2004:78) emphasises that, in order to properly understand chapter 6 of Isaiah, we must read it against the backdrop of chapters 1-5.[52] Watts (2007:151) also suggests that since chapter 6 is found only after the preceding 5 chapters, it implies that the foregoing material is essential to the interpretation of chapter 6. Whereas it is not explicitly stated in chapter 6 why judgment is to come on the people,[53] when considering chapters 1-5 we see for example that: YHWH cared for Israel but they rejected Him; the people engaged in idolatry; and there was a lack of social justice, to

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[50] See also Uhlig (2009:81).
[51] Roberts (2015:102) believes that the same is true in the Micaiah narrative.
[52] See also Beale (1991:261) and Blomberg (2007:46-7).
[53] Tucker (1194:104) does point out though, that a hint of indictment may be gleaned in 6:5 where the prophet proclaims that he lives amidst people of unclean lips.

name only a few aspects that could have contributed to the judgment.[54] The opening verses of the book (1:2-31) already tell of the condition that the people were in, describing their severe rebellion in words that remind us of 6:9-10 (Robinson, 1998:177). Beuken (2004:72-87) argues though that, even if chapter 6 speaks of the judgment to come over the people and the land, the intention was always for it to lead to or be followed by the eventual restoration by YHWH.[55] In the vision of chapter 6 we find that Isaiah proclaims himself, together with the people, as unclean, but then he is cleansed through a coal from the altar, leading to the expectation that the people will also be cleansed.[56] So it seems possible that, just as Isaiah's unclean lips were cleansed by a coal, the people, who also have unclean lips, will be cleansed, not by a coal, but by the judgment that is to come.[57] Bartelt (2013:22) specifically sees the "burning" reported in v. 13 as (together with serving as judgment) functioning as a means of purging and restoring holiness. According to Tucker (1994:104), the ending of the chapter, if it speaks of a stump that remains, indicates that those responsible for this verse (whether it be Isaiah or later editors) also saw that the disaster could be a cleansing punishment, but that the possibility was there for new life to grow out of it. Evans (1986:145) is further of the opinion that, in spite of Isaiah 6:9-10, it goes too far to claim that Isaiah did not preach repentance, since throughout the prophet's preaching the prophet had the expectation for the people to repent. In the light of this, the hope for a remnant and restoration, as suggested by 6:13, is not at odds with the prophet's overall teaching[58] (Evans, 1986:145).

Beale (1991:257) offers a somewhat different additional perspective than the usual approaches to Isa 6:9-13, proposing that these verses might function as part of a

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[54] Beuken (2004:78-9); see also Blomberg (2007:46-7); Pao and Schnabel (2007:305) and Watts (2007:151).

[55] According to Synge (1980:56), Isaiah's response to God's commission in v. 11 (asking "How long?") can be understood as the prophet expecting that Israel would in due time see and hear (even if at first, they would not).

[56] Beuken (2004:72-87); see also Robinson (1998:174).

[57] Beuken (2004:72-87) and Tucker (1994:104); see also Evans (1986:143, 146) and Uhlig (2009:68-9).

[58] To support the idea that chapter 6 is not the final message, we might also take Isa 32:3-4 into account, which demonstrates a reversal of the commission in chapter 6: "Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention. The heart of the hasty will understand and know, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly." (Landy, 2015:82). Furthermore, Landy (2015:83) points out that, chapter 35 also shows similar imagery by saying that the heart of the hasty is strengthened; the eyes of the blind and ears of the deaf are opened; and the dumb signs loudly. According to Landy (2015:83), Second- and Third-Isaiah can be regarded as a reversal of First-Isaiah, reconstructing the world that was deconstructed by First-Isaiah.

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polemic against the idolatry of Israel.[59] Beale (1991:258) mentions the following points that may serve as backing for such an argument: He observes a striking verbal resemblance between Isa 6:9-10 and Pss 115:4-6 and 135:15-18.[60] Isa 6:9-10 reads, ""Listen (in order) to hear, but do not understand, and look (in order) to see, but do not perceive." Make the heart of this people fat, and make his *ears dull*, and *shut* his *eyes*, *lest he sees with his eyes* and *hear with his ears* and his heart understand and turn back and heal himself." Ps 115:4-6 reads, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; *eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear*; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them.", which is very similar to Ps 135:15-18: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; *they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear*, nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them." It is noteworthy that these Psalms verses both conclude by indicating that those who make and worship idols, will in fact become like those very idols.[61]

Some might not find it so easy to see Isa 6:8-13 as having idolatry specifically in mind, but Beale (1991:259) further mentions that even the conclusion of chapter 6 might refer to Israel as idols, being burnt by the judgment of YHWH. In fact, the image of oaks and terebinths burning is used elsewhere in Isaiah as descriptions of God destroying idols (Beale, 1991:259). Isa 1:29-31 also likens Israel to an oak "whose leaf withers" and states that both it and the strong man, that will become tinder, will burn together (Beale, 1991:259). The things that are burnt in these verses should most probably be understood as the subjects of the first lines, i.e. the idols

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[59] See also Pao and Schnabel (2007:305) and Watts (2007:152).

[60] See also Robinson (1998:183).

[61] See also Pao and Schnabel (2007:305). Robinson (1998:183) observes similarities between Isa 6:9-10 and Ps 58, indicating that both describe the wilful deafness of Israel, the judgment of God that follows this, as well as the eventual vindication of God's faithful remnant. Ps 58:3-5 reads: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies. They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the *deaf* adder that stops its ear, so that it *does not hear* the voice of charmers or of the cunning enchanter." Robinson (1998:184) puts forth that these verses should be understood as a wicked Israel who chooses not to hear YHWH's appeals to repent (Robinson, 1998:184). However, the resemblances between Isa 6:9-10 and Pss 135 and 115 seem even closer. The description in Ps 58 is moreover applied to the "wicked" and it is unclear whether this refers to a sinful Israel in particular or wicked people in general.

and those who made them (Beale, 1991:259). Beuken (2004:83-4) also makes a connection between the oak imagery in chapter 1 and chapter 6, that is to say those who worship the idols will become like the idols that have been made from trees. However, Beuken (2004:84) emphasises 6:13 in the understanding of chapter 6 as a whole, and so believes that we must not forget that although there will be a burning, YHWH is able to produce holy seed even from the mere stump that remains after judgment. Beale (1991:272-3) further points out that the same language of 'not seeing, hearing, nor understanding' as found in Isa 6, also appears in other sections of Isa 42-48 (i.e. Isa 42:16-20 – cf. 42:7-8; 43:8-12; 44:8-20; 47:5-11), and in all these cases the language is used to refer to idol worshippers.[62] Beale (1991:273) admits the possibility that these passages could simply refer to the spiritual incapacity of the people, but holds firm that it seems more than mere coincidence that these metaphors occur in Isa 40-50 always in reference to idolaters. Other prophetic literature also indicates that figurative language describing malfunctioning sensory organs seems to not merely indicate covenant breakers in general, but are more specifically applied to broken covenant through idolatry (e.g. Ezek 12:2; Jer 5:21; 7:24, 26; 11:8; 25:4; 35:15; 44:5 etc.) (Beale, 1991:274). According to Beale (1991:274-5) there are instances where it is not clear from the language describing the malfunctioning of sensory organs, whether it relates to idolatry. However, where idolatry is not in mind atypical malfunctioning language is usually employed (Beale, 1991:274-5). Beale (1991:275) thus contends that the phraseology 'having eyes, but not seeing' or 'having ears, but not hearing', together with other sensory-organ malfunctioning language, almost without exception is applied to idolaters.[63]

The message of Isa 6:9-10 is difficult to accept, since it seems that God actively wanted to create a hardened state in his people and wished to intentionally withhold his own people from repenting. When taking the idolatry argument into account, as well as the rebellion of the people as described in chapters 1-5, it becomes easier to understand why God would announce such a complete judgment to come over the people. It also makes it rather clear that the judgment was fully deserved by the people. It further helps if we accept arguments that propose that God did not actively

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[62] See also Pao and Schnabel (2007:305).

[63] Although few scholars follow an argument in line with Beale (1991:262), he does points out that a significant number have seen v. 13 in 1QIsa[a] from the Dead Sea Scrolls in this manner.

prevent repentance in the people that they otherwise would have been willing to show, but that He merely gave them over to their already hardened state. However, in the end we must still admit that, whether a hardened state was already present or not, God asks Isaiah to go and actively fatten the people's heart, dull their ears, and shut their eyes, *so that* they shall not repent and heal themselves. Here McComiskey's argument may be very valuable, stating that God did this in order to ensure that judgment (i.e. the exile) came over the people, since He wished for the people to go through this judgment in order to be restored afterwards. Yet when 6:13 is considered, it seems that not all the people will "survive" this judgment, but only a small remnant will remain. This still leaves the reader with the impression that God actively destroys His own people, albeit because of a deserved judgment. When considering this in the light of the rest of the OT, we can admit that this message is not so foreign. But a God who actively hardens His own people and actively keeps them from repentance (regardless of it being due to punishment or not) leaves the reader in an awkward position. This awkwardness is evident when we look at later traditions that attempted to "soften" this harsh message, as we will do shortly. It is also very interesting that, all of the Evangelists would later decide to incorporate such a severe message into their own narratives, some specifically laying the words of Isa 6:9-10 in the mouth of Jesus. These are the issues that will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

THE SEPTUAGINT (LXX)[1]

4.1. The Septuagint (LXX) in General

The first books from the Hebrew Bible that were translated into Greek were those contained in the Pentateuch (Jobes and Silva, 2015:13). Their translation took place around 250 BCE in Alexandria, Egypt. The rest of the Hebrew Scriptures were subsequently translated into Greek within the following two or three centuries[2] (Jobes and Silva, 2015:13). Since Diaspora Jews, who were scattered throughout the Mediterranean, eventually no longer spoke Hebrew, it gave rise to the need for a translation of their Scriptures into the *lingua franca* of the Hellenistic world—Greek[3] (Jobes & Silva, 2015:2). And so, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures became the Scriptures of the Greek-speaking Jewish communities of the Diaspora (Jobes & Silva, 2015:2). Steyn (2012:427) describes the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures as having "built an interpretative bridge between the Jewish

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[1] The term "Septuagint" is often employed in "a confusing variety of ways", that gives the inaccurate impression that it is a homogenous document, when in fact it is not (Jobes & Silva, 2015:13; see also McLay, 2003:6-7). In this sense, the initial translation of the Pentateuch can be understood as the "Septuagint proper", and the earliest Greek translations of the other Biblical books as the "Old Greek" (OG) (Jobes & Silva, 2015:13). In a general sense, however, "Septuagint/LXX" is often used to refer to any or all Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible, similar to how there is often referred to the "English Bible" whilst not intending any particular version thereof (Jobes & Silva, 2015:14). The term Septuagint/LXX can thus indicate the entire Greek corpus of the Hebrew Scriptures (including some additional books) as found in Greek codices of the Bible (e.g. Codex Varicanus) as well as modern printed editions (e.g. Rahlfs) (Jobes & Silva, 2015:16). In this study Septuagint/LXX will be used to indicate in more general terms the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. When similarity or difference with the LXX text is indicated, this relates to the reconstructed LXX text (Göttingen ed.).

[2] Due to several reasons, for example dissatisfaction with the LXX, there followed other attempts to render the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (Jobes & Silva, 2015:13). Most notable are the works of Aquila, a Jewish proselyte who aimed for a consistent representation of almost every detail of the Hebrew; Theodotion, whose work showcases some contact points with Aquila; and Symmachus, who made a careful, rather "literal" translation, while being considerate of Greek idiom (Jobes & Silva, 2015:13-4).

[3] According to Seeligmann (1948:1), "Part of the reservoir of translations, known collectively by the name of Septuagint—and, in particular, that of the books of Thorah—had their origin in the divine service and the preaching in the Alexandrian synagogues." It started due to the fact that the Alexandrian Jews no longer had adequate knowledge of the Hebrew, resulting in them being unable to properly follow the reading of the Pentateuch and other Biblical books in their original form (Seeligmann, 1948:1). So, they started adding Greek paraphrases to the readings of some Hebrew sentences, including homiletic elaborations and commentary regarding religious practice (Seeligmann, 1948:1). These notes were not equivalent to a proper written translation, so when the need for such a translation arose, several writings emerged (Seeligmann, 1948:1). According to Seeligmann (1948:1-2), these were at first used in tandem, but eventually only one was declared to be authentic. Individual literary efforts later supplemented this oldest collection of interpretations (Seeligmann, 1948:2).

Scriptures and the Greek-speaking world". Ultimately, the LXX as a whole was produced by many (unknown) translators over two or three centuries, and most probably in different locations, resulting in a considerable lack of unity when considering the LXX as a whole.[4] The abilities of the translators, for example their translation-technique, knowledge of Hebrew, choice of words and idiomatic style, also differed immensely across books (Seeligmann, 1948:2-3). Because of this, a statement made about the history or characteristics of a particular LXX book cannot simply be applied to another book just because they feature in one codex.[5]

Seeligmann (1948:3) reminds us of factors to keep in mind when dealing with a translation (such as the LXX): The original text from which the translator worked, would definitely have set some limits to the translation, especially when working with a religious text that the translator viewed as authoritative. Nevertheless, the historical background of the translator would still have influenced his work, whether he was aware of this or not. The degree to which the translator's own context influenced his work would differ from translator to translator, and must especially be kept in mind when working with the LXX as such a diverse collection of translations. Even with the LXX, we must remember that translation is always interpretation (Hauser & Watson, 2003:13). Because of this, Hauser and Watson (2003:13) point out that influence from the Hellenistic environment surrounding the translators of the Hebrew Scriptures can be detected when reading the Greek. Ulrich and Flint (2010:92) remind, however, that translators can offer faithful translations, whether these translations are more free or literal. They do, however, propose that a distinction be made between "simple translation" or "faithful translation", and "intentional re-interpretation" or "actualizing exegesis" (Ulrich & Flint, 2010:92). They argue that "'[s]imple translation' (whether literal or free) is the innocent attempt to render the meaning of the Hebrew parent text as it is understood by the translator" (Ulrich & Flint, 2010:92). Thus, if the translator believes that the Hebrew means X, he attempts to faithfully render X in Greek, even if certain terms or expressions are adapted to suit the culture or understanding of the target audience better. On the other hand, "intentional re-interpretation" means that although the translator believes that the Hebrew text means X, he knowingly produces a rendering Y, which differs from X (Ulrich & Flint,

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[4] Jobes and Silva (2015:14-6); see also Seeligmann (1948:2).
[5] *Ibid*

2010:92). The translator does this because he wishes to make a new point (Ulrich & Flint, 2010:92). Greenspoon (2003:80-1) says that although contemporary Bible translators usually attempt to translate the original text with consistency in terms of the stylistic, lexical and theological principles they use, this was not at all the case with the LXX.

When working with the LXX it is crucial to remember that there is no absolute certainty as to what particular Hebrew text lay behind any Greek book in the LXX (Greenspoon, 2003:82). Tov (1992:22) states that, when it is found that an LXX reading differs from the MT, it is often difficult to determine whether this is due to a variant Hebrew reading from which the translator worked, or due to the translator's exegesis.[6] When comparing differences between the LXX and the MT, caution must be heeded before ascribing the variances to the translator's deliberate efforts (see Seeligmann, 1948:4). Before such conclusions can be made, we must ask what technique the translator employed when translating, what his knowledge of Hebrew was, and so forth, to be able to determine whether or not it is really reasonable to say that the translator consciously attempted to alter the meaning of a text (Seeligmann, 1948:4). It also cannot be expected that the LXX exactly represents its *Vorlage*, since a degree of interpretation is always present in translation (Jobes & Silva, 2015:3). We must furthermore remember that the Greek translators inevitably had their own theological and political prejudices, which they brought to the texts that they were working with, whether they were aware of this or not (Jobes & Silva, 2015:3-4). The manner in which they understood the Hebrew text in their particular context, thus influenced their translation, which may even have resulted in an understanding that was different from the original Hebrew author's intent (Jobes & Silva, 2015:4). Porter and Pearson (1997:531-2) importantly remind us that, in order to fully appreciate the LXX text, it must be approached as a text in its own right and not merely in order to determine its possible *Vorlage*. And although there certainly were people that were competent in more than one language at that time, we would do well to remember that the target audience of the LXX most likely "did not have facility with the original language of the translated document" (Porter & Pearson, 1997:532).

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[6] See also Jobes & Silva (2015:3).

Although the LXX was initially created by and for Jews before the birth of Jesus, the text came to be accepted as the Old Testament of the early church (Greenspoon, 2003:82-3). This is important to note, because it means that, to a large degree, the LXX came to be transmitted within a Christian context (Greenspoon, 2003:83). This easily leads one to wonder whether much reshaping of the LXX by the Christian communities who used it has occurred, resulting in the text being coloured differently from the original that was made by Jews. In this regard, Greenspoon (2003:84) interestingly notes that, although it seems quite natural that Christian scribes would introduce readings into the texts they were copying, to bring it into closer accord with their own theological understandings, on investigation, there are not many examples of this happening (Greenspoon, 2003:84). But why would this be the case? Greenspoon (2003:84) believes that there are two factors that could have been the cause of this: Scribes were probably aware of the fact that they were working with sacred writings, and thus felt the need to retain it as accurately as possible. And, where there are passages that Christians interpreted as referring to Jesus for example, but the Jews did not, it could have been the understanding that such matters could be addressed in commentaries on the text rather than altering the actual text. This also makes sense if the former point is true and those using the text did so with the conviction that it was sacred and not to be altered. Furthermore, apologists such as Justin and Origen felt it valuable to have a Biblical text in common with their Jewish contemporaries, especially in defending the text where debates arose between the groups (Greenspoon, 2003:84).

4.2. Septuagint (LXX) Isaiah

Generally, it is believed that LXX Isaiah was created in Ptolemaic Egypt, with the assumption that it had its origin in Alexandria (see Van der Kooij, 2012:63). According to Van der Kooij (2012: 63) though, LXX Isaiah was rather translated elsewhere in Egypt, in the nome of Heliopolis. Van der Kooij (2012: 85) further argues that, the translator(s) of Greek Isaiah were part of a priestly group that fled from Jerusalem (during the 60's of the 2nd century BCE) and afterward lived in Egypt. Van der Kooij (2012: 85) deems it reasonable to assume that the translation was made around 140 BCE, and if this is accepted, it would mean that the translator(s) lived in Egypt for a while before the actual translation of Isaiah commenced. The above propositions are made on the basis of certain LXX Isaiah passages (10:24; 11:16; 19:18f.; 24f.) that show a marked interest in a Jewish group in Egypt (Cook & Van der Kooij, 2012:224). The question was then raised, to which Jewish group these passages might be referring, and it was turned to Josephus' writings (*Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*) for possible answers (Cook & Van der Kooij, 2012:224). Josephus tells of Onias, who was a member of the high-priestly family in Jerusalem (Cook & Van der Kooij, 2012:224). He fled to Egypt in the sixties of the 2nd century BCE, where he built a temple (the building thereof having been legitimized by Isa 19:19) in the nome of Heliopolis (Leontopolis) (Cook & Van der Kooij, 2012:224). According to Cook and Van der Kooij (2012:224), this data illuminates the particular LXX Isaiah passages (10:24; 11:16; 19:18f.; 24f.) - which makes it seem likely that the translator was part of a specific Jewish group, i.e. Onias and his followers, and that the translation took place in the nome of Heliopolis.

Some scholars[7] have argued that the *Vorlage* of LXX Isaiah (although difficult to construct) was similar, but not identical to the MT or the Great Isaiah scroll from Qumran (1QIsa[a]). This opinion has been proposed even before the Qumran discoveries, but has also generally been confirmed by the Qumran Isaiah texts, especially 1QIsa[a] (Van der Kooij, 1997:517). It must be noted though that, in terms of typology and recension, there does not seem to be any particular connection between LXX Isaiah and one of the Qumran Isaiah texts (Van der Kooij, 1997:517). Regarding the LXX Isaiah version and 1QIsa[a], Van der Kooij (1997:517-8) observes

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[7] See Tov (1992:24); Ulrich and Flint (2010:92) and Van der Kooij (1997:517).

that both texts deviate from the MT in many instances, but the common readings against the MT are relatively small in comparison to the greater number of mutually divergent readings. Yet, even where these two texts show common readings, it cannot easily be shown that they worked from the same Hebrew text, as both texts reflect a rather free approach (Van der Kooij, 1997:518). In such cases where there seems to be agreement between these texts, Van der Kooij (1997:518) proposes that we ascribe these agreements on the word-level to a common approach by the authors rather than the use of a common Hebrew text.

LXX Isaiah is written in a good Koine Greek style,[8] but has undergone paraphrasing (see Evans, 1989:61). When comparing MT Isaiah to LXX Isaiah there are various instances that showcase an independence from the Hebrew text.[9] Roberts (2015:7) even argues that the Greek translator of Isaiah often had no idea what the Hebrew text meant and thus often resorted to loose paraphrases or summaries. The translator also frequently omitted lines that he regarded as redundant, when faced with Hebrew parallelisms for example, although some of these omissions may be accidental haplographies (Roberts, 2015:7).

The Greek text also shows noticeable influence from the surrounding culture, and the personal views of the author (Seeligmann, 1948:4). Van der Vorm-Croughs' (2010:188) impression of the LXX Isaiah translator, is that he was an educated and intellectual scribe,[10] who was proficient to render the Hebrew into Koine Greek. Van der Vorm-Croughs (2010:188) argues that this impression might even support her proposition that the translator had been instructed in Hellenistic rhetorical techniques. LXX Isaiah is rather unique within the LXX as it offers a free translation,[11] which indicates at several points that actualizing interpretation of the prophecies of Isaiah has taken place (Van der Kooij, 1997:513). Not only has the Isaiah text been

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[8] See Van der Vorm-Croughs (2010:175, 188). Jobes and Silva (2015:2) remark that the LXX, in general, is written in Koine, which was the common Greek of the Hellenistic age.

[9] Seeligmann (1948:3-4); see also Van der Meer (2010a:107).

[10] See also Van der Kooij (2012: 64-5).

[11] Roberts (2015:7) also deems the Greek translation of Isaiah in the LXX as quite free in comparison to, for example, the literal word-for-word rendering of Jeremiah in the Greek. According to Van der Kooij (1997:518), the following characteristics apply to a free rendering: the aim of the translation is to offer an end product in good Koine Greek; a variety of lexical choices are used; different word order is employed for stylistic reasons; and grammatical and contextual changes, such as harmonizations, are used.

actualized by the LXX translator in the sense of modernization (e.g. of place names), but the prophecies or oracles of Isaiah have actually been "updated"[12] (see Van der Kooij, 1997:516). In this view, the Greek translator seems to have understood the prophecies contained in the book of Isaiah as being fulfilled in his own time (see Van der Meer, 2010b:285). Ulrich and Flint (2010:92) make the case though, that even if the LXX Isaiah translator tended towards a free translation, he was merely trying to make the original understandable to his Greek audience and he was not engaging in actualizing exegesis. We must remember, however, as Jobes and Silva (2015:84) point out, that unfortunately almost nothing is known regarding the circumstances (e.g. times and places) in which the various Greek translations of the Hebrew Biblical books were made. Therefore, any assumptions about the translator of Isaiah or his circumstances, are inferred from the LXX text itself.

4.3. Septuagint (LXX) Isaiah 6:9-10[13]

9. καὶ εἶπε Πορεύθητι καὶ εἶπον τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ Ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·

10. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν αὐτῶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσι καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσι καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσι καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

9. *And he said: "Go and say to this people: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not perceive."*

10. *For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with their ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes and hear with (their) ears and understand with (their) heart and they convert and I will heal them."*[14]

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[12] In the words of Seeligmann (1948:4), "This translation, in fact, is almost the only one among the various parts of the Septuagint which repeatedly reflects contemporaneous history."

[13] Greek text from: Ziegler, J. (ed.) 1983. *Isaias*. Bd. XIV. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen.

[14] According to Evans (1989:64-5), the Greek recensions of the LXX, i.e. Aquila and Theodotion agree with the LXX Isa 6:9-10, however, Symmachus offers a different version of v. 10: ὁ λαὸς οὗτος τὰ ὦτα ἐβάρυνε, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἔμυσε, μήπως ἴδη ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούη, καὶ ἡ καρδία αὐτοῦ συνῇ, καὶ ἐπιστραφῇ, καὶ ἰαθῇ - "This people has closed its ears and shut its eyes, lest it

Childs (2004:6) informs that the Greek translation of Isa 6:9-10 retains the same historical context as found in the Hebrew, i.e. the prophet being commissioned to deliver a divine message of harsh judgment on Judah. In most of the early Jewish and Christian interpretations of Isa 6:9-10, it is clear that the harsh portrayal of God, as being responsible for his own people's obduracy, has been softened (Sawyer, 1996:36). This is also the case for the Greek (as well as Aramaic and Syriac) translation of these verses (Sawyer, 1996:36).

The differences between the MT and LXX Isa 6:9-10 may be few, but they are significant. These differences will now be explored. In v. 9 the imperatives of the Hebrew (שמעו and ראו - "*Listen* (in order) to hear, but do not understand, and *look* (in order) to see, but do not perceive"), which make for such a harsh message, have been softened in the LXX (ἀκούσετε and βλέψετε - *Listening* you will listen, but surely you will not understand and *looking* you will look, but surely you will not perceive"), resulting in the LXX describing the state of the people, rather than saying that God caused the people's hardened state.[15] Scholars are divided as to what exactly the Greek forms are in the LXX (e.g. aorist indicatives,[16] future indicatives,[17] or even future infinitives[18]), but the important fact is that the LXX has made away with the imperatives of the Hebrew that are the culprits of the harsh message in the MT.

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should see with its eyes, and hear with its ears, and its heart discern, and it turn and be healed." Evans (1989:192) does give caution to the fact that, the fragment is from the *Hexapla*, as it was cited by Theodoret, and so it is not certain if (or how much) the variation was made by Theodoret or Symmachus. In the end, although there are variations between Symmachus and the LXX, the fundamental meaning of the passage remains the same (Evans, 1989:65). Thus, the Greek textual traditions are in agreement—the people themselves are responsible for their obdurate condition (Evans, 1989:65).

[15] Koet (2005:96); Mallen (2008:95-6); Palmer (1993:66); Tucker (1994:105); Tull (2010:147); see also Blomberg (2007:47); Pao and Schnabel (2007:306) and Steyn (1993:209). Evans (1982b:417) points out that the Targum also places v. 9 in the indicative mood by prefixing מעינש with the relative pronoun ד. Because of this, the prophet speaks to the 'people *who* indeed hear, but do not comprehend' etc. (Evans, 1982b:417). This results, similar to the LXX, in the view that the blindness of the people is an already present condition, which the prophet merely increases (Evans, 1989:70 & Watts, 2007:153). It also makes clear that it is only a particular group that the prophet should harden further, those 'who hear, but do not understand, and see but do not perceive' (Evans, 1989:70). The righteous remnant group of v. 13 stands in contrast to this group who must be hardened further (Evans, 1989:70-1). The imperatives from the MT are also replaced in the Targum by participles and perfects, and the second person plurals are replaced by third-person plurals (Evans, 1989:71). On the other hand, the Peshitta retains the imperatives and reads similar to the MT (Evans, 1982b:417).

[16] Marshall (2007:600) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:306).

[17] Evans (1982b:416); Watts (2007:152); see also Foster and Shiell (1997:261).

[18] Childs (2004:6).

Consequently, the LXX portrays a people that are in a deaf, blind and dull (fattened) state, due to its own deliberate rejection of God's word, rather than God's preordination or the prophet causing spiritual failure.[19] Evans (1989:62) further observes that the Greek verbs (as in the Hebrew) are strengthened by their respective cognates (Ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε ... βλέποντες βλέψετε). Ultimately, in the Greek, the people are not directed by Isaiah to become obdurate, but the prophet's words are a prediction that their already obdurate state will continue (Evans, 1989:62).

In v. 10 the Hebrew השמן "*make* (the heart of this people) *fat*"[20] has been changed in the Greek to the passive ἐπαχύνθη "(the heart of this people) *has been fattened*", eliminating the causative sense in the Hebrew.[21] Thus, the prophet's preaching does not *cause* the hardening/dulling of the heart, but rather the prophet preaches because (γάρ) the heart is already fat, and this is what keeps the people from repenting.[22] So both vv. 9 and 10 in the LXX depict the people as already being in an unreceptive state, due to their own fault. Furthermore, where the Hebrew indicates that the prophet should "make his [the people's] ears dull, and shut his eyes", the Greek reads "with their ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes", making it clear that the people have made themselves stubborn and unwilling (Watts, 2005:101-3). In both instances, the Greek translation has altered the text in such a way that it softens the divine initiative to harden the people's hearts[23] (Childs, 2004:6). These changes function to lessen God's agency in the matter, and even the addition of γάρ "for" moves the focal point away from God (Pao & Schnabel, 2007:306). The causal conjunctive here makes it clear that the state of the people is

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[19] Sawyer (1996:37); Wall (2002:362); see also Watts (2007:152).

[20] Evans (1989:18-9) mentions that, it could be argued that the passive form found in the LXX as translation of השמן, may reflect the Hebrew text actually containing hophals. But, Evans (1989:19) rightly finds it unlikely that scribes then would have changed it to hiphil imperatives.

[21] Childs (2004:6); Evans (1982b:416; 1989:62-3); Pao and Schnabel (2007:306); see also Marshall (2007:600) and Steyn (1993:209).

[22] Childs (2004:6); Evans (1989:62-3); Watts (2005:109); see also Roberts (2015:89-90).

[23] Evans (1982b:417) notes that the Targum, while placing v. 9 into the indicative mood, still retains the causative imperatives in v. 10 (i.e. טפיש, יקר and טמטים). However, even with the retention of this, the changes made in v. 9 from imperative to indicative, and the presence of v. 13, which describes the righteous remnant, results in the Targum not carrying the same severity as does the MT (Evans, 1982b:417). Interesting, however, is that, whilst the Peshitta retains the imperatives in v. 9, it has an indicative mood in v. 10, indicating similarity with the LXX (Evans, 1982b:417). So, the prophet conveys the message to the people because they have become dull and hardened (Evans, 1982b:417). Also interesting to note is that, in both verses, the Vulgate preserves the imperative mood, and so depicts the nature and purpose of the prophet's message in the same way as is found in the MT (Evans, 1982b:417-8).

also not due to the prophet's agency, but indicates rather a diagnosis of their state (Koet, 2005:96). Additionally, in the final part of the verse, the aorist conjunctive is used, which conveys the people's negative intention ("they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, *lest* they see with (their) eyes and hear with (their) ears and understand with (their) heart") (Koet, 2005:96). It is clear that it is the people's own fault that God does not heal them – they do not make it possible for God to heal them (Koet, 2005:96). In the end, the prophet's message to the people in 6:9 is a prediction rather than a command, and 6:10 is merely a description of the state of things and the consequences to follow, as opposed to an instruction for Isaiah to carry out.[24]

Finally, v. 10 ends also with an alteration: where the Hebrew reads ורפא "and heal itself" (/ "and be healed" / "(it) will be healed (to them)") – an impersonal Hebrew idiom, the LXX has changed this to explicitly make God the subject - ἰάσομαι "and I will heal them."[25] If the Hebrew understanding "and heal itself" is preferred, the LXX change may be explained as wanting to make clear that only God can bring this healing, so the people are unable to heal themselves. Even if the reading "and be healed" is preferred for the Hebrew, the LXX clearly felt the need to clarify that it is God specifically (and only) that can bring this healing (see Marshall, 2007:600). Another important difference to note in the LXX is that, contrary to the MT, the possibility still exists for repentance[26] (Koet, 2005:96). According to Evans (1989:64), the LXX reading leads to the understanding that God would certainly be willing to heal the people, if they repented, but as they are in a state of stubbornness, He cannot heal them, because they are unwilling to repent. Noteworthy, as pointed out by Evans (1989:67), is that it seems the LXX translator has not only attempted to tone down the harshness of the Hebrew in the case of Isa 6:9-10, but apparently has also tried to do the same in other obduracy texts (cf. LXX Isa 29:9-10 and 42:18-20).

We cannot be sure how close the Hebrew *Vorlage*, from which the LXX Isaiah translator worked, was to the MT we have today. So, it is difficult to determine whether the differences we see now in the LXX and MT of Isa 6:9-10 are due to the

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[24] Sawyer (1996:37); see also Watts (2007:152).
[25] Blomberg (2007:47) and Koet (2005:96).
[26] Palmer (1993:67) argues that all these changes in the LXX place more emphasis on the hope that the people will surely turn and that God will then heal them.

Greek translator's hand (deliberately or even accidentally). The fact remains, however, that if we take the (reconstructed) LXX of Isa 6:9-10 and interpret it on its own, the meaning is quite different from what we find when we interpret the MT (as we have it today) of Isa 6:9-10. The MT offers a theologically difficult message of God who actively wants to harden His own people so that they cannot repent. This message has been softened in the LXX by indicating that the people's hardened state is in fact their own fault, and so, God cannot heal them because they do not want to repent. Given the difficulty the reader faces with the manner in which God is portrayed in these verses of Isaiah in the Hebrew, it does not seem improbable that a translator would willingly amend the text to offer a more "acceptable" depiction of God.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS (DSS)

5.1. The Community and "Scripture" at Qumran

Of the non-Biblical documents found at Qumran, none belong to the historical genre, so it is difficult to use these texts to gain an idea of the community that used them (Vermes, 2004:17). The sectarian persons and events referred to in the manuscripts are only portrayed in cryptic language with regard to "fulfilment of ancient prophecies relating to the last age" (Vermes, 2004:17-8). Sanders (2000:32, 42-3) asserts that, the Qumran community certainly had much in common with other Jews that lived in the same time and place, however, they were also a radical group, which made them distinctive in many ways. This distinctiveness was of such a nature that they separated themselves from other Palestinian Jews (Sanders, 2000:32, 42-3). VanderKam and Flint (2002:239) mention the following possible insights that have been proposed when trying to identify the Qumran community: 1.) The Scrolls were associated with a Jewish group that we can identify from ancient sources, primarily the Pharisees (under which the Zealots also fall), the Sadducees, or the Essenes.[1] 2.) The scrolls were associated with a Jewish group, though one that is unknown to us. 3.) The scrolls were associated with the nation rather than merely one group. 4.) The scrolls were associated with a Christian group rather than a Jewish one. In the end, it seems though, that scholars have proposed that the Qumran community[2] should be associated with the Essenes (VanderKam & Flint, 2002:239-40). Broadly speaking, VanderKam and Flint (2002:242) mention the following points where it appears there is agreement between the Qumran community (when taking evidence from the sectarian scrolls) and the ancient description of the Essenes[3]: The groups seemed to have had the same theology. They also had the same distinctive practices.[4] Even if the Essene movement and the Qumran community were not one

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[1] See also Vermes (1999:24, 114-122).

[2] The designations "Qumran community" and "DSS community" are used interchangeably in this work.

[3] VanderKam and Flint (2002:242) note that the major classical descriptions of the Essenes can be found in writings of Josephus (*Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*) and Philo of Alexandria (*Every Good Man Is Free* and *Hypothetica: Apology for the Jews*).

[4] Vermes (1999:124) observes the following similarities in practice between the Qumran community and the Essenes: both communities supported the common ownership of property; neither participated in temple worship [Sanders (2000:43) however states that there was no other known group that

and the same, when considering geography, chronology, organization, and customs, there seems to have been a close relationship between the two groups, or at least they both belonged to the same general movement (Vermes, 1999:124). In the end though, it seems that the Essene theory is the most probable.[5]

Even though we cannot say with certainty that the Qumran community was in fact the Essenes (or some other known group from that time), we can still investigate the texts found at Qumran to determine how the community engaged with Scriptural texts (and in our case specifically Isaiah). One important observation is that the members of the sect considered themselves to be the true Israel, who continued the authentic traditions of the religious body from which they had withdrawn (Vermes, 1999:94-113). It is not necessarily certain which texts the Qumran community viewed as Scriptural, but Davies (2003:145) proposes that multiple copies, fixity of text, and use of citation formulas all seem to point to having regarded a particular text as Scriptural and authoritative. To cite a text using the formula "as it is written", has been taken by many scholars to indicate that the given text had Scriptural status (Davies, 2003:146). This formula is indeed applied to the book of Isaiah (among many others)[6] (Davies, 2003:146). Among the non-Biblical Qumran texts, there are also many that cite or allude to Isaiah (Blenkinsopp, 2006:92).

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entirely refused participation in temple worship, as the Qumran community seemingly did.]; both communities seem to have had baths that were used for purification (see also Sanders, 2000:19); both communities participated in a sacred meal that was blessed by a priest; both were opposed to taking vows, except for the one they took on entry to the community; and both also seem to have had an interest in healing. For more detail on the agreement between the Qumran community and the Essenes, see VanderKam and Flint (2002:242-250). For more on the possible identity of the Qumran community, see Evans (2005:86-8) and Vermes (2004:18-21; 26-45).

[5] According to Cross (1995:54), "There is now sufficient evidence, to be supplemented as publication of the scrolls and reports of excavations in the vicinity of Qumran continue, to identify the people of the scrolls definitively with the Essenes." Sanders (2000:34) reports that, "… the Scrolls conform to the literary descriptions of the Essenes closely enough that the simplest conclusion is that much of the library from Qumran represents the monastic (or celibate?) Essene order." VanderKam and Flint (2002:254) also contend that, the Essene hypothesis fits the evidence and offers the most economical explanation. Vermes (1999:126) agrees that, the Essene theory has a high degree of intrinsic probability.

[6] Davies (2003:146) questions though, whether this information is really useful, and reminds that we must observe, for example, that this formula is also applied once to a book that is *not* found in the Masoretic canon (CD 4.15 of a statement of Levi son of Jacob). So, it is uncertain whether a certain quotation formula is applied consistently for only Scriptural books (Davies, 2003:146). The number of allusions to Scriptural books, without the use of any quotation formula, is also great (Davies, 2003:145). Kister (1998:102) does, however, point out that many interpretations of explicit quotations of the Hebrew Bible are found at Qumran, but this is very scarce for other works. According to Kister (1998:102), the quotation and interpretation in CD 4:14-17 of the Levi Document is practically a unique exception. Kister (1998:102) further admits that, there does exist references to other books within the Qumran literature, but he is not aware of any exegesis of explicit quotations from such texts.

In terms of how the Qumran community viewed and interpreted "authoritative" texts, we may mention the *Damascus* document. This *Damascus* document is a collection of the laws of the DSS community, which was derived from the Torah of Moses, but also includes an ongoing revelation of this Torah to the true remnant (i.e. the DSS community) (Hauser & Watson, 2003:19). The community believed that the law was revealed to Moses, but since the pre-exilic Israel disobeyed this law it became necessary that subsequently it be divinely interpreted (Hauser & Watson, 2003:19-20). Here the sacred text and the interpretation thereof are closely connected, and the interpretation is viewed as a second revelation that builds on the first and returns to its true meaning (Hauser & Watson, 2003:20). According to Hauser and Watson (2003:20), these DSS writers, in the absence of a closed canon, clearly viewed themselves as part of the ongoing process of revelation/interpretation that was found in the very documents they were interpreting. It was believed that God had dictated a coded message to the original prophetic author, but that the message was to be deciphered at the end of times (in which the community believed themselves to live) (Blenkinsopp, 2006:103). The means to decipher the code would be given to an intermediary, in order to come to the true meaning of the text (Blenkinsopp, 2006:103). So, the true interpretation of prophecy occurred by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Blenkinsopp, 2006:103). The concept of ongoing revelation was, however, certainly not limited to the DSS writers (Hauser & Watson, 2003:21). There were also others within the broader Jewish community who believed themselves to be recipients of subsequent revelation that enabled them to interpret the sacred Scriptures more clearly (Hauser & Watson, 2003:21). According to Hauser and Watson (2003:21), the best-known example of a community that did this, is probably that of the NT writers. The Jewish Scriptures were seen by the NT writers, as anticipating the new revelation in Christ – that is, if the Scriptures were interpreted properly (i.e. from the NT writers' perspective) (Hauser & Watson, 2003:21). It is not argued by Hauser and Watson (2003:22) that the NT writers understood themselves as writers of "Scripture", but it is claimed that these writers definitely believed they had part in a subsequent revelation from God. For the Qumran community (as well as early Christianity), the interpretation of prophetic writings played a large role in shaping their own identities, and the book of Isaiah had an especially prominent role in this sense (Blenkinsopp, 2006:148). VanderKam (2012:53) says of the writers of

the DSS (and the NT books) that, beyond quoting from Scriptural texts, which they regarded as authoritative, they also used "Scripturally-informed language". It seems these authors were thoroughly familiar with the Scriptures and this was reflected in all of their writings (VanderKam, 2012:53).

Flint (2003:296) observes that, those works found at Qumran which exist in a large number of manuscripts, were clearly extensively used within the Qumran community, indicating the popularity of these books and very likely also their authoritative status. Flint (2003:296) further expresses: "Of all the scrolls discovered at Qumran the books represented by the greatest number are – in descending order – the Psalms (36 manuscripts),[7] Deuteronomy (30), Isaiah (21),[8] Genesis (20), Exodus (17), *Jubilees* (about 15), Leviticus (14), and *1 Enoch* (12)." Flint (2003:296) admits that the number of manuscripts of a particular book does not in itself prove that the Qumran community viewed the particular book as Scripture, nevertheless, this is a very important component when considering such claims. The most represented Biblical texts at Qumran are the same Biblical books that enjoyed primacy by the NT writers (i.e. Psalms—cited about 68 times, Deuteronomy—39 times, and Isaiah—63 times).[9] According to Swanson (2009:191), this could indicate that, "these three books formed something of a canonical core in Judaism in the Second Temple period." Brooke (1997:609) proposes that, of the three Major Prophets, it seems that Isaiah was handled distinctively among the manuscripts found at Qumran. The fact that approximately 21 Hebrew texts of Isaiah (some more complete, others more fragmentary) have been found at Qumran, certainly says something about the popularity of this book with the Qumran community.[10] According to Blenkinsopp (2006:98), one (although not the only) reason why the book of Isaiah enjoyed such a significant position at Qumran, is that throughout the transmission and redaction of

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[7] So also Davies (2003:145). Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:xvii, 267) indicate 37.

[8] Davies (2003:145); Tov (2010:118) and Vermes (1999:172). See also Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:xvii, 267); VanderKam and Flint (2002:131) and Swanson (2009:191). VanderKam (2012:3) mentions 21, but points out that in some cases it is difficult to ascertain the precise number of fragments of a particular Biblical text, since it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a fragment belongs to a particular manuscript or whether it is actually pieces that once formed an entire book. Ulrich (1997:477) and Flint (1997:481) indicate that 22 manuscripts of Isaiah have been found to date, i.e. 2 in Cave 1, 18 in Cave 4,1 in Cave 5, and one at Wadi Murabba'at.

[9] Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:xvii); Blenkinsopp (2006:98) and Swanson (2009:191).

[10] See Blenkinsopp (2006:98); Brooke (1997:610, 631); Roberts (2015:6); Tov (1997:491) and Ulrich (1997:477). Of the manuscripts found in the eleven caves at Qumran, Jeremiah, for example, is only extant in six copies and Ezekiel only in five (Brooke, 1997:610).

the book it leaned more and more towards an apocalyptic orientation, which played a significant role in the Qumran sect. Isaiah is also the only Biblical book that is virtually completely preserved at Qumran in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa[a]).[11] Although these many scrolls (or parts of scrolls) on Isaiah have been found at Qumran, it is interesting to note that in terms of textual criticism they do not offer much to investigate, since it seems that all the manuscripts of Isaiah at Qumran belong to the proto-Masoretic family[12] (Roberts, 2015:7). This is not to say that variants do not exist, but those that are found are mostly quite minor and do not really differ in form to the types of variants found in medieval manuscripts (Roberts, 2015:7).

Flint (2003:296-7) further suggests that those books on which commentaries were written at Qumran, were also very likely regarded as Scripture by the community. According to Flint (2003:296-7), there are at least 17 *pesharim* among the DSS,[13] of which 6 are on Isaiah[14] (3QpIsa = 3Q4 and 4QpIsa[(a-e)] = 4Q161-165),[15] the greatest number among the surviving commentaries.[16] These *pesharim* are characterized by quoting a base Biblical text and then commenting on that text (often verse by verse), with a clear distinction between text and its interpretation.[17] As the current study focuses mainly on interpretation that has occurred in Biblical texts themselves, these commentaries will not be discussed. In any case, it does not seem that these commentaries feature any sections that pertain to Isa 6:9-10 specifically, so they would not be of value for the current study.[18] Moreover, there are at least 23 explicit

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[11] Ulrich (1997:477); VanderKam (2012:2); see also Brooke (1997:610); Evans (2005:89) and Flint (1997:483).

[12] Kutscher (1974:3) postulates that 1QIsa[a] (or its predecessors) comes from a text that was identical or similar to the MT.

[13] Friebel (1981:13) mentions fifteen positively identified *pesharim*.

[14] According to Blenkinsopp (2006:99), the Isaiah *pesharim* have been dated from around 100 BCE (4QIsa[c]) to the mid-1st century (4QIsa[a]).

[15] So also Brooke (1997:610-1); Charlesworth (2002:35-112); VanderKam (2012:70) and VanderKam and Flint (2002:133). See also Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:270); Chilton (1988:122) and Evans (2005:76-7). For more detail on the Isaiah *pesharim*, see Charlesworth (2002:35-112).

[16] So also Swanson (2009:191).

[17] Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:270) and Kister (1998:103); see also VanderKam (2012:36). Friebel (1981:13) explains that these *pesharim* cite a Biblical text and then insert a gloss, introduced with "the interpretation of the passage" or "the interpretation of it concerns," which is followed by a designation of whom it concerns and/or the event to which it relates.

[18] Evans (2005:147) indicates that, the *pesharim* fragments on Isaiah deal with the following verses: 4Q161 comments on Isa 10:22-11:3; 4Q162 – Isa 5:5-30 (here Evans acknowledges that it also possibly comments on Isa 6:9); 4Q163 – Isa 8:7-31:1; 4Q164 – Isa 54:11-12; 4Q165 – 40:11-12; 14:19; 15:4-5; 21:10-15; 32:5-7; 11:11-12. Evans (2005:147) explains that 3Q4 is a small fragment of a possible *pesher* on Isaiah (1:1-2). In a section handling the Isaiah *pesharim*, Blenkinsopp (2006:107-

sectian citations of Isaiah[19] (Brooke, 1997:610-1). If the large number of Biblical Isaiah texts, the *pesharim*, and the many instances of citations from, and allusions to, passages from Isaiah[20] are taken into account, it certainly seems that Isaiah was something of a favourite among the Qumran community[21] (Van der Kooij, 1992:196).

5.2. The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa[a])

1QIsa[a] was one of the original Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered in 1947 in Cave 1 (1QIsa[b] was also among the first to be found[22]) and was published as early as 1950.[23] 1QIsa[a] consists of 54 columns that preserve all of the 66 chapters of Isaiah,[24] except for minor gaps that occurred due to damage to the leather (for instance in columns 1-9).[25] This led to the designation "Large/Great" Isaiah scroll,[26] over against the "Small" Isaiah scroll - 1QIsa[b] (Tov, 1997:494). However, the bulk of Isaiah manuscripts found, only remain in random and damaged fragments.[27] Before the findings at Qumran, the oldest Hebrew text of the complete Isaiah text was the Ben Asher codex from Cairo that is dated to 895 CE[28] (Vermes, 2004:15). The complete Isaiah scroll, found in Cave 1 at Qumran, is so significant because it is

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28) discusses the *pesharim* fragments, but unfortunately there does not seem to be such a fragment on Isa 6:9-10. See also Wise, Abegg, Jr. and Cook (1996:209-14).

[19] Against what seems to be only four explicit citations of Jeremiah and Ezekiel respectively (Brooke, 1997:610-1).

[20] VanderKam and Flint (2002:133) reckon that Isaiah is the book most quoted among the DSS.

[21] According to Swanson (2009:191), this may indicate the significance that Isaiah carried in the Qumran community's self-understanding. Blenkinsopp (2006:92-3) also suggests that the book of Isaiah served as a significant resource for the language that the Qumran community (and the first Christian community) employed to describe their own self-understanding. See also VanderKam and Flint (2002:133).

[22] 1QIsa[b] is an incomplete Isaiah scroll from Cave 1 at Qumran, together with some broken-off fragments, and contains parts of 46 chapters of the book of Isaiah (Blenkinsopp, 2006:91). Evans (2005:89) indicates that, 1QIsa[b] is a fragmentary text and contains fragments of chapters 7-66 of Isaiah. See also Kutscher (1974:1) and Tov (2010:6-11). According to Blenkinsopp (2006:91) this copy had its origin in the Herodian period, and is practically identical with the MT. Flint (2011:104) describes 1QIsa[b] as being inscribed in a late Hasmonean or early Herodian script, and proposes that it can be dated around 50-25 BCE.

[23] See Hoegenhaven (1984:17) and Tov (1997:494).

[24] See also Kutscher (1974:1); Tov (2010:6-11) and Van der Kooij (1992:195).

[25] Flint (1997:483) and VanderKam and Flint (2002:131).

[26] 1QIsa[a] has also been named the St. Mark's Isaiah scroll, since it was initially owned by the St. Mark's Monastery (Tov, 1997:494).

[27] Ulrich (1997:477); see also Tov (1997:493).

[28] Kutscher (1974:1) designates that the oldest extant manuscript of the Bible as a whole is from 1008/9 CE (the Leningrad Codex), and of the Prophets from 916 and 895 CE.

about a millennium older.[29] According to Vermes (2004:14), scholars generally date the Qumran Scrolls between around 200 BCE and 70 CE, with the possibility that a small amount of the texts are as old as the 3rd century BCE, while the majority of the extant material falls within the 1st century BCE. Scholars offer various possible dates for the scroll, but it seems the dates proposed by most fall within the range of 200-100 BCE.[30] VanderKam and Flint (2002:131) report, of the Isaiah scrolls in particular, that these manuscripts were copied over an estimated two century period, from around 125 BCE (1QIsa^a) to around 60 CE (4QIsa^c).

According to Ulrich's (1997:477-80) index to the Isaiah manuscripts from the Judean desert, Isa 6:9-10 only appears in 1QIsa^a, which basically features the entire book of Isaiah. Other than that, it seems that only 4QIsa^f contains 6:3-8 and 6:10-13, and 4QIsa^a also has 6:4-8.[31] Consequently, in this section on the DSS, the present work will focus mainly on 1QIsa^a, and additionally offer notes on the 4QIsa^f fragment where deemed necessary.

When comparing the MT of Isaiah with 1QIsa^a, scholars offer different observations: According to Steyn (2012:445), the Isaiah scrolls, particularly 1QIsa^a, from the 2nd to 1st centuries BCE, features a text that is virtually similar to the Codex Leningradensis from the 11th century. VanderKam and Flint (2002:131) also indicate that the scroll generally agrees with the MT, however, they point out that it does contain many variant readings and corrections, which are of interest. According to Blenkinsopp (2006:90), an estimate of about 1480 textual variants from the MT, have been found

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[29] Kutscher (1974:2) and Vermes (2004:15).

[30] According to Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:267), the Isaiah manuscripts were copied over the period of almost two centuries, from about 125 BCE (1QIsa^a) to around 60 CE (4QIsa^c). Blenkinsopp (2006:89-90) puts forth that, 1QIsa^a seems to have been copied around the mid-2nd century BCE and paleographic evidence stamps it as the oldest of all the Isaiah manuscripts that have been found at Qumran. Kutscher (1974:2) broadly states that, the consensus of scholars is to date the scrolls to the last centuries before the Common Era. Steyn (2012:445) indicates a date for the Isaiah scrolls from the 2nd to 1st centuries BCE. Swanson (2009:194) proposes for 1QIsa^a a date of 125-100 BCE. Tov (1997:494) dates the time of writing for 1QIsa^a at 150-125 BCE. In terms of the paleography and date of 1QIsa^a, Ulrich and Flint (2010:61) say that the script on the manuscript appears in a typical hand from the middle Hasmonaean period. Van der Kooij (1992:195) designates for 1QIsa^a a late 2nd century BCE date; for the 4QIsa^f fragment around 150 BCE to 70 CE. In general, VanderKam and Flint (2002:32) give the following dates that have been determined by three different dating methods for Qumran materials: archaeology – 2nd century BCE to 1st century CE; paleography – 3rd century BCE to 1st century CE; accelerator mass spectrometry – 4th century BCE to 3rd century CE (or 4th century BCE to 1st century CE). For more details on, the specific dating methods and subsequent dates determined for the Qumran scrolls and 1QIsa^a, see VanderKam and Flint (2002:20-33).

[31] See also VanderKam and Flint (2002:414) and Swanson (2009:195).

(Blenkinsopp, 2006:90). Stuhlman (1997:178) designates about a 70 percent difference. Important though, as remarked by Swanson (2009:197), is that a text-critical analysis of 1QIsa[a] compared to the MT, reveals that most of the variant readings are of an orthographic and morphological nature. In terms of linguistic and orthographic differences between 1QIsa[a] and MT Isaiah, the following have been pointed out: 1.) Most notable is the fact that, 1QIsa[a] makes much more extensive use of *matres lectionis* (i.e. consonants to indicate certain vowels).[32] Waw [ו] is often used for u/o, aleph [א] is used in several cases for a/e,[33] where there is no vowel sign in the MT, and it is also found that 1QIsa[a] has a waw [ו] and an aleph [א] where the MT only has an aleph [א].[34] The letter yod [י] is also used to indicate the vowels i and e, but with considerably less frequency than the use of the waw [ו] for u/o.[35] 2.) 1QIsa[a] often "omits, exchanges, or adds gutturals without any etymological justification …"[36] 3.) In the cases of personal pronouns and pronominal suffixes, those in the 2nd and 3rd person plural forms often end with a he [ה] in 1QIsa[a], which seems to represent the final a.[37] Regarding he [ה] as *mater*, Ulrich and Flint (2010:26) observe that,

> There are no occasions in the Biblical corpus where he [ה] occurs as a *mater* in a medial position. This function belongs entirely to the aleph [א]. However, the role of he [ה] as a *mater* in final position has expanded considerably. The vast majority of these additions is to be found in the second masculine singular inflection of the perfect קטלתה and the second masculine singular suffix כה-.

Van der Kooij (1992:200) reports that 1QIsa[a] and LXX Isaiah deviate in many instances from the MT, but both also mutually differ in many cases, while the number of shared readings against the MT is relatively small. Van der Kooij (1992:196-197, 201) makes the following observations with regard to the "relationship" between LXX Isaiah and 1QIsa[a]: Both texts, according to him, can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century BCE. Both indicate a free approach[38] to their *Vorlage*.[39] They both

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[32] Flint (1997:483) and Hoegenhaven (1984:20-1); see also Stuhlman (1997:178). Of the Qumran scrolls in general, VanderKam (2012:9) remarks that the scribes much more frequently employed *matres lectionis* than what is seen in the MT.

[33] See also Kutscher (1974:20).

[34] Hoegenhaven (1984:20-1); see also Ulrich and Flint (2010:26).

[35] Ulrich and Flint (2010:26).

[36] Hoegenhaven (1984:20-1); see also Stuhlman (1997:178).

[37] Hoegenhaven (1984:20-1).

[38] With regard to the designation "free approach", Van der Kooij (1992:203) understands the following: A free approach indicates both a free attitude towards the *Vorlage*, as well as a free representation of that *Vorlage*. A free rendering has bearing on the language of the *Vorlage*, in terms of grammar,

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differ noticeably from the MT. The deviations and variant readings found are of both a linguistic and contextual nature. Both texts are also fond of interpretative renderings.[40] In terms of recension, Van der Kooij (1992:200) indicates that there is no particular connection between LXX Isaiah and any one of the three groups of Qumran Isaiah texts (i.e. 1QIsa[a], 1QIsa[b] and 4QIsa).[41] Van der Kooij's (1992:208) tentative conclusion regarding the "relationship" between LXX Isaiah and 1QIsa[a], is that their writers, as scribes and scholars, attempted to create new texts with a meaning of their own, it seems not only to modernize the text linguistically but also to actualize the prophecies of Isaiah. Van der Kooij (1992:208) does not, however, offer this as an ultimate and final conclusion, stating rather, that further investigation into both texts are necessary. Tov (1992:37, 46) notes that, when 1QIsa[a] was first published, scholars were quick to point out what they deemed as agreements with the LXX. However, Tov (1992:37-8) reports that there is in fact no such evidence to argue a close connection between the scroll and the LXX version. Tov (1992:38) admits that there are certain agreements between the two texts, but argues that most of these are in minutiae and that they may very well be coincidental. Moyise (2001:16) also cautions against too quickly claiming that a Qumran (or NT) text "agrees with the LXX" for example, or "goes against the Hebrew", since the difference can very likely be due to a different source text that the Qumran (or NT)

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syntax, semantics, style and idiomatic expressions. In relation to translation technique, the goal is to translate the work into an adequate Koine Greek rendering (in terms of syntax and idiom). This means that there may be a variety of lexical choices and word order. There may also be changes in terms of grammar and context (e.g. harmonisations). And, of course, there may be additions or omissions of various words and/or phrases. A free approach can also be applied to the content of a text, where the translator feels the liberty to alter the content in certain instances.

[39] Kutscher (1974:17) explains that, the scribe who copied the Great Isaiah Scroll worked with a classical Hebrew text, which had been written hundreds of years earlier, and had undergone linguistic development. Because of this, Kutscher (1974:17) argues that, the language of the text was rather strange to the scribe and he did not properly understand it on certain occasions. So, the scribe amended the text, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unconsciously, to make it fit more with the language as he knew it (yet this was no different from what every copyist inevitably does, unless purposefully trying to produce an exact facsimile of a text) (Kutscher, 1974:17-8). Furthermore, Kutscher (1974:24) proposes that the scribe's native language was actually Aramaic, and consequently he "inadvertently grafted Aramaic forms upon the Hebrew text".

[40] VanderKam and Flint (2002:131) also point out that, 1QIsa[a] has many instructive variants from the traditional Hebrew form. Van der Kooij (1992:196-197, 201) says that, 1QIsa[b] is rather different in this respect, showcasing a conservative approach to its *Vorlage*. According to Van der Kooij (1992:196-197, 201), 1QIsa[b] is very close to the MT and so he regards it as pre-Masoretic. VanderKam and Flint (2002:131) also list 1QIsa[b] among the Isaiah manuscripts they regard as especially close to the MT. Evans (2005:89), on the other hand, argues that 1QIsa[a] follows the Hebrew as in the MT closely, while 1QIsa[b] is rather liberal with the text, to such an extent that it could almost be regarded as a Hebrew Targum on Isaiah.

[41] Van der Kooij (1992:200) does, however, mention in a footnote that 1QIsa[b] is in fact close to (the *Vorlage* of) Kaige-Theodotion Isaiah.

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authors were quoting from. Moyise (2001:16) admits that, sometimes the Qumran (and NT) authors changed the wording of the texts they used, but argues that, evidence still indicates that the Biblical text was available in a number of versions in the 1st century (both for the Hebrew text and its Greek translation). Moyise (2001:16) accordingly states that, when difference or correspondence to the Hebrew or Greek is claimed, what is most often meant is that the particular texts differs or agrees with the MT or the reconstructed Greek text of Rahlf or the Göttingen series. In the following section, an examination of 1QIsa[a], in particular of 6:9-10, will thus occur in order to compare it to the MT in the form we have it today (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) and the Göttingen edition of the LXX (edited by Joseph Ziegler).

5.3. Isaiah 6:9-10 in 1QIsa[a] (col. VI, lines 2-5)[42]

9 ויואמר לך ואמרתה לעם הזה שמעו שמוע ועל תבינו ראו ראו ועל תדעו

10 השמ לב העם הזה ואוזניו הכבד ועיניו השע פן יראה בעיניו ובאוזניו ישמעו בלבבו יבין ושב ורפא לו

9. *And he said: "Go and say to this people: "Listen (in order) to hear, but do not understand, look (in order) to see, but do not perceive."*
10. *Make fat/unreceptive the heart of this people, make dull his ears and shut his eyes, lest he sees with his eyes and hear with his ears, understand with his heart and he turn back and heal himself."*

Tull (2010:147) is of the opinion that 1QIsa[a], by means of various subtle textual changes, has completely altered the meaning of Isa 6:9-10. A major divergence between 1QIsa[a] and the MT of Isaiah is the fact that 1QIsa[a] is an unvocalised text. Because of the lack of vowels, the differences that can be seen are mostly cases where an extra ו or ה has been added to a word (e.g. in 6:9 the MT reads ויאמר, whereas 1QIsa[a] reads ויואמר; and where the MT has ואמרת, 1QIsa[a] reads ואמרתה). Evans (1982b:416; 1989:54-6, 189) acknowledges that a few of the variants found in 1QIsa[a] are simply due to a variant spelling form (like a ו having been inserted for certain vowels), but he contends that there are several alterations that seem to be deliberate (like על instead of the MT אל). Ulrich and Flint (2010:29) note that the letter

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ע replaces א in four cases and that this is the explanation of the two instances of ועל at 6:9, where only ואל, as in the MT, makes sense. Roberts (2015:89-90) regards this difference as a simple auditory error, because ועל "and upon" syntactically does not make sense. Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:280) argue that 1QIsa[a] simply misspelled the word in both instances. Some have understood though that, if ועל is accepted, it means that the prophet is to encourage the people to listen and look *because* (על) they may understand and perceive, turning the negative statement into a causal one "Listen (in order) to hear *because* you may understand, look (in order) to see *because* you may perceive."[43] Furthermore, from the MT וראו "and keep looking/look", the copulative has been omitted (ורא) (Abegg, Jr., Flint & Ulrich, 1999:280). However, Roberts (2015:89-90) asserts that the versions support retention thereof. In any case, this does not have a significant impact on the meaning of the verse.

In 6:10, 1QIsa[a] has השמ instead of the MT השמן, omitting the final letter (ן).[44] Ulrich and Flint (2010:100) put forth that, the 1QIsa[a] text apparently intends the hiphil imperative form of שמם "make desolate", which they deem makes sense in the context with לב "heart". Roberts (2015:89-90) also presumes it to be the hiphil imperative of שמם, but understands it as "stupefy", where the MT has השמן "fatten". In *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Holladay (1988:376) indicates the hiphil imperative form of שמם to be השמו, with the translation "make deserted, desolate" in terms of an object, or in relation to a person "make disconcerted, awestruck". Evans (1982b:416; 1989:54) reckons that this variant may be due to scribal error, where the ן was accidentally omitted (which would explain why the scribe wrote מ instead of the final ם). However, Evans (1989:54-5) holds that, in the light of other variants present in 1QIsa[a], as well as other Qumran readings, it seems likely that the form of השמ is in fact a deliberate alteration and should subsequently be considered a hiphil imperative. This would offer a translation of "make desolate/disconcerted the heart of this people". 1QIsa[a] further uses the plural form of "hear" (ישמעו), against the singular form in the MT and 4QIsa[f], but this alteration is less significant (Abegg, Jr., Flint & Ulrich, 1999:280). Another difference with the MT appears in the phrase "understand

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[43] See Evans (1982b:416); Pao and Schnabel (2007:306) and Tull (2010:147).

[44] So Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:280) and Evans (1982b:416; 1989:54-6), who deems this a deliberate alteration; see also Ulrich and Flint (2010:93), who reckon that the LXX (/OG) correctly translates the MT form (השמן) as ἐπαχύνθη, which differs from the Qumran form (השמ),

with his heart". The MT reads "lest he see with his eyes and hear with his ears and *his heart understand* …" (ולבב יבין). 1QIsa[a] reads "*with* his heart[45] understand" (יבין בלבבו),[46] which causes it to conform with the other nouns (בעיניו ובאוזניו) (Watts, 2005:101-3). According to Watts (2005:101-3), however, the MT version makes sense and is the hard reading. Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:280) indicate that 4QIsa[f] (as well as some MT manuscripts) reads ובלבבו יבין "*and/or with* his heart understand".[47] Roberts (2015:89-90) supposes this to be the *Vorlage* behind 1QIsa[a]'s awkward phrase בלבבו יבין and argues that the reading ובלבבו could be the original.

Hoegenhaven (1984:29) contends that, although it is certainly possible that על in 1QIsa[a] is a scribal error, the fact that the substitution appears twice, together with the variants השמ and בלבבו, supports the notion that conscious amendment has taken place. The purpose is supposedly to render the heart of the people "appalled" (השמ) at evil.[48] For this to be possible, the polel form of the word (שמם) seems to be supposed ("appalled, stupefied"[49]), but this does not correspond to the form present in 1QIsa[a].[50] Also, the word "evil" does not appear in the text, but is supposed by those scholars who offer a reading of "appalled (at evil)". Concerning the last section of v. 10, Evans (1982b:416) concludes that, the syntactical connection to פן "lest" is broken. So, the last line could then be interpreted as having an imperatival force – "let the people understand in the heart and return and be healed".[51] This would bring about an important difference from the MT: Isaiah does not speak judgment to promote obduracy, but instead he cautions the righteous (i.e. the believers at Qumran) to be careful lest they fall prey to evil (Evans, 1982b:416). Watts (2007:152) contends that, although some regard these differences as scribal errors, the combination of them suggests that the changes were intentional and reflect the belief that, contrary than those in Israel that are blind and stubborn, the Qumran community

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[45] "Mind", according to Roberts (2015:89-90).

[46] See also Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:280), who give the following translation of 1QIsa[a] 6:9-10: "So he said, "Go, and say to this people: Hear indeed, but do *not* understand; *see* indeed, but do *not* comprehend." Make the heart of this people *fat*, dull their ears, and blind their eyes; so they do not see with their eyes, or *hear* with their ears, *with* their heart understand, or turn back and be healed."

[47] See Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich (1999:280) and Roberts (2015:89-90).

[48] See also Watts (2007:152).

[49] See Holladay (1988:376).

[50] The polel does not feature a ה at the beginning of the word (see Holladay, 1988:376).

[51] See also Pao and Schnabel (2007:306).

are actually the holy seed as mentioned in Isa 6:13.[52] Evans (1989:60) concludes on Isa 6:9-10 at Qumran, that the meaning of the passages has been softened, and in addition to this, completely transformed so that the prophet does not convey a message that is intended to cause obduracy. Instead, Isaiah admonishes the righteous community to be careful and vigilant in the difficult times to come.[53] According to Evans (1989:60), it is understood at Qumran that, the disaster said to come, will engulf the Jerusalem religious establishment, who are not part of the righteous, eschatological community. Evans (1989:58), however, also makes the noteworthy observation that, although the Isa 6:9-10 passage is then no longer concerned with obduracy as it is employed in 1QIsa[a], the obduracy theme is still present elsewhere in the Qumran writings (e.g. stubbornness is mentioned in the *Manual of Discipline*, 1QS, the *Cairo-Damascus* document, CD, and the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, 1QH), although noticeably never in relation to the eschatological community. Obduracy is applied rather to members not part of the community or those who previously were part of the community (Evans, 1989:60). According to Blomberg (2007:47), this Qumran scroll thus attempts to tone down the predestinarian theme of the original prophecy even more so than the LXX.[54]

In conclusion we may note the following: It is uncertain whether the change from the MT אל to על in 1QIsa[a], twice in verse 9, is due to scribal error; replacement of א with ע, without the intention of altering the meaning of the word; or a deliberate alteration from the scribe in order to soften the harsh theological message of the verse. The fact that both occurrences of אל have been changed to על seems to indicate that the difference is not due to scribal error (visually at least). Still, we cannot be sure that the scribe did not make an auditory error since א and ע, would sound the same. This is certainly possible. According to Holladay (1988:15, 272-3), אל can mean "certainly not, not, do not, let us not" as a prohibition, and על can be understood as "on, over, in front of, because of = upon, with regard to, concerning, onto, in addition to, against, down from". If this is taken into consideration, it certainly looks as though אל more naturally makes sense. So, it could be the case that the change was made

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[52] Watts (2007:153) proposes the following translation/interpretation, building on the conviction that the Qumran community viewed themselves as the holy seed: "keep listening because you may understand … make the heart of this people (those who join the holy seed) appalled (at evil), stop its ears (from evil) … let it understand … and be healed".

[53] Evans (1989:60); see also Pao and Schnabel (2007:306).

[54] As well as the Peshitta and later rabbinic literature (Blomberg, 2007:47).

accidentally, but if the alteration had been deliberate in order to arrive at a different meaning, it seems somewhat forced. However, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter on the LXX, it would certainly be understandable that there was a desire to soften the harsh message of the verse. And a deliberate alteration to על intending the meaning "because" (if this is in fact an adequate translation of על) would certainly have done this. Thus, the people would be ordered to "Listen (in order) to hear, *because* you (may) understand, look (in order) to see, *because* you (may) perceive."

In terms of השמ in 1QIsa[a], instead of the MT השמן, it seems very possible that the last ן has been omitted due to scribal error. It is certainly curious, as Evans has pointed out, that if the alteration was deliberate, the scribe would have ended the word on a medial מ instead of the final ם. Again, we cannot be sure whether it was an accidental alteration, or perhaps a deliberate doing intending the hiphil imperative (as has been suggested) "make desolate" or perhaps "make disconcerted". In any case, it seems that the negativity of the verse would be retained. Whether the prophet is ordered to make the people's heart fat or desolate/disconcerted, neither seems a good prospect for the people. Regarding the modification from ולבבו יבין "and his heart understand" in the MT to בלבבו יבין "with his heart understand," the difference in meaning is not that significant. It might be a scribal error or an attempt to simplify the reading. In this sense, we can agree with Watts, who regards the MT reading as the hard reading, and thus argues that it should be preferred. But even if the alternate reading is accepted, it does not make for a real difference in the interpretation of the verse.

Some have proposed that the sense of פן has been altered in 1QIsa[a], and so offer a translation like "let the people understand with the heart and return …" When consulting Holladay (1988:293) though, the only meanings indicated for פן are "lest, so that … not, otherwise, what else", which does not offer the option of translating "let the people …". Also, when considering the preceding clause "Make fat (/desolate/disconcerted) the heart of this people, make dull his ears, shut his eyes …" it does not make sense that the next section should be understood as "let the people understand …". It makes far more sense that the people's ears should be dulled and eyes should be shut *so that* they can *not* understand (i.e. to prevent them from understanding). So, the possible deliberate alterations that the scribe(s) of 1QIsa[a]

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might have made to the text do not really make sense if the clause "make dull his ears, shut his eyes" remains the same as what is found in the MT (as is in fact the case in 1QIsa[a]). This might indicate that the differences between the two texts were not a purposeful attempt to alter the meaning, but resulted rather from a mere difference in spelling and/or scribal error. If this is the case then the theologically difficult message is retained.

CHAPTER 6
MARK[1]

6.1. Background

6.1.1. Date

If we accept that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark when writing their own Gospels, normally a date no later than 75 CE is advocated as the upper limit (*terminus ad quem*) for the Gospel of Mark (Telford, 1995:21). Such a date allows time for the copying of the document, its distribution and general acceptance (Telford, 1995:21). According to Telford (1995:21), though the lower limit (*terminus a quo*) is more difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, Telford (1995:23) concludes that a general dating between 65 and 75 CE is highly probable, and is also widely agreed upon.[2] Perkins (1995:517) agrees that most scholars advocate a date of writing for the Gospel of Mark somewhere around 70 CE,[3] not only due to the fact that many accept it as having been written before the Gospels of Matthew and Luke,[4] but also since it seems that the turbulence in Judea, which led to the destruction of the Temple, was in progress or recently finished by the time the Gospel of Mark was written.[5] The earliest traditions regarding the dating of the Gospel (c.a. 160/180 CE – anti-Marcionite prologue; Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1.), propose a date after the death of Peter in Rome (Guelich, 1989:xxxi). According to Guelich (1989:xxxi), it is generally assumed that Peter (together with Paul) died during an intense persecution

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[1] It is generally accepted by scholars that Mark's Gospel was written first among the Synoptic Gospels and subsequently used by Matthew and Luke when they composed their own Gospels (Boring, 2012:472; Guelich, 1989:xxxiii; see also Hagner, 1993:xlvii-xlviii; Morris, 1992:1 & Powell, 2009:107, 128). There are, however, some scholars who have a different view on the matter, for example Mann (1986:83), who is of the opinion that Mark is "an edited and conflated version of Matthew-Luke …". Albright and Mann (1981:xxv) propose that it is, in fact, more correct to assert that Luke was dependent on oral tradition and the earliest written notes of the (Jesus) tradition, than it is to say that Luke was dependent on Mark. Albright and Mann (1971:clxxxiii) heed that, the priority of Mark in time or as source for either Matthew or Luke, has not been proven. For a discussion of the Synoptic Problem, see Boring (2012:473-505); Powell (2009:92-101); Schnelle (1998:161-79) and Wansbrough (2015:41-6). Since the majority opinion, however, seems to favour the idea that Mark came first and served as a source for the other Synoptic Evangelists, this presupposition will be taken in the current work, and thus Mark is examined first among the Synoptic Gospels.

[2] See also Powell (2009:128).

[3] See also Schnelle (1998:201) and Tolbert (1999:56).

[4] See also Marcus (2000:30).

[5] See also Schnelle (1998:202).

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of the Roman Christians by Nero in 64/65 CE, which would mean that the Gospel had to have been written after that time. There are, however, other traditions that favour an earlier date. It seems that Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius believed the Gospel to have been written by Mark in Rome during Peter's lifetime (see Eusebius *H.E.* 2.14-16; 6.14.5-7) (Guelich, 1989:xxxi). Regarding Peter's time in Rome, the earliest tradition indicates a date during the rule of Claudius (ca. 42 CE) (Guelich, 1989:xxxi). Most scholars prefer the later dating though, but with another debate that centres on whether Mark wrote before or after the fall of Jerusalem (Guelich, 1989:xxxi). Those that suggest a date before the fall, tend towards 65-69 CE, while those preferring a dating after the fall propose a date somewhere along 70-73 CE (Guelich, 1989:xxxi). According to Guelich (1989:xxxi), Mark 13, where Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple, is often considered a crux in this debate, and it seems that the chapter might be used in support of either view.[6] Those in favour of a date before the destruction of Jerusalem argue that Mark 13 prophesies this destruction, while those preferring a later date hold fast that Mark 13 should rather be viewed as *vaticinium ex eventu* [account written to resemble a prophecy, after the event had actually occurred].[7] Guelich (1989:xxxi-ii) suggests that, a dating after the start of the Romans' military campaign against the Jews under Vespasian (67 CE), yet before the final siege of Jerusalem under Titus (summer of 70 CE), seems to be the most fitting for Mark 13. Marcus (2000:39) concludes that the Gospel might have been written as early as 69 CE. This would allow enough time for: 1.) the re-shaping of Mark's community after the flight from Jerusalem in 67-68 CE; 2.) the composition of the Gospel to actually take place (Marcus, 2000:39). On the other hand, the Gospel may have been written as late as 74 or 75 CE, which would be after the destruction of Jerusalem, yet still close enough in time to the event that eschatological excitement remained strong (Marcus, 2000:39). These matters considered, it seems that most scholars prefer a date somewhere between 65 and 75 CE[8] (Boring, 2012:523).

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[6] See also Wansbrough (2015:70-1).

[7] See Schnelle (1998:202) and Wansbrough (2015:46).

[8] For more on the various possibilities for the dating of the Gospel of Mark, see Telford (1995:21-3).

6.1.2. Location

The following places have been suggested as the possible location of origin for the Gospel of Mark: Galilee, the Decapolis, Syria,[9] Tyre, Sidon, Alexandria, Rome and Antioch.[10] Most scholars seem to agree with the early tradition, by preferring Rome as place of writing for the Gospel.[11] According to the anti-Marcionite prologue (160/180 CE), the Gospel is situated within the "regions of Italy" (Guelich, 1989:xxix). Clement of Alexandria also indicates Rome as place of origin (Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.15; 6.14.6) (Guelich, 1989:xxix). Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, does not offer any information regarding a place of writing, but Guelich (1989:xxix) suggests that the connection of the writings of Mark with Peter might be an explanation as to why Mark became associated with Rome.[12] Furthermore, 1 Peter 5:13 makes a connection between Mark and Peter and also situates them in "Babylon", which Guelich (1989:xxix) deems to be an obvious allusion to Rome.[13] Other scholars also support Rome as a likely place of origin due to Mark's Latinisms.[14] Against Rome, it may be noted that: the Latinisms are from the military or economic world, and so does not necessarily testify to the author having a connection with the centre of the Empire; also, the problems with the Roman church, as illustrated in Paul's letter to the Romans (fourteen years earlier), does not seem to play a role in Mark.[15] Within early tradition, it is only John Chrysostum (*Matthaeum Homilae* 1.3) who argues for Egypt as the place of writing for Mark's Gospel (Guelich, 1989:xxx). However, this claim has been generally accepted as a misreading of Eusebius, who wrote that Mark was the first person to proclaim the Gospel, which he had written, in Egypt (*H.E.* 2.16.1) (Guelich, 1989:xxx). As with the date of writing, we must contend that any suggested locations for the writing of the Gospel remain speculative, however, it seems that there are many who favour Rome for the location of composition.

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[9] So Marcus (2000:36).

[10] See Guelich (1989:xxix); Marcus (2000:30-7); Schnelle (1998:201) and Telford (1995:23-6). For more detail on the possible place of origin for the Gospel of Mark, see Telford (1995:23-6).

[11] See Guelich (1989:xxix); Marcus (2000:30) and Telford (1995:26).

[12] See also Marcus (2000:30) and Schnelle (1998:201).

[13] Wansbrough (2015:70) confirms that "Babylon" is a code-name for Rome.

[14] Guelich (1989:xxix-xxx); see also Marcus (2000:31).

[15] For the last point, see also Boring (2012:523).

6.1.3. Author[16]

The Gospel of Mark is anonymously written and does not even allude to an author (as perhaps is done in Luke 1:1-4 for example).[17] The fact that the author is not identified might indicate, on the one hand, that the important element for the author was not his own authorial personality, but the aim was to let the good news of Jesus speak for itself (Marcus, 2000:17). On the other hand, or additionally, the author might simply not identify himself because he was well known in the community to which he was also writing (Marcus, 2000:17). According to a tradition of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, ca. 130 CE (as cited by Eusebius, H.E. 3.39.15), Mark did not himself encounter Jesus, but followed Peter for whom he was also interpreter (e.g. "translator" from Aramaic to Greek or "transmitter" of Peter's sermons to others).[18] Eventually Mark then wrote down all he had come to learn regarding Jesus through his notations of Peter's sermons.[19] This Mark, with whom Papias identified the author, was perhaps John Mark.[20] There have, however, been arguments against the identification of the author as John Mark (see Marcus, 2000:19-21): some argue that, the Gospel's Gentile orientation; mistakes or carelessness regarding Jewish laws and customs; as well as inaccuracies in terms of Palestinian geography all indicate that John Mark was not the author (as John Mark is rather thought of as a Jew from Jerusalem).[21]

Considering whether the name Mark may be a pseudonym, we may note that it is probably unlikely that the early church would attribute the name "Mark" to lend validity to a text, since it was a very common Roman name[22] and the figure Mark was relatively insignificant in the early church.[23] The figure "Mark" is mentioned in 1 Peter 5:13; Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13; 15:37-39 as well as instances in the Pauline corpus (e.g.

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[16] In this work, the Evangelists of the respective Gospels will be referred to by the names designated to the respective Gospels (i.e. Mark, Matthew, Luke and John) purely for convenience sake.

[17] Guelich (1989:xxv) and Marcus (2000:17).

[18] Guelich (1989:xxvi-ii); see also Marcus (2000:18); Powell (2009:128); Schnelle (1998:199) and Wansbrough (2015:70).

[19] Guelich (1989:xxvi-ii); see also Schnelle (1998:199).

[20] See Boring (2012:522); Marcus (2000:18) and Powell (2009:129).

[21] Marcus (2000:19-21) warns though, that even if these critiques are true regarding the author, it does not necessarily confirm that he was not a Jew.

[22] So also Wansbrough (2015:69); see also Boring (2012:521) and Powell (2009:128).

[23] Guelich (1989:xxviii) and Marcus (2000:17-8).

Phil 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11).[24] According to Guelich (1989:xxviii), this was John Mark who was an associate of Peter and Paul and also part of the early faith community in Jerusalem, which gathered in the upper room of his mother's house (Acts 12:12).[25] There are, however, scholars who make a distinction between Mark and the John Mark of the NT (Guelich, 1989:xxviii). Schnelle (1998:199) reminds that, a direct connection between the Papias tradition and the tradition regarding John Mark, as found in Phlm 24 [Col 4:10]; 2 Tim 4:11 and Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39, cannot be confirmed.

Although there is no way to confirm these arguments, we may glean something of the author when looking at the Gospel itself. Guelich (1989:xxvii) remarks that when looking at the astonishing similarity in language, style and form of the Markan and non-Markan materials present in Matthew and Luke, it does not seem to suggest that the materials in Mark were shaped by only one person. Guelich (1989:xxvii) suggests that the following can be observed in Mark: multiple traditional milieus; stages in the development of traditional units; and the grouping of units into themes. This might not prove that Mark was not the author, but surely witnesses against the Papias tradition by indicating a more complex traditional background than merely working from the sermons of another (Guelich, 1989:xxvii). Schnelle (1998:200) further notes about Mark that, it seems his mother tongue was Greek, since the characteristic language used by Mark corresponds Hellenistic folk literature, as well as the literary Koine. It further appears as though Mark writes for a Gentile Christian community (Schnelle, 1998:200). According to Schnelle (1998:200), Mark can be described as "a Greek-speaking Gentile Christian who also has a command of Aramaic, probably a native of Syria who grew to adulthood there." In the end, we cannot make a certain proclamation regarding the true author of this Gospel (as is also the case for many of the other NT writings). But as Guelich (1989:xxix) rightly says, "… the identity of the author is more a historical curiosity than an exegetical necessity." At the end of the day we must contend that the author of the Gospel of Mark remains anonymous (see Telford, 1995:20).

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[24] Guelich (1989:xxviii) and Marcus (2000:18).
[25] See also Marcus (2000:18).

6.1.4. Audience

Mark probably wrote for his own local community, however, it is not impossible that he wished for his Gospel to eventually gain a wider reading (see Marcus, 2000:28). Guelich (1989:xxxii) proposes that the audience to whom Mark wrote, existed in a time after the events that he narrates. This argument is supported by the explanatory notes that Mark gives to the reader, as well as 13:14 that heeds the reader to take note of what has been promised and is imminently approaching (Guelich, 1989:xxxii). According to Guelich (1989:xxxii), Mark's audience lived in the timeframe of 13:10, which indicates that the Gospel is "proclaimed to all nations". Yet the narrative itself tells of an earlier period that started with the appearance of John the Baptist and ended with the female followers of Jesus discovering the empty tomb of Jesus (Guelich, 1989:xxxii).

We may reasonably accept that the community Mark addressed is one that experienced persecution, when considering the references to affliction and persecution in 4:17, exhortation in 8:34-9:1 to take up your cross and follow Jesus, as well as particular warnings about persecutions that are to come in 13:9, 11-13.[26] It is even suggested by Marcus (1984:573) that Mark 4:10-12 is a reassurance to the community, that even though all these persecutions and trials are taking place, and many people are not accepting who Jesus is, it does not mean that God is no longer in control. These sufferings are now rather seen as part of the "secret of the kingdom of God", which explains that those outside are in fact blinded by dark forces and consequently oppose the kingdom of God (Marcus, 1984:573). Furthermore, Marcus (1984:573) contends that when it is stated "to you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God", more than mere knowledge is implied - it also includes the community's own participation in the mystery by going through suffering. According to Guelich (1989:xliii), Mark wrote the Gospel from a pastoral perspective. The pressures the community faced forced them to ask questions regarding who Jesus was as well as about the nature of the kingdom that he inaugurated (Guelich, 1989:xliii). The Gospel is thus an attempt to answer these questions, as such providing a renewed basis of faith for the community, but also warning them of

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[26] Marcus (1984:572). See also Guelich (1989:xliii); Mann (1986:83); Marcus (2000:28); Schnelle (1998:204) and Tolbert (1999:55).

potential pitfalls and ultimately offering them new hope for the future kingdom (Guelich, 1989:xliii).

Moreover, it seems that Mark's audience was not very familiar with Aramaic or the Jewish laws and customs, which is why the author had to offer additional explanations on these issues (e.g. 7:2-4; 14:12; 15:42).[27] The fact that the Gospel contains some awkward explanations of Jewish customs has thus been taken to suggest that the community of Mark was comprised (at least to some degree) of non-Jews (cf. Mark 7:3-4; 14:12; 15:42).[28] The fact that the Gospel contains Aramaic expressions, and possible Aramaic or Semitic forms of speech or thought, as well as many references to places in Palestine (although somewhat inaccurate at instances) seems to indicate that the author did have access to Palestinian traditions (Telford, 1995:23). But the explanation of Jewish ritual prescriptions may suggest that the community Mark was writing to, found themselves outside of Palestine (Schnelle, 1998:200-1). Moreover, the fact that Mark often translates Hebrew or Aramaic expression (e.g. Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 9:43; 14:36; 15:22, 34) may indicate that he was writing to Greek readers (Schnelle, 1998:200). There are also examples of Latin words translated into Greek (usually of a military – e.g. 5:9; 15:16, 39, legal – e.g. 6:27; 15:15, or commercial – e.g. 6:37, 12:42 nature) (Telford, 1995:23). Furthermore, it seems that, in general, the Gospel was oriented towards already Christian believers, rather than their adversaries or unbelievers they still wanted to reach with their mission (Guelich, 1989:xliii). So it seems that the Gospel of Mark was primarily written (but not necessarily exclusively) for Greek-speaking Gentile Christians.[29] Powell (2009:129) concludes that Mark probably wrote for a community of Roman Christians, who understood the tales of Jesus and his disciples as sacred history. Powell (2009:129) clarifies that they understood it as sacred in the sense that it was accepted to be of key importance for their faith, but saw it also as history in the sense that it had happened a while ago among people who differed somewhat from them.

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[27] Guelich (1989:xliii) and Telford (1995:23).

[28] Guelich (1989:xxviii) and Perkins (1995:518).

[29] Schnelle (1998:200-4) and Telford (1995:23).

6.1.5. The Old Testament in Mark

Mark contains numerous allusions to OT traditions and material, in addition to many quotations from the Pentateuch, Prophets and Writings[30] (Vorster, 1981:65-6). For Mark, the authority of the Scriptures was very important, but the authority of Jesus was of even greater concern (Watts, 2007:112). In this sense, Jesus, in the Gospel of Mark, holds his opponents accountable to the Torah, but his authority is of such a nature that he can offer new understandings of Scripture by his own unique combination of texts that were previously not brought into connection with one another (Watts, 2007:112). Müller (2001:318) says that in Mark's Gospel, the OT is mainly used to indicate that, what happened to and concerning Jesus, was testified to in Scripture. Vorster (1981:69) instead, argues that,

> Rather than making use of a hermeneutical framework of promise and fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New, Mark uses Old Testament quotations and allusions in the same way as he does with narrative commentary to substantiate a particular train of thought … he uses the Old Testament material to tell his story of the life and work of Jesus.

Thus, Vorster (1981:65) argues that Mark used the OT in a manner rather different to how Matthew and Luke used it. A very important observation by Vorster (1981:69) is that Mark quoted the OT to serve his own purposes, and he did not take into account the literary or historical context from which the quotations were taken. Vorster (1981:71) goes so far as to say that Mark's hermeneutics had no limits, meaning that he did not hesitate to actualize OT material in order to "prove" his point.

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[30] According to Vorster (1981:65), these quotations more often correspond to the Hebrew text than the LXX. However, this may be too simple a statement, as it may actually be the case that the Evangelist did in fact use an LXX text, yet one which had a *Vorlage* which was closer to the MT we have now.

6.2. Isaiah 6:9-10 in Mark 4:12[31]

10. Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ μόνας, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς παραβολάς.

11. καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται,

12. ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν, μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς.

10. *And when he was alone, those around him together with the Twelve,[32] asked him about the parables.*

11. *And he said to them: "For you the mystery of the kingdom of God[33] has been given; but for those outside[34] everything is in parables.*

12. ***In order that looking they see, but they do not perceive, and listening they hear, but they do not understand, lest they convert and it be acquitted (forgiven) them."***

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[31] All Greek NT Bible texts from: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed. Since the verses preceding Mark 4:12 have bearing on how v. 12 is understood, vv. 10-11 will also be taken into account where deemed necessary.

[32] The explanation Jesus offers when asked about the parables, is directed at the Twelve as well as οἱ περὶ αὐτόν "those around him" (Moule, 1975:247). According to Tuckett (1988:14), Mark's terminology with regard to the in- and out-groups is rather imprecise, so it is not certain exactly who constitutes these groups. Tuckett (1988:14) proposes that the "in group" mentioned is not necessarily to be seen as a small group (either the Twelve or otherwise), but it could potentially be a rather larger group that includes not only the Twelve and the disciples, but also those listeners who have responded positively, at least in some manner, towards Jesus' teaching, showcased by the fact that they came and sought further information (v. 10).

[33] Jeremias (1976:16) is of the opinion that "the mystery/secret of the kingdom of God" should not be understood as referring to general information about the coming kingdom, but since the singular "mystery/secret" is used, it rather indicates a particular piece of information. Williamson, Jr. (1983:92) notes that the word μυστήριον "mystery/secret" appears in the Gospels only here and in the parallel verses in Matthew (13:11) and Luke (8:10), where the word appears in the plural form. Bowker (1974:312) indicates that the singular is much less commonly used than the usual plural form. According to Williamson, Jr. (1983:92), the plural form in Matthew and Luke can be understood as Jesus giving secrets about the kingdom of God to the disciples. However, since the word appears in the singular in Mark, Williamson, Jr. (1983:92) proposes that Jesus is not giving the disciples privileged information about the kingdom, but rather the kingdom itself is given as a mystery (genitive of apposition: the secret is the kingdom).

[34] Guelich (1989:207) advises that an understanding of "those outside" as the entire Israel is too broad concerning Jesus' ministry and Mark's concerns; instead a better understanding of the phrase might be that it refers to unbelievers or non-Christians, both Jew and Gentile (and so it is accepted by most commentators). Siegman (1961:173-4) suggests that Mark is referring to the Jews who refused to become a part of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 5:12, 13; 2 Cor 4:16; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:12). Perkins (1995:572) proposes that "those outside" are specifically the Scribes and Pharisees, who are plainly against Jesus and his teaching.

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6.2.1. The Parables

The Isa 6:9-10 passage appears in a similar context in Mark, Matthew and Luke, i.e. in between the parables (see Sawyer, 1996:37). However, in Mark and Luke the prophet Isaiah is not explicitly mentioned and there is an element of secrecy "… for you the mystery of the kingdom of God has been given; but for those outside everything is in parables" (Mark 4:11; cf. Luke 8:10) (Sawyer, 1996:37). The reference to Isa 6:9-10 in Mark is found between the parable of the sower/soils[35] and the explanation of that parable (Hooker, 2005:39). The citation in Mark is given as though it offers a reason for why Jesus speaks in parables (Perkins, 1995:572). Since the Isaiah citation is applied in reference to Jesus' use of parables when teaching/preaching, it is necessary to investigate the nature of parables (or at least the parable of the sower/soils) in Mark to some extent.

It has been pointed out that the Greek παραβολή "parable" is used in the NT and the LXX to translate the Hebrew משל.[36] According to Jeremias (1976:20), the Hebrew משל does not simply have one meaning, but encompasses a range of meanings (in the common speech of post-Biblical Judaism), viz. parable, similitude, allegory, fable, proverb, apocalyptic revelation, riddle, symbol, pseudonym, fictitious person, example, theme, argument, apology, refutation, or jest. Holladay (1988:219-20), in *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, offers the following possibilities for the translation of משל: "saying, proverb, wisdom saying, mocking song." According to Siegman (1961:174), the Hebrew word can basically be understood as a means of communicating truth. Some have asserted that the word be understood as "riddle".[37] Guelich (1989:208) indicates various parallels in the OT for the understanding of riddle for the Hebrew משל, (e.g. Ezek 17:2; Hab 2:6; Pss 49:5; 78:2; Prov 1:6).[38] Jeremias (1976:20) argues that, just as there exists multiple possible understandings of the Hebrew משל, the same is also the case with the Greek

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[35] Scholars differ in their designation of the name of the particular parable. Some claim that the parable is more about the one who does the sowing and so prefers "the parable of the sower/Sower", while others argue that the focus is on the different soils, hence "the parable of the soils." Foster and Shiell (1997:262-3), for example, propose that Mark actually focuses more on the sower than the seeds, whereas Luke places more emphasis on the sowing and the seeds.

[36] E.g. Ambrozic (1967:220) and Siegman (1961:174).

[37] E.g. Ambrozic (1967:220). Though other scholars (e.g. Siegman, 1961:176) do not believe that "riddle" is a valid translation of משל.

[38] For further elaboration regarding "riddle" vs. "parable", see Guelich (1989:208-9).

παραβολή. In the NT παραβολή does not merely mean "parable", but can also mean comparison (Mark 3:23; Luke 5:36), symbol (Heb 9:9; 11:19; cf. Mark 13:28), proverb or commonplace (Luke 4:23; 6:39), riddle (Mark 7:17), or rule (Luke 14:7) (Jeremias, 1976:20). Telford (1995:130) admits that the word "parable" can at times mean something like mysterious speech, riddle or enigma, but says that ordinarily the term is understood as indicating a short narrative or saying that communicates a single idea by using vivid imagery drawn from everyday life. Jeremias (1976:16) holds that, "The contrasting parallelism of the two clauses v. 11a and 11b in Mark requires that μυστήριον and παραβολή should correspond." However, this does not happen if παραβολή is translated as "parable", but only if παραβολή is understood as its apparent Hebrew equivalent משל "riddle" (Jeremias, 1976:16). This gives us the required antithesis: to you the secret is revealed; those outside are confronted by riddles!" (Jeremias, 1976:16).

Synge (1980:53-4) is of the opinion that the word "parable" is used in two senses in chapter 4 of Mark: firstly, to indicate a method of teaching-by-pictures, but also a riddle or a riddling, of which the main characteristic is that the meaning thereof is not self-revealing, but can only be illuminated by the riddler (cf. Judg 14:5-20). In Synge's (1980:54) view then, it is only the disciples who respect the riddler and choose to follow him that accept the explanation. Outsiders do not accept the explanation because they do not ascribe any authority to the riddler (Synge, 1980:54). According to Synge (1980:54), the nature of the parable as a riddle is made clear in Mark 4:22, "For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light." Synge (1980:54) thus argues that concealment is in fact a purposeful action, *but* it functions as a prelude to revelation. So, Synge (1980:54) proposes that the ultimate goal is still to make known the true message.

According to Telford (1995:130), when originally employed by Jesus, it is usually assumed that parables were used to illuminate his message, not confuse the listeners. Jesus' use of parables in order to prevent understanding thus seems incomprehensible, and even more so when considered together with other ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians, the majority of whom asserted that a metaphor should be used in order to bring greater clarity of understanding to those at whom it

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was directed[39] (Urban, 2014:113). Telford (1995:130) speculates that when it came to the point where they were actually written down, the parables were often found to be obscure or puzzling, and this led to the church or Evangelists affording them allegorical meanings. Jeremias (1976:18) contends that Mark was misled by the word παραβολή, and erroneously understood it as "parable", which led him to insert this logion into the parable chapter (in that case Mark 4:13 originally followed on 4:10).

Although many authors enter lengthy discussions regarding the possibility of the various meanings of παραβολή and משל, particularly understanding it as "riddle", we would do well to remember that Mark's use of παραβολή in 4:10-11 is not part of the Isaiah citation and is thus not a translation of the Hebrew משל. Hence, it might not be valid to take the meaning of the Hebrew into consideration in this instance. When merely looking at the meaning of παραβολή in the Greek, it seems that the following are possible understandings of the word: "a placing beside, comparison, illustration, parable",[40] with "parable" seeming to be the best understanding within the context if Mark 4:10-12 is accepted in its present location and examined in a synchronic manner. The parables served to reveal the true nature of the "soil-hearts" of his hearers, and similar to Isaiah, carried out the blinding and deafening judgment of God on the people who were hardened or shallow hearted and who did not listen correctly (Watts, 2009:217). Hooker (2005:39) further remarks that the Isaiah reference acts to explain why so much of the crop had failed – why so many Jews did not accept Jesus' message. Telford (1995:131) proposes that, in Mark, the parables are not the way in which Jesus *openly* reveals the kingdom of God, but it is rather the means by which he *secretly* makes known who he really is and what he had come to do. It is acknowledged, as pointed out by Van Eck (2009:5), that to properly understand the parables of Jesus, one has to take the social and cultural values of Jesus and his audience into account. Interesting to note about Jesus' parables, is the fact that they referred to everyday experiences that his audience encountered (see Van Eck, 2009:8). According to Van Eck (2009:7), all of Jesus' parables, except for the parable of the pearl (Matt 13:44-45), are "native to Palestine and have a rural context". So, Jesus' parables concern matters like sowing, the planting of a mustard seed, a woman who searches for a coin, a shepherd who lost a sheep etc. (Van Eck,

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[39] For more on this, see Urban (2014:114-20).

[40] See Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (1974:520).

2009:7). Important though, as Van Eck (2009:8) observes, is that Jesus' parables turns that which is accepted and expected, in a social and religious sense, on its head. So, the parables sketch the world from a different angle than what it is normally viewed by the audience (see Van Eck, 2009:8). The parables function to move the readers to see the world in a new way and see what it could be like, according to God's ideals, i.e. the kingdom of God (see Van Eck, 2009:8).

6.2.2. Mark 4:12

Many scholars venture into discussions regarding the originality of the subsections in Mark 4:1-20, or address the question whether these words were really spoken by Jesus, but this is not the concern of the present work. Whether 4:(10-)12 was original or a later interpolation will not be investigated here, but the focus will rather be on 4:(10-)12 as it appears now in its present NT context.

Mark does not state where the quotation in 4:12 comes from (Hooker, 2005:38). It can be said that the quotation comes from Isa 6:9-10, but the citation itself is far from precise (Hooker, 2005:38). Mark 4:12 rather offers a paraphrase of these Isaiah verses,[41] so Isa 6:9-10 in Mark may be better described as a reference or allusion than an explicit quotation.[42] Evans (1982a:126-7; 1989:92) suggests that most of the vocabulary of the Isa 6 quotation in Mark is from the LXX,[43] but he does point out that it differs from the LXX in four major ways: 1.) Mark places the quotation in the third-person ("*they* see but *they* do not perceive … *they* hear but *they* do not understand") rather than following the second-person of the LXX and MT.[44] But this may merely be due to a choice by the Evangelist to change from direct to indirect speech. 2.) Mark also reverses the clauses of Isa 6:9, having the βλέποντες clause first, followed by the

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[41] Childs (2004:7) and Evans (1982a:126); see also Chilton (1984:91). According to Koet (2005:97), Mark gives an extended allusion of Isa 6:9-10. Watts (2007:151) puts forth that Mark might only be citing the last colon of 6:10 to emphasise the "so that/lest" matter and/or because the issue of stubbornness/hardness of heart already featured in Mark 3:1-6.

[42] Steyn (1993:206).

[43] So also Marcus (2000:300).

[44] So also Chilton (1984:91-2), who notes though, that Matthew and Luke agree with Mark (and the Targum) here. Watts (2007:151) also mentions this fact and proposes that it could either be due to the narrative or a sign of Mark following the Targum. See also Jeremias (1976:15).

ἀκούοντες (LXX - ἀκοῇ) clause.[45] 3.) Mark omits the description of the blinding of the eyes, deafness of the ears, and lack of understanding of the heart from Isa 6:10.[46] 4.) Finally, Mark reads καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς (literally "and it be *let go/set free/remitted/acquitted* for them"[47]) where the LXX has καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς ("and I *will heal* them").[48]

It has been pointed out quite often though, that Mark 4:10-12 features close similarities with Targum Isaiah.[49] Evans (1982a:127; 1989:71, 92) observes the following similarities that Mark share with the Targum: 1.) Like Mark, the Targum uses the third-person in v. 9,[50] which accommodates the syntactical move from direct speech to a relative clause. 2.) Both Mark and the Targum in v. 9 have replaced the imperative verbs found in the Hebrew with indicative verbs. 3.) Only the Targum agrees with Mark's phrase καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς, having רשתביק להון.[51] The Targum replaced the "healed" (רפא) of the MT and LXX with "forgiven" (שבק), as also found in Mark.[52] We may also note the following continued points: According to Jeremias (1976:15), it is only the Targum that shows participle equivalents for Mark 4:12's βλέποντες and ἀκούοντες. Jeremias (1976:15) also points out that, instead of the singular לו (heal *him*) (as in Isa 6:10 MT), Mark and the Targum have the plural (acquitted/forgiven *them*);

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[45] So also Hooker (2005:38); Marcus (2000:300) and Watts (2007:151), who suggests that it is possibly due to Mark's interest in "seeing" (see the healing of sight in 8:22-26; 10:46-52) as well as the fact that "seeing" is at the centre of the concentric pattern in Isa 6:9-10.

[46] So also Hooker (2005:38).

[47] See Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (1974:120).

[48] Goulder (1991:296-7) argues that there is remarkable agreement between Mark and the LXX: βλέποντες βλεπ- that is followed by μὴ ἰδ- in the subjunctive (against the Targum that reads ולא ידעין וחזן מחזא). Where μήποτε is used, Goulder (1991:296-7) says that ἵνα μή would be the normal rendering. Mark also has the Greek ἐπιστρέψωσιν for שוב, whereas Goulder (1991:296-7) speculates that a free Markan rendering of the Targum would have resulted in μετανοήσωσιν. So, Goulder concludes that Mark's primary dependence is in fact on the LXX and the only real agreement with the Targum is "it be forgiven them", as will be discussed in the following paragraph. However, Goulder's arguments mentioned here do not seem to be that convincing.

[49] Jeremias (1976:15); Steyn (2012:443); see also Bowker (1974:312); Freed (1965:86); Moyise (2001:23) and Siegman (1961:171). Blomberg (2007:47) offers the following translation of Targum Isaiah for these verses: "And he said, 'Go, and speak to this people *that* hear *indeed*, but do not understand, and see *indeed*, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people *dull*, and their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest *they* see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* hearts and repent and *it be forgiven them*." (emphasis Blomberg's).

[50] See also Marcus (2000:300) and Jeremias (1976:15).

[51] See also Chilton (1984:91). Jeremias (1976:15) points out that Mark 4:12b (καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς) differs completely from the Hebrew and LXX (καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς) (and Symmachus – καὶ ἰαθῇ), but it does however agree with the Peshitta and to an even greater extent with the Targum.

[52] Evans (1989:71); Jeremias (1976:15); Mann (1986:264); Siegman (1961:171) and Watts (2007:153); see also Marcus (2000:300).

and both avoid using the name of God, by employing the passive. Jeremias (1976:15) thus contends that Mark used the paraphrase of Isa 6:9f, which was commonly used in the synagogue and is now known to us via the Peshitta and Targum. Evans (1982a:132) admits that the paraphrase of Isa 6:9-10 in Mark 4:12 does probably show familiarity with the Aramaic version, but he deems it going too far to say that Mark depended on that version.[53] Although dependence on the Targum cannot be proved without question, the instances where Mark and the Targum agree against the MT and LXX seems to offer good support for such an argument.

Those who accept the meaning of Mark 4:10-12 as telic or final, translate ἵνα as "in order that" and μήποτε as "lest", understanding that everything comes in parables to those outside *in order that* they should see, but not perceive, hear, but not understand, *lest* they repent and be forgiven.[54] However, those who find it difficult to accept the telic sense usually appeal to one of the following arguments:[55] 1.) ἵνα should be understood as shorthand for ἵνα πληρωθῇ, seen as an introductory formula to a fulfillment quotation, thus reading "in order that it might be fulfilled";[56] 2.) ἵνα is a mistranslation of the Aramaic relative particle ד, which could be translated into the Greek οἵ (pl. "who") or ἵνα; 3.) ἵνα is to be understood in a causal sense, meaning "because," with μήποτε as "perhaps"; 4.) It should be regarded as a consecutive/result clause with ἵνα translating the Hebrew consecutive למען "in order that/so that", and μήποτε as "unless"; 5.) The clause should be understood as imperatival; 6.) And finally, the clause should be viewed as prophetic irony in that the apparent failure of Jesus was foretold.

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[53] According to Hooker (2005:38), Mark's version does not indicate clear dependence on the MT or the LXX (or even the Targum).

[54] Nagel (2016:5) sums up that the discussion regarding Isa 6:9-10 in Mark 4:12 has usually centred on the conjunctions ἵνα and μήποτε and have resulted in the following three lines of argument: 1.) The verse in Mark should be understood as a final clause (with dependence on the Targum); 2.) It should be understood as a purpose clause (indicating LXX dependence); 3.) It could be understood as a result clause (if Mark 4:12 is seen as a later interpolation, apart from 4:11).

[55] See the following authors in relation to summaries of these various arguments: Ambrozic (1967:221); Evans (1982a:128-9; 1989:92); Guelich (1989:211); Kirkland (1977:6); Marcus (2000:299-300); Urban (2014:120) and Watts (2007:151).

[56] E.g. Jeremias (1976:17) and Siegman (1961:176).

Regarding these arguments, the following may be noted: Guelich (1989:211) points out that ἵνα is not an introductory formula, but rather the first word of the citation. Siegman (1961:176) acknowledges that in later Greek ἵνα does sometimes introduce a result clause, but argues that this is not the case in Mark 4:12. Also, Mark does not seem to use such a designation as shorthand anywhere else (see Urban, 2014:121). Furthermore, Evans (1982a:130) observes that it was apparently not obvious to either Matthew or Luke that ἵνα could possibly be an abbreviation of ἵνα πληρωθῇ, as neither use that as an option.[57] But most importantly, Evans (1982a:130-1; 1989:94) asserts that, even if ἵνα is to be understood as a shortened form of ἵνα πληρωθῇ, the idea of Scriptural fulfilment does not lessen the final/telic meaning of the phrase.[58]

If it is accepted that ἵνα is a mistranslation of the Aramaic particle, and we change the translation to οἵ, the following reading of 4:11-12 might be possible: "all things come in parables to those outside *who* see indeed but do not know". Evans (1982a:130) points out though, that apparently both Matthew and Luke were unaware of the "fact" that the ἵνα in Mark may be a mistranslation of the Targum's particle ז, since neither replaced it with οἵ. Kirkland (1977:6) reminds us that, to assert that ἵνα is a mistranslation of the Aramaic particle ז, remains merely speculative, and that in any case the difficult μήποτε would still be present.

If ἵνα is taken to mean something like "with the result that/because", and μήποτε becomes "unless" or "perhaps", it makes for a less harsh message. This softening results in the understanding that Jesus does not necessarily intend to make his message unintelligible, however, this is the result if the hearer does not repent and become saved (McComiskey, 2008:60). According to McComiskey (2008:60), ἵνα may certainly be understood in this way if the context allows for it, however, it seems that μήποτε followed by the subjunctive, does not allow for such a softening. McComiskey (2008:60) further notes that, in every instance in the LXX the basic sense of this grammatical construction indicates aversion. So μήποτε plus the

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[57] Evans admits that Matthew does later use a similar formula when introducing his LXX Isa 6:9-10 quotation in 13:14-15. It seems Evans is referring here to ἀναπληροῦται in Matt 13:14, but still this is not identical to ἵνα πληρωθῇ.

[58] Here Evans (1982a:130) refers to Metzger's article on quotation formulas "The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Midrash," *JBL*, 70 (1951).

subjunctive may be understood as meaning "lest" with the sense "for the aversion of" (McComiskey, 2008:60). Furthermore, McComiskey (2008:60-1) indicates that the same is also true for almost every such construction in the NT. The fact that Matthew and Luke both omit the μήποτε-clause, can also be taken to indicate that they did not see another way to soften the meaning, apart from dropping the clause.[59] Evans (1982a:130) does admit though that, while Matthew omits Mark's μήποτε clause in 13:13, where Jesus says that he speaks to the people in parables because they do not truly see, hear and understand, he does include the clause in his LXX Isaiah quotation. Since Matthew does feature a μήποτε-clause then, it seems he retains the harsh message. But it is at least safe to say that Luke does not have any such clause when he quotes Isa 6:9-10, and it seems very plausible that it has been left out precisely because it makes for such a difficult theological message. Jeremias (1976:17) argues for the μήποτε-clause that, like the Aramaic דלמא apparently underlying it, it is ambiguous and both words can mean either "in order that not", or "lest perhaps", and דלמא can additionally mean "unless." According to Jeremias (1976:17), the μήποτε of the LXX Isa 6:10 as a translation of the Hebrew פן, is better understood as meaning "in order that not". However, Jeremias (1976:17) proposes that, in whatever way the Targumist understood it, rabbinical exegesis certainly understood it as meaning "unless", with the clear idea of a promise that God would certainly forgive his people if they repented. Jeremias (1976:17) goes on to propose that the same understanding should be accepted of Mark 4:12, since it has been shown to agree with the Targum. Jeremias (1976:17) offers the following translation of Mark 4:11-12: "To you has God given the secret of the kingdom of God; but to those who are without everything is obscure, in order that they (as it is written) may "see and yet not see, may hear and yet not understand, *unless* they turn and God will forgive them". Kirkland (1977:7) suggests that μήποτε should be understood as "otherwise" (though still be translated as "lest") and reasons that it was not the people's hardness that *caused* their incomprehension, but that it was rather a symptom. Only if the people were able to perceive the message contained within Jesus' parables, would they be able to turn and so be forgiven (Kirkland, 1977:7). Against those who argue that μήποτε was an ambiguous word (with the possible meaning of either "lest" or "unless") and that the subsequent Evangelists thus omitted

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[59] Evans (1982a:130) and McComiskey (2008:61); see also Watts (2007:151).

it for fear that it might be misunderstood, Evans (1982a:130) maintains that such an argument only concedes the point. If the Evangelists really had such a fear, Evans (1982a:130) proposes that they very well could have decided merely to replace μήποτε with another less ambiguous conjunctive meaning "unless" (e.g. ἐκτὸς εἰ μή, παρεκτός, or πλὴν ὅτι). Evans (1982a:132) ultimately concludes that, the best understanding of the ἵνα / μήποτε construction in Mark 4:12 is a final or telic meaning.[60]

Although there are various arguments that propose a softer reading of the Isa 6:9-10 paraphrase in Mark is possible, many of these arguments have also received clear criticism. It seems that the easiest understanding of the Isaiah citation in Mark is to accept a final/telic meaning, even if this is the most difficult reading in a theological sense. Evans (1982a:132) is of the opinion that, whoever composed this paraphrase (whether the Evangelist or someone before him) certainly gave it a final/telic meaning, and has applied this understanding to the purpose of Jesus' teaching in parables.

6.2.3. Interpretation

When trying to interpret Mark 4:12 it is important to note that even the disciples do not yet fully see, and even they are accused of having hard hearts at certain points in the narrative (e.g. 6:52 and 8:17).[61] But they do, however, understand *something,* and so they might be seeing only partially, like the partially-healed blind man in 8:24, who sees people but at first only as though they were trees (Marcus, 1984:569).) The disciples "saw" something in Jesus, but their "vision" was somewhat clouded and out of focus (Harvey, 2000:99). Marcus (1984:569) also remarks that, it is significant that the scene of the healing of the blind man has been placed between two instances where the disciples misunderstand (8:14-21 and 8:31-33). Moule (1975:247) further points out that, in 8:17-21 the ones in the boat with Jesus (apparently his intimates) are described as being in a "hardened" state, which seems to suggest that those who see and those who are blind, and those who hear and those who are deaf, are "not two irrevocably fixed groups" – instead it rather appears to refer to the responses of

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[60] See also Ambrozic (1967:221), who agrees, but does contend though that, other than being a final clause, it could at best perhaps be a consecutive clause. See also Childs (2004:7) and Watts (2007:151).

[61] Marcus (1984:569) and Perkins (1995:572).

the hearer at particular times and circumstances. Marcus (1984:570) proposes that, similar to what is found in the Qumran literature, for Mark even the members of the elect group (together with those outside) find themselves in the penultimate age and they are subject to blinding by dark forces. However, the blinding of the elect eventually comes to an end, as also the period during which the mysteries of God must be kept a secret concludes (Marcus, 1984:570). Tuckett (1988:12) explains that 8:17-21 is offered in the form of questions and do not exclude the possibility of repentance to occur in the future, as is explicitly done in 4:12. Tuckett (1988:13) goes on to say that, after reading 4:10-12, when the reader comes across failings on the part of the disciples, this can subsequently be interpreted as a warning to learn from the disciples' shortcomings, or it can function as an example of God's grace that overcomes the failures of humans.

Another important observation when trying to understand Mark 4:12 is that the parable of the sower/soils in Mark begins and ends with the command to "hear" (4:3 and 4:9), and it seems that the responsibility lies with the crowd (Stagg, 1997:216). According to Stagg (1997:216), Mark's ἀκούετε "listen" (4:3) seems to indicate that a positive response to the parable is within the abilities of all those hearing the parable and not just a few to whom the "mystery/secret of the kingdom" is restricted. So, the command for those who can hear to indeed hear, seems to indicate that the crowd does in fact have the *ability* to hear in some sense.[62] Furthermore, in Mark 4:33-34 it is said that Jesus taught the people "the word … as they were able to hear[63] it," and that he always made use of parables to do this[64] (Hooker, 2005:39). Mark 4:33 thus gives the impression that the people were actually able to understand to a certain degree and that everything was not as unintelligible to them as 4:11 makes it out.[65] Stagg (1997:217) subsequently offers the following explanation of the parable of the sower/soils, "The difference in results, ranging from no fruit to abundant fruit, is due to difference in the soils. The sower intended a harvest from all the seeds." Marcus (1984:566) contends that the parable of the sower/soils is in fact a "parabolic

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[62] Goulder (1991:290) and Stagg (1997:217). Moule (1975:247) points out that this stands in contrast to the "obscuring" theory.
[63] McComiskey (2008:82-3) indicates that in this instance "hear" in a Semitic sense should be understood as "understand" (καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν).
[64] However, 4:34 also indicates that Jesus did explain the parables privately to his disciples (see McComiskey, 2008:82).
[65] Ambrozic (1967:220); see also McComiskey (2008:82-3).

description of the mystery of divine providence: some people are good soil and thus can receive the word, but others are wayside, rocky, or thorny and so cannot receive the word." Marcus (1984:566) holds firm that there is no indication that it is possible to alter the type of soil a person is, rather it is apparently God's will that determines the type of soil. Marcus (1984:566) explains that Satan in the parable explicitly leads people astray and implicitly uses tribulation, persecution, and the "cares of the age" as his agents. But ultimately in 4:11-20 it is made clear that the parable of the sower/soils illustrates that it is God's will to cause some people to bear fruit, and harden others by mediation of Satan and his agents (Marcus, 1984:566). Stagg (1997:216) argues, however, that we do not find the idea that divine determination dominates human potential or responsibility in the parable. In line with what Stagg says, we must admit that the parable does not indicate in any way that the sower has caused the soils to be a particular way. The sower has merely sowed the seeds and the soils "responded" in different ways.

Tuckett (1988:13) is of the opinion that there need not be a contradiction between 4:11-12 and the results of other instances of Jesus teaching in parables,[66] since there are in fact cases where Jesus' opponents do understand the meaning of particular parables.[67] An example is found in 12:12 where the Jewish leaders understand the parable of the wicked husbandmen. However, important is the fact that although they understand the parable on one level, they still do not *understand* in the sense that it makes them stop their opposition towards Jesus - thus they remain blind in a sense (Tuckett, 1988:13). Such an understanding is actually in line with what is gleaned from 4:11-12: they do indeed "see" and "hear", but since they do not come to the level of repentance, they do not truly "perceive" and "understand" (Tuckett, 1988:13).

Watts (2007:154) points out that whether the soils produce a harvest or not is the point actually addressed by the Isaiah citation. Watts (2007:154) contends that everything thus actually hinges on hearing and faith and subsequent repentance, which is also the concern in Isaiah. Hence, the parables were meant as a challenge to which one could respond or ignore the message thereof (Hooker, 2005:39).

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[66] See also Ambrozic (1967:221-2).
[67] Ambrozic (1967:222) and Tuckett (1988:13).

Marcus (2000:302) observes that the sort of inquiring spirit (as showcased by the disciples) was regarded very highly in apocalyptic circles. As examples, Marcus (2000:302) points out the following: in the Hymn Scroll from Qumran, the hymnists gives thanks to God for being gracious towards those that inquired of Him (1QH 4:23-24); and the writer of the Community Rule criticizes the wicked since they have not sought God out or attempted to inquire from him (1QS 5:11-12). It is important observe that many people failed to fully understand the parables seemingly due to a lack of faith.[68] Those who accept the message in faith is healed and saved, but those who reject the message - refuse to hear it in faith – stay on the outside in unbelief (Watts, 2007:154). The harshness of the message in Mark 4:10-12 is qualified by further interpretation in vv. 21-23(/25): "And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."[69] The hardening should thus be understood as temporary.[70] In this sense, Williamson, Jr. (1983:93) argues that Mark 4:21-23 reinterprets and transcends the negative message of 4:11b-12, in the same way that Isa 40-55 offers songs of salvation, which reinterpret and transcend the judgment of Isa 1-39. Kirkland (1977:12) proposes that, that which is hidden should be made manifest "by the act of hiding it - with the paradox being intended. In this way, Jesus did not use the parables to prevent anyone from properly understanding, but his manner of using parables was in order that the truth might be properly discerned (Kirkland, 1977:13). Hooker (2005:39) also states that even though the message of Isa 6:9-10 is a negative one, the reference to "turning" and "forgiveness" still indicates that the main purpose of the coming of the Lord is to bring salvation. So, even though the preaching and teaching of Jesus may initially function to mask the truth and harden hearts, the ultimate intention thereof is to lead to the salvation of people (Williamson, Jr., 1983:93-4).

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[68] McComiskey (2008:82); see also Foster and Shiell (1997:265).

[69] Watts (2007:154-5) and Williamson, Jr. (1983:93). Kirkland (1977:12) even argues that the sower/soils parable and its explanation is not the proper "context" under which Mark 4:10-13 should be understood, but that these verses should be understood under vv. 21-25. See also Marcus (2000:307).

[70] Williamson, Jr. (1983:93); see also Marcus (2000:307).

It is important to note that in Mark, knowledge of vital truth, especially regarding the identity of Jesus, is seen as a gift from God (Marcus, 1984:558-9). This means that this knowledge does not come from a human level, but it belongs on the one hand to God (1:11; 9:7) and by implication Jesus, and on the other hand also to the demons and by implication to Satan (1:24, 34; 3:11; 5:7; 9:20), since they are part of the unseen world (Marcus, 1984:559). Beyond this, God also chooses to reveal the truth to some (4:11) (Marcus, 1984:559). So humans do not naturally have access to the vital truth about God, Jesus, or even their own condition (Marcus, 1984:559). Humans can only acquire this vital knowledge if God reveals it to them (Marcus, 1984:559). Hence, there exists a dualism of revelation and concealment in the Gospel of Mark (see Mark 4:11-12 and 44:33-34) (Marcus, 1984:559-60): On the one hand there are the disciples of Jesus to whom "the mystery of the kingdom" are given; they also receive insight into the identity of Jesus; and they witness miracles performed by Jesus and are taught by Jesus. On the other hand there are "those outside" who look and look, but do not perceive, and hear and hear, but do not understand; insight into the identity of Jesus is explicitly kept from them; and the knowledge and teaching that the disciples receive are explicitly kept from the general public. This tension that exists between the "revealed" and "concealed" mystery of the kingdom of God is actually a central theme in the Gospel of Mark (Nagel, 2016:1). Marcus (1984:560) goes further, stating that this motif of revelation to a few and concealment from the many is also commonly found in Jewish apocalyptic writings.[71] Within apocalyptic literature it is understood that the real moment of revelation only occurs at the eschaton, so until that time the knowledge of even the elect only exists in imperfect form (see Marcus, 1984:560-1). It is Marcus' (1984:561) view that this imperfection of knowledge of even the elect group before the end time is a characteristic of Markan epistemology. Furthermore, this combination of revelation and secrecy is also found in the Qumran literature, where we see that the Qumran community is the recipient of secrets, which they keep hidden from outsiders (see 1QS 9:17, 21-22; 4:6) (Marcus, 1984:560).

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[71] *2 Baruch* 48:2-3, for example, tells of Baruch that says to God that He (God) does not reveal his mysteries to many (Marcus, 1984:560). *4 Ezra* 12:36-37 tells that Ezra was instructed to teach the mysteries of God only to those who are wise and comprehend them (Marcus, 1984:560).

In the end it appears though that the message of Mark 4:12 (however difficult to accept) is that Jesus, in fact, used the mysterious language of parables to make these parables incomprehensible and consequently exclude some that hear it from the kingdom of God (Urban, 2014:124). Wansbrough (2015:133), on the other hand, does not agree with such an understanding, arguing instead that Mark quotes Isa 6:9-10 merely as an explanation of the fact that Israel failed to recognize the Messiah. In Wansbrough's (2015:134) it is also used in this manner in John and Acts. Even if Jesus' words are understood as actively preventing some from understanding, Urban (2014:124) warns that Jesus' words should not be understood as deterministic, rendering the hearers unable to make rational choices. If Mark 4 is considered in the context of the whole Gospel, it can be understood that this chapter also relates something of the coexistence between divine sovereignty and human responsibility (Urban, 2014:124). The parables actually serve to bring division in the hearers and make their true attitudes (of humility or pride) evident (Urban, 2014:124). In this regard, Urban (2014:124-5) makes a very valuable point: We must recognise that *none* of Jesus' hearers at first understand the parable of the sower. Those that afterwards come to Jesus to ask the true meaning of the parable are not characterized by having a special knowledge that enables them to understand the parable, but they are rather sketched as willing to pursue Jesus and learn from him. When they hear the true meaning of the parable, they are confronted with the challenge of real devotion to Jesus. Perkins (1995:572) points out that even if their understanding is limited, Jesus remains willing to teach the crowds and the disciples.

Another way to understand this harsh message of 4:12 is to note that Mark is simply reflecting the actual opposition that Jesus, and the church later, experienced, and then interprets this reality as due to divine intention (Tuckett, 1988:19). The historical outcome of Jesus' teaching was rejection by the Jews, and subsequently theological minds sought to explain this as the intended outcome, since the purposes of God could not be upset (Telford, 1995:131). According to Williamson, Jr. (1983:93), this actually reflects a common tendency of that time "to attribute all inexplicable phenomena to the will of God". And that is why God is "implicated" when it is asked why some are not able to properly see and hear (Williamson, Jr., 1983:93). Tuckett (1988:19-20) further says that "... since Mark is presumably writing primarily for Christian readers, the point of the saying is not necessarily to damn outsiders just for

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the sake of it. The saying serves quite as much to exhort the Christian readers, to assure them of their own privileged position, to bolster flagging spirits, as well as to warn them of their own responsibilities …" When considering Isa 6:9-10 as it appeared in the book of Isaiah, we may also remember that these verses fall within the context of the nation being unfaithful to God, and the prophet who has to speak to these unfaithful people (Mann, 1986:264). The hardening of the people is thus to be understood as an act of divine judgment (Perkins, 1995:572). According to Watts (2009:217), it was the people's rejection of Isaiah's preaching and summons to repentance, which led to the judgment. In a similar way, the preaching and summons to repentance by Jesus was rejected, which led to Jesus' response of speaking in parables.[72] McComiskey (2008:59) is of the opinion that in Mark (as well as Matthew and Luke) Jesus assumes a meaning for Isa 6:9-10 that is basically the same as the original meaning of these verses in Isaiah. McComiskey (2008:59-60) also makes the important observation that Jesus thus applies this Isaiah passage to his own ministry. Surely this passage originally applied to Isaiah and not Jesus, however, Jesus legitimately employed these verses to his own context to show that his preaching had an identical function to that of Isaiah (McComiskey, 2008:60). Jesus thus spoke in parables with the same function and to reach the same results as the proclamation of Isaiah, however, the idea was to harden the hard, yet call those who were responsive to return to God.[73] This aligns more with the fact that, elsewhere, Jesus actually calls sinners and offers them forgiveness (1:15; 2:5, 10, 17) (Perkins, 1995:572). To have the overall message end in such a harsh tone does not seem to correspond to what Mark says elsewhere regarding Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God[74] (Hooker, 2005:38-9). McComiskey (2008:83) thus says that the parable genre is the perfect means to teach to a crowd that had different responses to God and where the teaching called every person to either harden or soften upon hearing the message.

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[72] Watts (2009:217); see also Mann (1986:264) and Perkins (1995:572).

[73] McComiskey (2008:83); see also Hooker (2005:39) and Mann (1986:264).

[74] Hooker (2005:38) sees Mark's understanding of the passage as clearly indicating that Jesus taught in parables in order that certain people should not understand and heed his teachings, however, this is not the final message.

6.3. Conclusion

Just as Isa 6:9-10 is sometimes omitted from the lectionary, Juel (2002:279) notes that Mark 4:10-12, where Isa 6:9-10 is referred to, is also often omitted from the lectionaries, with focus being only on the preceding parable and the explanation that follows these verses. Juel (2002:280) even states, "The efforts of interpreters to bring these verses under control border on desperation." Juel (2002:282) simply (and accurately) states that the parable of the sower/soils and Jesus' explanation about why he chooses to teach/preach in this manner, is found to be so difficult, not because the passage is obscure, but because it is in fact quite clear. When merely considering the language and grammar of 4:(10-)12 it seems most reasonable to accept that the Evangelist intended to say that Jesus did in fact speak in parables to "those outside" "so that/in order that" they should not truly perceive and understand "lest" they repent and be forgiven.[75] Many interpreters have proposed various arguments advocating a softer reading, but as theologically difficult as these words are, it seems to be the most straightforward understanding. Juel (2002:282) also offers some assurance that the idea of hardening is not the end of the message. Mark 4:21-23 reads, "And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." Although the Isaiah passage in relation to Jesus' use of parables is rather difficult to interpret, it appears that in Mark it is part of a larger secrecy theme that is used as a strategy with a goal to it.[76] So it should be understood that the time will come for clarity, and perhaps people will in time be able to see and hear properly (Juel, 2002:282).

If the verses preceding the quotation are taken into account and the citation itself is considered within its new context in the Gospel of Mark, we must consider additional elements as well. In Isaiah the prophet is ordered to harden the people so that they would not properly understand and perceive and consequently repent. In Mark the parables seem to serve the same purpose. As has been pointed out, in terms of

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[75] Evans (1982a:132) and Hooker (2005:38); see also Childs (2004:7).

[76] See Childs (2004:7); Evans (1989:106); Juel (2002:282); Synge (1980:54) and Telford (1995:131). See also Powell (2009:136-9) in relation to the secrecy theme in Mark.

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language and grammar, the verses seem quite clear in Mark. The difficulty is, however, that this picture of Jesus, who uses parables to deliberately make his message incomprehensible to some, seems to be in contradiction to how he is portrayed elsewhere in the Gospel. In this regard we may understand it in a similar way as the hardening that God orders the prophet to bring in Isaiah: as harsh as the command is, we must take into account the fact that at that point the people had already been grossly rebellious and did not want to repent. So it does not seem that God is ordering Isaiah to harden people that otherwise would have wanted to repent. In the same vein, we can argue that Jesus does in fact use parables to deliberately make his message non-evident, but this seems to be in response to the rejection of his message. Furthermore, it is clear that no one seems to understand the parables at first - this includes "those outside", as well as the disciples. Yet Jesus is willing to offer additional explanations of his parables to those who come to him in search of their true meaning. Thus, it does not seem that Jesus makes his message unintelligible to people who are eager to learn its true meaning. Rather, it appears as though Jesus conceals the true meaning of the parables so that it would be necessary for the hearers to search for him in order to come to a correct understanding of the parables, and when they do, he willingly gives such an explanation to them. Ultimately, as has been mentioned above, it seems that the matter has much to do with faith. Those who believe and come to Jesus to seek truth will be given this by Jesus, but those who do not have faith and consequently do not ask Jesus about the real truth of his parables remain blind and deaf. So it seems that Mark did in fact intend to use the Isaiah citation with a similar understanding as what it had in its original context. However, Mark still appropriates the Isaiah passage to the present context by applying it to Jesus' parables particularly. The Isaiah passage has thus been accustomed to a new context, but the meaning in the new context does not seem to contradict the original meaning of the passage as it appears in Isaiah.

CHAPTER 7
MATTHEW[1]

7.1. Background

For an interpretation of the Gospels to be appropriate, attention has to be given to historical, literary, and theological considerations (Boring, 1995:89). Yet, these approaches are not to be understood as mutually exclusive, but rather, they should be viewed as corresponding to the very nature of the Gospel (Boring, 1995:89). Although this study will primarily be focusing on a synchronic analysis of the particular verses under discussion, it is necessary for a proper understanding of the verses to make mention of certain historical and theological elements pertinent to the Gospel of Matthew.[2]

In terms of the genre of the Gospel of Matthew, it is obvious that it tells the story of the life of Jesus (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). In this sense, it is a sort of ancient type of biography, but not what we would understand under the word biography in a contemporary sense (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). The Gospel is, however, also quite distinct from Hellenistic biography, which is indicated, for example, by the following (Boring, 1995:109-10): The Gospel is actually a community narrative, more than an individualistic writing. The Gospel is also saturated with Christology, thus having a Christological, more than biographical, purpose. And, following from its Christological purpose, the Gospel is also very much ecclesiological. Some have even suggested that the Gospel was written to serve a liturgical function (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). Others have also seen the Gospel as a sort of catechesis or catechetical manual that

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[1] Boring (1995:91) says that, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, there emerged consensus among scholars that Matthew greatly made use of Mark as a source, as well as a collection of Jesus sayings, referred to as "Q". Boring (1995:91) does, however, point out that recently this view has been challenged, resulting in less unanimity and dogmatism than previously, and avoiding simplistic solutions. Nevertheless, the majority of scholars are still of the opinion that Matthew made use of Q (albeit perhaps in a slightly different form from what Luke used) as well as Mark (also perhaps a slightly different form as the canonical Mark) as his major sources, as well as certain materials that are peculiar to his own tradition, often called the Matthew *Sondergut* material (Boring, 1995:91-2).
[2] Boring (1995:94) notes that, although there is value in investigating the developing tradition that lies behind a text (e.g. moving from traditions originating in Jesus' own time, to that of the early church, to Matthew's time), we must remember that ultimately the object and norm of the church's study, teaching and proclamation is the text of the Bible as it is found in the present canonical form.

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served to build up Christian discipleship (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). Or perhaps it was even meant as a church corrective, provided to a community that was facing many difficulties (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). The Gospel can also be viewed as a tool for the missionary purposes of the church (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). Furthermore, some suggest that the Gospel functions as a polemic against the rabbis, since it features many instances where Jesus is described as "debating" with the Pharisees (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). In this sense, the author and his readers were continuously working to defend the Gospel against the claims of the synagogue (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix).

Hagner (1993:lix) concludes that, the various possibilities regarding the genre of the Gospel of Matthew, at the very least indicate that the work has a multifaceted character. And it is even possible that more than one of these options could have been part of the reason for writing the Gospel (Hagner, 1993:lix). In the end though, Hagner (1993:lix) says that, it is clear that the Gospel is a "community book", which was written largely in response to the immediate needs of Matthew's community, for the period between the narrated historical events and the awaited return of Christ. Hagner (1993:lix) points out that, in particular, Matthew attempts to show to his readers that their new faith stands in continuity with the faith of their ancestors, and is also to be seen as the fulfillment of Scripture and the beginning of the realization of Israel's hope. Matthew is concerned throughout the Gospel to show that Christianity is actually a continuation of what is found in the OT (Morris, 1992:2).

Considering the theology in the Gospel of Matthew, the following broad themes play a role (Hagner, 1993:lx-lxiv): 1.) Fulfillment is clearly a favourite theme for Matthew. 2.) The Gospel also shows central emphasis on the kingdom, whereby the reign of God has started to be realized through the coming of Christ. Matthew refers to this as "the kingdom of heaven".[3] 3.) There is also a sense of a future expectation regarding the kingdom, that will come through the *parousia* (return of Christ).[4] 4.) Christology also plays an important part in the Gospel of Matthew, as the author is fundamentally concerned with the doctrine of Jesus as the Christ in every theological aspect. It is

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[3] See also Morris (1992:8). Noteworthy is that, there are ten instances where Matthew actually introduces parables with the phrase "The kingdom of heaven is like …" (Morris, 1992:8).

[4] Among the Gospels it is only Matthew that features the technical term $\pi\alpha\rho\text{ου}\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ "parousia" – which refers to the eschatological return of Christ (24:3, 27, 37, 39) (Hagner, 1993:lx-lxiv).

the identity of Jesus that has bearing on matters such as "fulfillment, authoritative exposition of the law, discipleship, ecclesiology, and eschatology." 5.) Furthermore, it seems that righteousness[5] and discipleship are important themes for Matthew. 6.) Matthew is also very much concerned with law and grace, and emphasizes Jesus' faithfulness to the law. 7.) Church/community is another important element in Matthew. Among the Gospels, only Matthew features the word ἐκκλησία "church" (16:18; 18:17). 8.) Finally, Matthew also showcases an eschatological interest, when we compare the length of his apocalyptic discourse (chapter 24) with that of Mark 13.[6]

7.1.1. Date

According to the early traditions, Matthew was the first Gospel to be written (Morris, 1992:8). This would make for a very early dating of the Gospel, no later than about the early 60's CE (see Morris, 1992:8). However, contemporary scholarship is convinced that Matthew shows traces of having made use of Mark (Morris, 1992:8). Morris (1992:8) makes it clear that, the passages which are found in both Gospels are of such a nature/form that it is highly unlikely that the situation was reversed, where Mark made use of Matthew. If Matthew did in fact make use of Mark (and Q) as sources, Matthew must have been written at a time when Mark had already become a sacred tradition for the community (see Boring, 1995:105-6). Although there is no certainty regarding the date or historical circumstances in which the Gospel of Matthew originated, most scholars propose that it was written sometime after the Jewish rebellion against Rome, during which Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, but still before the beginning of the 2nd century CE (Garland, 2001:3).

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[5] In some instances, righteousness in Matthew seems to be referring to a personal righteousness that is associated with discipleship, but in other instances it seems to mean righteousness more in a salvation-historical sense (Hagner, 1993:lx-lxiv).

[6] The apocalyptic chapter in Matthew is longer than what is found in Mark, and Matthew adds an entire chapter of material not found in Mark, which features the reality of eschatological judgment (Hagner, 1993:lx-lxiv). The purpose of the focus on eschatology is to motivate the community to live in a way that is appropriate in light of the imminent judgment (Hagner, 1993:lx-lxiv).

When talking about the date of Matthew, many scholars point out that, it seems Matthew mentioned the fall of Jerusalem (which occurred 70 CE)[7], but it is not certain whether this was because the fall had already occurred or because it was merely a foresight as to what was to come (see Morris, 1992:9). It seems probable that in Matt 22:7, there is an indication of the war that occurred in 66-70 CE, as well as the consequent destruction of Jerusalem (see Boring, 1995:105-6). Yet, Matthew does not seem too concerned with it, possibly reflecting that he experienced some distance from the event in space and time (see Boring, 1995:105-6; 2012:536). Morris (1992:10) points out that, all the references to the destruction of Jerusalem are forward looking and so points to a time before the actual occurrence thereof. Furthermore, Matthew also features a story of the Temple tax (17:24-27), which seems to imply that the Jewish followers of Jesus still had to pay the tax, which would only have been relevant if the Temple was still standing (i.e. before 70 CE) (Morris, 1992:10).

Preferring a later date, some point out that Matthew seems to be quite concerned with the developments of formative Judaism that occurred after 70 CE (see Boring, 1995:105-6). Some also point out that, the references to the church are such that it reflects a point of development that must have taken a while to achieve (see Morris, 1992:9). However, others counter that, there is no evidence of a developed church order, but that the church was rather an organization in a simple sense that does not need to be anything more than what we read of in the Pauline letters (see Morris, 1992:10). The question is further asked whether the relationship between the church and the synagogue in the Gospel reflects such a state that the break between the two, usually dated 85 or 90 CE, had already occurred (see Hagner, 1993:lxxiii). Against a late date though, it has been pointed out that the Gospel does not contain any references to the Pauline letters, as one would perhaps expect if those letters had already been written and circulated (see Morris, 1992:10).

On the possible date of the Gospel of Matthew, Morris (1992:11) concludes that, there is ultimately no hard evidence to unequivocally determine the date of the Gospel. Morris (1992:11) does, however, mention that most contemporary scholars prefer a date somewhere between 70 and 90 CE, but he proposes that there is good

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[7] See also Hagner (1993:lxxiii).

reason for accepting that it was actually written before 70 CE, perhaps in the late 50's CE or early 60's CE even. Hagner (1993:lxxiv) also argues that there is good reason to take seriously the possibility that the Gospel was actually written quite early, i.e. before 70 CE. Boring (1995:105-6), on the other hand, proposes that a likely dating for Matthew is somewhere between 80-100 CE.[8] Schnelle (1998:222) advocates a likely date of writing for the Gospel around 90 CE. It seems that Ignatius, writing around 110 CE, made use of Matthew, which means that it must have at least been written, and most likely circulated before then.[9] Hagner (1993:lxxiv) reminds us, however, that to propose an early date, before 70 CE is a mere inclination, just as a date after 70 CE remains speculation. So, it seems safest to assume a date of origin for the Gospel, as most scholars do, somewhere between 70 and 90 CE. The preferred date may differ depending on the date accepted for the origin of Mark, which is usually somewhere between 65 and 75 CE.

7.1.2. Location

Many possibilities for the origin of the Gospel of Matthew have been proposed: e.g. Palestine[10] (Galilee, Caesarea, Jerusalem), Edessa, Caesarea, Maritima, Phoenicia, Syria (Tyre or Sidon, Antioch), Egypt (Alexandria) or Transjordan (Pella).[11] It seems though that Syria is the favoured option,[12] and when defined more closely, Antioch.[13] Unfortunately this also remains merely a good conjecture.[14]

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[8] Wansbrough (2015:50) indicates a date of ca. 85 CE.

[9] See Boring (1995:105-6) and Schnelle (1998:222).

[10] See Morris (1992:12).

[11] See Boring (1995:105) and Garland (2001:3).

[12] See Morris (1992:12) and Schnelle (1998:222).

[13] See Boring (1995:105; 2012:536); Garland (2001:3); Hagner (1993:lxxv) and Powell (2009:108). For reasons supporting Antioch as origin of Matthew's Gospel, see Boring (1995:105).

[14] See Hagner (1993:lxxv) and Morris (1992:12). For more on the possibilities relating to the provenance of the Gospel of Matthew, see Boring (2012:536).

7.1.3. Author

The author of the Gospel of Matthew, like the other NT Gospels, is anonymous.[15] The Gospel only received the title κατὰ Μαθθαῖον "according to Matthew" somewhere in the 2nd century (Hagner, 1993:lxxvi). The earliest testimony that explicitly makes mention of "Matthew", is a Papias citation, found in Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.39) (ca. 110-125 CE).[16] If the citation does in fact refer to the Gospel of Matthew, it highlights a Jewish orientation for the Gospel (Garland, 2001:1). Though Garland (2001:2) admits that the Papias statement is enigmatic, he reckons that even a casual reader of the Gospel can discern Matthew's "Jewishness".[17] This Jewish orientation does not only indicate something about the author, but also says something about the audience that he was writing to.[18] The Jewishness of the Gospel will be further explored under the next heading - "Audience". Irenaeus (as cited by Eusebius) also makes mention of Matthew as the author of the Gospel (Albright & Mann, 1971:clxxix). Early church tradition subsequently believed the author of the Gospel to be Levi,[19] also known as Matthew, one of the Twelve Apostles[20] and a former tax collector (cf. Matt 9:9-13; 10:3; Mark 2:13-17)[21] (Blomberg, 2007:1). A profession as a tax collector might likely have ensured that Matthew was literate, something only a few people could claim at the time (Blomberg, 2007:1). According to Boring (1995:107), the author was clearly familiar with the traditions and methods of the synagogue, but it does not seem that he had the formal training that became commonplace for scribes in formative Judaism (Boring, 1995:107). It is possible that he acted as some sort of teacher in his community, although we cannot say for certain in what capacity that might have been.[22] Blomberg (2007:1) says that, the elementary school education Matthew had, as well as his synagogue attendance

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[15] Garland (2001:1) and Hagner (1993:lxxvi).

[16] Garland (2001:1) and Albright and Mann (1971:clxxix). According to Powell (2009:107), Papias indicated that Matthew, the tax collector and on of the Twelve disciples, "collected the sayings in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) language and each one interpreted (or translated) them as he was able".

[17] See also Boring (1995:107) and Morris (1992:2).

[18] See Beaton (2005:63).

[19] Albright and Mann (1971:clxxviii) propose that "Levi" might not actually be a proper name, but might instead be the tribal designation "Levite". For more on this, see Albright and Mann (1971:clxxviii).

[20] See also Morris (1992:8, 12).

[21] From the early 2nd century, the church tradition supported Matthew as author (e.g. Papias, John, Pantaenus, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome) (Hagner, 1993:lxxvi). See also Albright and Mann (1971:clxxvii).

[22] Boring (1995:107); see also Schnelle (1998:220).

would have resulted in him having a good knowledge of the contents and interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and, as will be mentioned shortly, the Gospel does in fact evidence a thorough knowledge of the OT. According to Garland (2001:1) though, it is questionable whether the author Matthew should be associated with the Matthew who was once a tax collector, but who decided to follow Jesus as a disciple (9:9; 10:3). Morris (1992:13) also says, "It is widely agreed by critical orthodoxy that this Gospel was not written by Matthew or for that matter by any close personal follower of Jesus. It is pointed out that the writer makes use of earlier written documents, such as Mark and Q …". Whichever Matthew the author was, Garland (2001:1) proposes that we can assert the following about the author of this Gospel: 1.) He belonged to a Hellenized Jewish culture;[23] 2.) He had the ability to write in good Greek; and 3.) He knew the Scriptures well. Powell (2009:108) suggests that Matthew was almost certainly a Jewish Christian, and he might even have been a rabbi or synagogue leader.

It does not seem likely that the Gospel would have been attributed to "Matthew" without good reason, since, from what we know, Matthew does not seem to have otherwise been a leading figure under the apostles or the early church.[24] So, in this sense, there does not seem to be a good reason for assigning the Gospel to him unless he in fact wrote it (Morris, 1992:13). Some object that Matthew, being one of the Twelve and himself an eyewitness of the events, would not have depended so heavily on the work of Mark, who did not have part in the events surrounding Jesus.[25] However, if one sees Mark's Gospel as basically the preaching of Peter, as proposed by Papias, then it might make more sense that Matthew would have used Mark.[26] Morris (1992:15) furthermore mentions that, there is no reason to even assert that an apostle did not or would not make use of the work of a non-apostle, especially if an apostle judged a particular source as being reliable.

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[23] See also Boring (1995:107).

[24] Hagner (1993:lxxvi) and Morris (1992:13). However, Schnelle (1998:220) maintains that in the community within which the Gospel of Matthew originated, the disciple did probably play an important role. For more on this see Schnelle (1998:220).

[25] See Hagner (1993:lxxvi); Morris (1992:14-5) and Schnelle (1998:219).

[26] See Hagner (1993:lxxvi) and Morris (1992:15).

Hagner (1993:lxxvii) concludes that, the apostle Matthew was likely the source of an early form of major parts of the Gospel, particularly the sayings of Jesus, but also perhaps some of the narrative material. Hagner (1993:lxxvii) goes on to assert that, it might have been possible that one or more disciples of Matthew later compiled these materials in the form of the Gospel as we know it today. Finally, the last editing was probably done by a Hellenistic Jewish Christian (Hagner, 1993:lxxvii).

7.1.4. Audience

When examining the Gospel of Matthew, it is usually most satisfactory to understand that the readers were Jewish Christians (Hagner, 1993:lxiv). Blomberg (2007:1) deems it most likely that Matthew's audience comprised mainly of Jews[27] that became Christians and who lived in and around Syrian Antioch (one-seventh of which were Jews). Based on the material favoured by Matthew, it seems that the community he was writing to might have been a relatively wealthy urban and prosperous community.[28] Matthew's community was profoundly influenced by its relationship with the surrounding and dominant Jewish community, and can only be rightly defined when that relationship is taken into account (Boring, 1995:97).

Because the Gospel of Matthew often reflects particularly Jewish interests (e.g. concern about the Law, Sabbath and Temple), it has often been described as the "Jewish" Gospel, against Luke or John that are often categorized as "Gentile".[29] This Jewish inclination in the Gospel of Matthew can be discerned, for example, by the fact that the author does not feel the need to offer explanations for Jewish terms and customs like hand washing (15:1), the nature of the two didrachma (i.e. Temple tax, 17:24-27), the seat of Moses (23:2), phylacteries and fringes (23:5), and flight on the

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[27] So also Viljoen (2007b:701, 712).

[28] Boring (1995:104) and Powell (2009:108). Boring (1995:104) offers the following examples as evidence for such a claim: The reference to the "poor" and "hungry" of the beatitudes, become the "poor in spirit", and those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" in Matthew (Matt 5:3,6 // Luke 6:20-21). References in other Gospels to "small-denomination copper coins" are replaced by references to "gold and larger-denomination coins" (Mark 6:8 // Matt 10:9; Luke 19:11-27 // Matt 25:14-30). Matthew includes stories where much finance is present and where lavish dinner parties occur (e.g. 18:23-35; 22:1-14). Finally, Matthew also specifically adds (to Mark) that Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus, was a disciple *and* a wealthy man (27:57).

[29] Boring (1995:97); see also Boring (2012:537) and Schnelle (1998:220).

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Sabbath (24:20).[30] This probably indicates that the community Matthew was writing to would have been familiar enough with these terms and customs (Boring, 1995:97). Furthermore, Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham, the ancestor of the Jews, and only Matthew says that Jesus was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6; 15:24) (Morris, 1992:2-3). The author also continuously refers to the OT an emphasizes the idea of fulfillment (see Schnelle, 1998:220).

In terms of Matthew's "Jewishness", Boring (1995:97) warns though that, it is somewhat simplistic to understand the Gospel merely in this sense, and we must remember that the Jewish Christianity of the time consisted of a range of different groups with a variety of attitudes concerning the Law. Also, according to Garland (2001:2), we must not too quickly conclude that the Gospel was written mainly for Jews, since it also contains a lot of anti-Jewish material (see 21:43; 23:32-33, 35; 27:25).[31] Certain elements within the Gospel clearly indicate an alienation from Judaism (e.g. references to "their" synagogues – 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34; "their" scribes – 7:29; and "the Jews" as though they are another group – 28:15).[32] Strong criticism against the Jews is especially evident in chapter 23 (Morris, 1992:3). The anti-Jewish polemic that appears at certain points in Matthew may be explained by the proposal that Matthew's community had recently broken away from the synagogue (Blomberg, 2007:1). Yet, this is not to say that the newly converted Christians did not attempt to persuade their fellow Jewish brothers to the same faith (Blomberg, 2007:1). It seems that Matthew's community separated from Judaism, from whence it had originated, and so this new community was centered around Jesus and not the Torah (18:20) (Garland, 2001:2). According to Garland (2001:2), Matthew's community understood itself as over against others who claimed to be Israel. In this sense, the kingdom of God had been taken away from those to whom it formerly belonged and given to "others", who are described as a "nation" that will produce fruits (21:41, 43) (see Schnelle, 1998:221). "The Jews" are thus seen as distinct from the church, who believes in the resurrection of Jesus (Garland, 2001:3).

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[30] Garland (2001:2); see also Boring (1995:97) and Morris (1992:2-3).
[31] See also Hagner (1993:lxxi-lxxiii).
[32] Boring (1995:97) and Morris (1992:3).

Although Matthew has a Jewish background and he is interested in Jews, we must also remember that Matthew is concerned with how Jesus is relevant for all nations (Morris, 1992:3). Beyond criticism against the Jews, Matthew also reflects ideas regarding the inclusion of Gentiles into the church (8:11-12; 12:21) (Garland, 2001:2). Although Matthew certainly does not showcase a theme of universalism like Luke or Paul, it seems he was concerned with the fact that Gentiles had their place in the bigger plan, and could specifically also receive the teaching and help of Jesus (Morris, 1992:6). Furthermore, Jesus' final command also indicates that disciples should come from all nations (Garland, 2001:2). Hagner (1993:lxiv-lxv) mentions that, it is not impossible that the Gospel was actually written to a mixed community, or Gentiles, by a Gentile author, however, he argues that such a proposition is less natural and thus less probable. Although seemingly contradictory, it is best to understand Matthew as both Jewish and anti-Jewish.[33]

In the end, the believing community in which Matthew found himself, viewed itself as the Messianic community, that is, the eschatological people of God, and they were distinct from others (be it Jews or Gentiles) based on the fact that they believed in Jesus the Messiah (Boring, 1995:98). Thus, the most important distinction made within the Gospel is between believers and non-believers of Christ (Boring, 1995:98). Matthew further uses the word "church" to describe the community of believers.[34] It must be noted, however, that the Gospel of Matthew does not view itself as presenting a new religion, but the Christian community (consisting of both Jewish and Gentile believers) is understood as the continuation of the people of God (Boring, 1995:99). Viljoen (2007b:705-6) says that Matthew understands that the "church" (ἐκκλησία) "took over the role of the Old Testament congregation of the people of God and distinguishes them from the synagogue and its leaders." In the words of Schnelle (1998:223), "The situation of the Matthean community is essentially defined by its break with Israel, which had led to repressions and persecutions of Matthean Christians (cf. Matt 10:17-18; 23:34)."

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[33] Boring (1995:98) and Wansbrough (2015:54). Schnelle (1998:221) confirms that there is still debate regarding whether Matthew was a Jewish or Gentile Christian. For arguments in favour of both positions respectively, see Schnelle (1998:220-1). Viljoen (2007b:710) also remarks that, in relation to Jesus' attitude towards the Jews on the one hand, and the Gentiles on the, the Gospel of Matthew contains evidence that appears contradictory. For more on this see Viljoen (2007b:710-2).

[34] Boring (1995:97); see also Viljoen (2007b:705).

7.1.5. The Old Testament in Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is saturated with the Hebrew Scriptures (i.e. OT),[35] and the symbolic world of the Gospel is thoroughly shaped by the OT.[36] The Gospel is filled with Semitisms, quotations and allusions from the OT (Leske, 1998:152). The Evangelist makes use of Scripture in order to emphasize some of his most prominent theological interests (Stanton, 1988:205). Blomberg (2007:1) points out that, almost every major theological emphasis of Matthew, is backed up by the OT. In terms of how Matthew makes use of the OT, many have also described the Gospel as *midrash*, which offers an interpretation of Scripture (see Hagner, 1993:lvii-lix). Powell (2009:107-8) puts forth that Matthew, not only knows the Jewish Scriptures well, but also uses them in a way that may indicate that he was somewhat trained in scribal activities.

There are more than sixty explicit OT quotations in Matthew, which is more than twice what is found in any of the other Gospels.[37] Beaton (2005:63) mentions that, from the OT, it is especially Jeremiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel and Isaiah that are used by Matthew, but he reckons that Isaiah plays a profound role in the message of Matthew's Gospel. Sixteen of the explicit quotations in Matthew are from the book of Isaiah (Blenkinsopp, 2006:148). Beyond this, the Gospel also includes many allusions and echoes to Scripture.[38] According to Blomberg (2007:1), these are roughly twice the amount as found in the other Gospels. Many of these allusions are also to the book of Isaiah (Blenkinsopp, 2006:148). Beaton (2005:64) proposes that, Matthew's use of Isaiah is creative, complex, and thoroughly Christological. Beaton (2005:76) further suggests that, Matthew (as well as the exegetical tradition that he was dependent upon) interprets Isaiah in such a way that it offers an explanation and validation of the life, ministry and death of Jesus in light of God's purposes in history. Beaton (2005:76) is of the opinion that the Gospel shows affinities with the Dead Sea Scrolls, where we find a revelatory exegesis of Scripture with an eschatological

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[35] Blomberg (2007:1).

[36] Beaton (2005:63).

[37] Hagner (1993:liv); see also Morris (1992:3) and Blenkinsopp (2006:148). Blomberg (2007:1) says there are about 50 quotations, depending on how "quotation" is defined, but confirms that it is much more than what is found in the other Gospels.

[38] Blomberg (2007:1) and Hagner (1993:liv).

orientation. The DSS community also understood Scripture as pertaining to their current circumstances (Beaton, 2005:76). Black (1986:4) agrees that, the Qumran sect believed their present historical situation to be an eschatological situation, just as the NT writers did. In Matthew, this can be seen, for example, in all the formula quotations that are preceded with the words "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet …" (1:22; 2:15) or "This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet (Isaiah) …" (8:17; 12:17; 13:35: 21:4) (Beaton, 2005:76).

Leske (1998:152) observes that, the author's knowledge of the OT can also be seen in subtle ways: In 3:4 for example, Matthew describes John the Baptist's clothing in terms similar to the description of Elijah's garments in 2 Kings 1:8, alerting the reader that John should be seen as the returning Elijah. In 27:41-43 Matthew describes the chief priests, scribes and elders with the same words that portray the wicked in Psalm 22:8 (and Wisdom 2:10-20, which Leske sees as an echo of Isaiah 53), sketching these Jewish leaders as the wicked ones who persecute the righteous servant in Psalm 22 (and Isa 53), i.e. Jesus.

The theme of fulfillment plays and important role in the Gospel of Matthew (Viljoen, 2007a:301). Matthew seemingly had a great interest in illustrating the Gospel of the kingdom as fulfillment of OT expectations (Hagner, 1993:liv). According to Hagner (1993:lv), the quotations in Matthew have theological importance, as Matthew used these quotations to show that the events contained in his narrative should be understood as the fulfillment of God's promises in the Scriptures. In using Scripture, Matthew's concern was to indicate that the Jewish Scriptures were fulfilled in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ,[39] and the subsequent church.[40] Matthew understood (along with contemporary Judaism) that the messages of the prophets were meant for his own time and that they proclaimed the events that would characterize the end time (Reventlow, 2009:69). But it must be remembered that to Matthew, the Christ-event was the central act of the end time (Reventlow, 2009:69). According to Reventlow (2009:69), the manner in which Matthew understood and used the OT, seeing OT prophecy as the promise and the Christ-event as the fulfillment thereof,

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[39] So also Morris (1992:3). Matthew attempts to showcase, for future generations, the importance of Jesus (Beaton, 2005:63).

[40] Boring (1995:94) and Viljoen (2007a:305-6).

served as a model for the relationship between the Testaments and was subsequently quite influential in the history of interpretation that followed. Important to note is that, in the Gospel of Matthew, the events concerning Jesus offer an interpretation of Scripture that gives it new meaning (Müller, 2001:320-1). So, through a revelation, the true meaning of Scripture is revealed (Müller, 2001:321). Garland (2001:2) also makes the following comment: "He [Matthew] illuminates the mission and destiny of Jesus throughout his Gospel with a creative rereading of the Scripture."

Beaton (2005:75) holds that, the usage of Scripture by Matthew functions for the author as conveying God's perspective on the events narrated in the Gospel. Beaton (2005:75-6) reckons that Matthew does not use the Scriptures with new altered meanings, which are completely removed from their original context. Instead, he uses them in a sophisticated way that imparts the Gospel with intricate layers of meaning (Beaton, 2005:75-6). According to Beaton (2005:76), Matthew's use of the OT represents early Christian exegesis and shows attempts to understand the life, work and person of Jesus as the Messiah, son of Abraham, son of David. Hagner (1993:lv-lvi), however, argues that, the way in which Matthew employs OT quotations offer difficulties for the contemporary reader, since it is often unclear on what hermeneutical basis they rest. Although the word "fulfill" is used, many of the texts that are quoted do not actually contain the prediction of future events (Hagner, 1993:lv-lvi). Hagner (1993:lv-lvi) maintains that, Matthew does not take care to understand/employ the texts in the same way as what the original authors intended them. Hagner (1993:lvi) explains that, what we find instead, as elsewhere in the NT, is what is known as *sensus plenior*, that is, a fuller or deeper understanding within the text that is quoted, which was not understood by the original author, but that can now be discerned in light of the new revelatory fulfillment.[41] Furthermore, Hagner (1993:lvi) notes that, this means of interpretation should not be viewed as an "arbitrary, frivolous misuse of the texts", but it is rather "a reasoned practice that assumes a divinely intended correspondence between God's saving activity at different times in the history of redemption". There may be instances where Matthew understands a deeper meaning to a particular Scripture, but this does not necessarily

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[41] Hagner (1993:lvi) importantly points out that, *sensus plenior* is not something that was invented by Christians, but it had actually been in practice by the Jews.

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mean that such an understanding is in opposition to or completely removed from the original message of the text (as far as such an original message can be discerned). This study does not focus on Matthew's use of the OT in general, but restricts itself to how Matthew made use of Isa 6:9-10. As will be pointed out further on in this chapter, when employing these Isaianic verses, it seems that Matthew did have a new understanding that goes beyond what seems to have been implied with the verses in Isaiah. However, there is still a connection point with what seems to have been the original meaning of these verses, as Matthew saw in them words that he felt would also be appropriate to his current circumstances.

A final important point for the study at hand is that, it some propose the LXX was the author's standard OT from which he worked (Boring, 1995:107). But it is possible that he knew his way around Hebrew well enough to be able to engage in Biblical study, and perhaps knew enough Aramaic for informal communication (Boring, 1995:107). Viljoen (2007a:310) observes that when Matthew made use of Mark, it seems he used the LXX (particularly in his fulfillment quotations. Yet, this is not to say that Matthew used the LXX, instead it is his use of Mark (Viljoen, 2007a:310). On the other hand, it appears that Matthew's own quotations diverge a great deal from the LXX (Viljoen, 2007a:310). According to Viljoen (2007a:310-1), scholars have offered various opinions regarding Matthew's own quotations: It is possible that Matthew altered the LXX, resulting in a free rendering. Matthew might have cited from another Greek form unknown to us. Alternatively, he could have used "an existing revised form of the LXX". An already existing collection of writings or testimonies could have been used by Matthew as a source. Matthew could even have worked from oral traditions. Viljoen (2007a:311) concludes though that,

> … it seems most probable that Matthew himself was responsible for changing the text. Matthew's own quotation from the Old Testament most probably came from other translations of the original Hebrew than the LXX which he apparently adapted to make it more clear how they have found their fulfillment in Jesus. Matthew takes the original meaning of the text as starting point of his interpretation, but then he locates its fulfillment in a new situation.

7.2. Isaiah 6:9-10 in Matthew 13:13-15

13. διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν,[42]

14. καὶ ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἠσαΐου ἡ λέγουσα· ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε.[43]

15. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

13. *Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*

14. *And it is fulfilled for/to them, what the prophet Isaiah said: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not perceive."*

15. *For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with their ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes and hear with (their) ears and understand with (their) heart and they convert and I will heal them.*[44]

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[42] Some scholars (e.g. Luz, 2001:237; see also Davies & Allison, 1991:393 & Evans, 1989:108) point out that, in verse 13, the μήποτε clause of Mark 4:12c is omitted, meaning that the guilt lies with Israel and does not reflect predestination on God's part. However, Matt 13:15 still features a μήποτε clause, so any reasoning for having omitted the clause from v. 13 seems irrelevant, since such a clause is still present in v. 15.

[43] Hagner (1993:373) points out that the finite verbs "imply a wilful closed mindedness: they *will* not see, hear, or understand."

[44] Matthew 13:11 reads, "… "To you it has been given to know the secrets [/mysteries] of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (ESV), thus featuring the plural "mysteries", in contrast to Mark 4:11, which reads the singular "mystery". This may indicate that, in Matthew, "mysteries" do not merely refer to *the* mystery of Christ, but includes the entire wealth of Jesus' teaching, which is "given" to the disciples (Luz, 2001:245). "Mysteries" could refer to Jesus' teaching overall, the lessons contained in the parables of chapter 13, and/or the relationship of Jesus to the coming of the kingdom (Garland, 2001:148). Boring (1995:304) points out that, the singular "mystery" could often be understood in terms of the secrets of the Hellenistic mystery cults and their exclusive understanding of insiders vs. outsiders. But Matthew's use of the plural may be more in line with an OT understanding of the plans of God, regarding history and the establishment of the kingdom of God, which were not always known (Boring, 1995:304). Although it is not explained why the mysteries are not given to the other people, Luz (2001:245) proposes that instead of merely understanding the cause in general terms, as due to the people's unbelief, we might refer back to the actual parable that was used. Luz (2001:245) suggests that, the parable ought to provoke the hearer/reader to ask themselves how they receive the "word of the kingdom".

7.2.1. Matthew 13:13-15

Other than Mark, Matthew first alludes to Isa 6:9-10 (in v. 13), and then proceeds to quote it (in vv.14-15), starting with a fulfilment quotation.[45] Matthew also features a much fuller quotation of Isa 6:9-10 than what is found in Mark.[46] According to Hooker (2005:38), Matthew possibly recognized Mark's words in 4:12 as an allusion, but did not regard it as a quotation. Menken (2004:230) regards the quotation in Matt 13:14-15 as superfluous, since it follows on the already clear allusion to Isa 6:9-10 in v. 13. In Menken's (2004:231) view, the quotation is a post-Matthean insertion.[47] Boring (1995:305), however, mentions that there is no manuscript evidence to support such a claim,[48] and furthermore, it seems better to assume that Matthew fully quotes the Isaiah verses here because he was uncomfortable with the text as it stands in Mark 4:10-12. But, whether it is a later addition or not, is not of concern in the present study. Rather, this study aims to investigate the Isa 6:9-10 quotation as it stands in the Greek NT text as we have it today.

The text form of the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in vv. 14-15 is practically identical to the reconstructed LXX, except for the omission of αὐτῶν in v. 15.[49] Quoting the LXX practically verbatim (if indeed Matthew was working from a text identical to the reconstructed LXX), Matthew shares the sense that the obduracy of the people is in

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[45] See Blomberg (2007:46); Evans (1989:107); Hagner (1993:371); Moyise (2001:35-6) and Stendahl (1968:130).

[46] Boring (1995:305) and Hagner (1993:371).

[47] This is argued due to several facts regarding the quotation (Menken, 2004:231): 1.) The introductory formula differs from the formula Matthew usually employs. 2.) The formula contains two *hapax legomena,* ἀναπληροῦν and προφητεία, which seem strange since cognates of them are found elsewhere in Matthew (πληροῦν, προφήτης, προφητεύειν). 3.) This is the only quotation that is part of Jesus' speech (so also Hagner, 1993:373). 4.) The quotation agrees with the LXX almost completely against the Hebrew. 5.) The quotation seems superfluous as it follows on a perfectly clear allusion to Isa 6:9-10 in v. 13. 6.) And finally, the quotation could be omitted from the narrative without taking away from Jesus' argument. See also Stanton (1988:207).

[48] So also Luz (2001:237).

[49] See Albright and Mann (1971:167); Beaton (2005:72); Blomberg (2007:47); Childs (2004:7); Chilton (1984:92); Evans (1989:107); Hagner (1993:371-2); Menken (2004:230); Morris (1992:342); Muller (2001:319); Nel (2009:279); Sawyer (1996:37); Seeligmann (1948:24); Stanton (1988:207); Stendahl (1968:130); Steyn (2012:443) and Tull (2010:151). There are, however, other LXX witnesses that do not contain this word, like the original of Codex Sinaiticus (Steyn, 2012:443). On the other hand, there are some NT witnesses that do feature the word in Matt 13:15, like Codex Sinaiticus (Steyn, 2012:443).

fact an already present state, and not something created by Isaiah or, in the context of the Gospel, by Jesus.[50]

In Matthew, it is merely the disciples (οἱ μαθηταί) who ask Jesus why he speaks to the others in parables (see 13:10), whereas in Mark a larger group poses this question to Jesus (οἱ περὶ αὐτον σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα).[51] Thus, Childs (2004:7) suggests that, in Mark, the contrast lies between the insiders and outsiders, whereas in Matthew the contrast is rather between the disciples, who know the secrets of the kingdom, and the rest, who do not. Yet, this still amounts to two distinct groups - "insiders", who know the secrets/mysteries and "outsiders", who do not know. Like others, Blomberg (2007:48) remarkably points out that, the understanding of the insiders over against the outsiders is not merely a cognitive matter: even the disciples need Jesus to explain his teachings to them; and conversely, even Jesus' most hostile opponents cognitively understand his message. Ultimately then, the lack of understanding from the outsiders is due to their own choice to not commit to Jesus and seek for the real truth (Blomberg, 2007:48).

Despite the contrast between insiders and outsiders (which is a theme also present at Qumran), it is made clear throughout the Gospel that a mission should take place towards those outside (see especially Matt 28:16-20) (Blenkinsopp, 2006:162). Boring (1995:304) states that, in Mark Jesus is portrayed as using parables to deliberately keep "outsiders" from understanding his message (Mark 4:10-12), making out part of Mark's "Messianic secret". However, Matthew does not share this understanding of a secret Messiahship with Mark (Boring, 1995:304). It appears that Matthew is thus struggling to reinterpret a hard saying found in Mark, within the framework of his own understanding of Jesus' ministry (Boring, 1995:304). The response Jesus offers represents Matthew's theology and serves in moderating the harsh statement as found in Mark 4:10-12 (Boring, 1995:304).

Noteworthy is that, in v. 13 Matthew changes Mark's ἵνα "in order that" to ὅτι "because", which results in a softening of the statement as it puts emphasis on the

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[50] Evans (1989:108-111); see also Tull (2010:151).
[51] Boring (1995:304) and Nel (2009:277).

responsibility of the hearers.[52] This results in the understanding that Jesus speaks in parables "because" of the wilful unreceptivity of those who are blind, against Mark where the "purpose" of Jesus' speaking in parables is to cause blindness.[53] However, Matthew's alteration still does not make away with the predestination difficulty altogether (Hagner, 1993:371). Watts (2009:217) remarks that, in Isaiah, "the hearers' idolatrous blindness is both the cause and the *lex talionis* judgment [law of retaliation]." In this sense, Mark and Matthew indicate either side of the one reality (Watts, 2009:217). Thus, both the allusion to Isa 6:9-10 in v. 13 and the full quotation that follows in vv. 14-15 presuppose the hardheartedness and culpability of the people.[54] The problem lies in the fact that the people are unwilling to receive the message of Jesus, and so he speaks to them in parables (Hagner, 1993:373).

The introductory formula of the quotation, ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἠσαΐου ἡ λέγουσα, is not found elsewhere in Matthew (Stanton, 1988:207). Neither the verb ἀναπληροῦται, nor the noun προφητεία, is used anywhere else in either the Gospels or Acts.[55] The Isa 6:9-10 quotation is also the only fulfillment quotation in Matthew that is spoken by Jesus.[56] Childs (2004:7) argues that, Matthew's use of the fulfillment formula indicates that Matthew did not merely use the Isaiah passage in relation to Jesus' use of parables *ad hoc*, but he respected the theme of obduracy that is present in the original text, and which now combines with Jesus' fresh use thereof. In an overarching sense, Evans (1989:113) purports that the obduracy theme is understood differently in Matthew than it is in Mark: Evans argues that Matthew takes special care to avoid implying that the disciples are obdurate, or that obduracy is caused by Jesus. Only the enemies of Jesus are sketched as obdurate, particularly the Pharisees.

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[52] Hagner (1993:371); see also Boring (1995:305) and Guelich (1989:210).

[53] Boring (1995:305); Childs (2004:7); Evans (1989:107); Guelich (1989:210); Hagner (1993:371) and Tull (2010:151); see also Davies and Allison (1991:392); Freed (1965:86); Moyise (2001:35-6) and Nel (2009:278).

[54] Hagner (1993:373); see also Davies and Allison (1991:392). According to Freed (1965:86), this view is more in keeping with the usual understanding of the OT and the DSS.

[55] Stanton (1988:207); see also Blomberg (2007:46); Hagner (1993:373); Luz (2001:237) and Muller (2001:319).

[56] Evans (1989:108-111) and Hagner (1993:373-4); see also Stanton (1988:207).

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7.2.2. Interpretation

Matthew (and the other NT authors) seems to find in Isaiah's words, regarding his contemporaries' unbelief, an analogy to his own time regarding the lack of understanding, and the rejection of Christ, by the Jews.[57] In this sense, Matthew recognizes a deeper sense of eschatological fulfillment in Isaiah's words (Hagner, 1993:374). Robinson (1998:185) holds that, Jesus uses Isa 6:9-10 in the same way as it functioned in Isaiah's time – where unbelief blinds people from truly perceiving God. Robinson (1998:186) does, however, conclude with the warning that Isa 6:9-10 should not be interpreted and used in a deterministic sense. So, it is legitimate to understand, in a certain sense, that God does in fact cause blindness, hardness and so forth, but it should not be understood as God establishing a condition as a preordained purpose (Robinson, 1998:186). Rather, Robinson (1998:186) firmly advocates, the theological context for understanding God's blinding, deafening and hardening of people, should be seen as occurring as judgment due to human sin and not as demonstrating "decretal sovereignty." According to Luz (2001:246), however, the parables should not be understood as punishment for Israel's lack of understanding, but the parables simply have a negative function in the face of Israel's hardened state. But ultimately, the Israelites do not "remove" or "end" this hardened state, thus their lack of understanding is their own responsibility and not that of Jesus (Luz, 2001:246). Some propose[58] that we might understand the fulfilment in Matthew's quotation as designating a generic fulfilment in the sense that what was predicted occurred multiple times throughout history, as there are people with obdurate states in all generations. Matthew 13:14-15 (as well as 4:15-16 and 21:42) functions as Matthew's understanding of Israel's failure to believe (Luz, 2001:247). The sections that precede 12:46-13:58, make it clear that Jesus' ministry in Israel had been met with "confusion, indifference, and hostility" (Garland, 2001:145). This led, as Jesus predicted (10:34-35), to division occurring within Israel (Garland, 2001:145). Matthew takes up this point from his source (Mark), and then carries it further (Luz, 2001:245).

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[57] Hagner (1993:374) and Luz (2001:245).
[58] See Blomberg (2007:48).

The collection of parables in chapter 13 intends to explain why Israel had not accepted the Messiah (Garland, 2001:146). Luz (2001:238) notes that, the parable of the sower/soils itself, wherein the Isa 6:9-10 quotation is taken up, also delivers quite a harsh message, if considered that it tells of only a few in number who are actually saved. Yet, it seems clear that the harvests resulting (or not resulting) from the seeds depend on the different soils (Garland, 2001:147). According to Garland (2001:148), the parable's interpretation indicates that, the failure of the seeds is caused by the spiritual states of the hearers' hearts. He admits that the failure of the seeds is also mixed with Satan's snatching of the seeds, the withering of the seeds under persecution, worldly worries, and the lure of posterity, but ultimately it is not caused by a lack of intellectual insight or understanding, but rather due to a lack of spiritual insight (Garland, 2001:148). Whether the soils produce a harvest or not, depends on proper hearing, and that in turn depends on the nature of the soils (i.e. the heart of the individual) (Garland, 2001:148). According to Garland (2001:149), the parables, used by Jesus, in Matthew, is not difficult to understand, unless a person's mind is already hardened towards the truth. Thus, Jesus speaks to the people in parables not to keep them from understanding (as is the case in Mark), but because they already do not understand.[59] In this sense, the separation between individuals who do understand and those that do not understand, already occurred before Jesus started speaking in parables (Garland, 2001:149). According to Garland (2001:149), it was the people themselves who shut their eyes and ears and refused to repent, and because of this they now only receive Jesus' teaching in parables, which intensifies their blind and deaf state.[60] Hagner (1993:373) also asserts that, it was mainly due to the people's own unwillingness to repent that they could not properly perceive and understand, yet in a paradoxical way God's sovereign will was established through this.

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[59] Garland (2001:149) and Luz (2001:246).

[60] Boring (1995:304) is of the opinion that, the way Matthew views parables is akin to that of Jesus ben Sirach, who understood them as a method used by teachers to make a distinction between perceptive and discerning, and indolent students. In this view, Jesus speaks in parables because he is a good teacher who wishes to challenge those who want to understand (Boring, 1995:304). Those who do not understand are bad students (Boring, 1995:304). Those who have chosen to follow Jesus, receive the mysteries, have Jesus as their teacher and can appropriate the meaning of the parables (Boring, 1995:305). But to those who do not become disciples, the parables are not explained and serve no longer as teaching, but as judgment (because of their choice not to follow Jesus) (Boring, 1995:305).

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In Matthew, there seems to be a connection between the faith of the listeners and the saying "For the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." (13:12).[61] Achtemeier (1990:62-3) explains that, if the listeners do not hear Jesus' message through faith, they will find fault in the teacher when they do not understand his message, and thus leave there losing the little bit of faith they had.[62] However, if the listeners hear Jesus' message in faith, but do not understand at first, they will enquire what the problem is in themselves, moving them towards a more diligent discipleship that will result in more faith.[63] According to Achtemeier (1990:62), the most plausible explanation for why Jesus uses parables to teach, is that the parables do not function to "cause" blindness, but it rather serves to "illuminate" an already existing condition of blindness within the people, that they are not aware of. So, Jesus obscures his message in parables, to make his listeners attentive to the fact that they are presently unable to understand and subsequently unable to profit from his teaching (Achtemeier, 1990:62). Jesus' parables both revealed and concealed truths regarding the kingdom of God: those who responded in the correct manner was granted understanding, but those who had hardened hearts were unreceptive to Jesus' message and could not understand properly (Bailey, 1998:30).

It is interesting to note that, not just did parables form an important part of the teaching of Jesus, but there is no other NT character that is said to have used even one parable (Morris, 1992:333). According to Morris (1992:334), Jesus apparently used parables as a method to vividly portray his teaching and move his audience to think. This caused that, those who applied themselves to listen, actually understood and learned, whereas those who did not make an effort to listen, never came to the truth of Jesus' teaching (Morris, 1992:334). In Morris' (1992:339) view, the parable is in fact a powerful method of teaching, but it appears that some commitment might actually be required from the audience, in order for them to truly understand the meaning thereof. Morris (1992:339) indicates that, everyone is not able to understand parables (e.g. like David, who did not understand Nathan's parable, even though it

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[61] Achtemeier (1990:62-3); Robinson (1998:185); see also Foster and Shiell (1997:264).

[62] See also Robinson (1998:185).

[63] Achtemeier (1990:63); see also Boring (1995:304) and Robinson (1998:185).

pertained directly to him).[64] So, a parable left unexplained is open to interpretation, and those who are not devoted to Jesus can go astray even if the parable was intended to make its meaning quite clear to the disciples (Morris, 1992:339). If one was open to really understand the true meaning, one would go to Jesus to receive an explanation, but if one was not devoted to Jesus, one would not enquire from him what the parable really meant - leaving the one without understanding in the dark. Morris (1992:339) plainly states, "Commitment to Jesus is the prerequisite for a true understanding of his parable teaching."

Matthew's version of Isa 6:9-10 differs from the MT in key places. These instances seem to correspond more with the reconstructed LXX, but it may also be the case that Matthew was using another version that was merely closer to the reconstructed LXX, or even a variant Hebrew text. Whatever the case may be, Matthew's version of Isa 6:9-10 enables him to steer away from the predestinarian imperatives featured in the MT (see Hagner, 1993:375). The LXX further employs the passive sense, "the heart of this people has been fattened" (Blenkinsopp, 2006:162). Whatever Matthew's source, he also features this phrase in the passive. In the end, although Matthew seems to tone down the idea of election by emphasizing the people's responsibility, he does not give up the idea of God's sovereignty or completely avoid the election theme (Hagner, 1993:375). Moyise (2001:35) aptly points out that, the idea of predestination can still be seen in Matthew[65] when considering, for example, 13:11: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." Moyise (2001:35) does contend though, that the focus seems to have shifted in Matthew to the people's culpability rather than God's intention to harden. Matthew tries to hold the tension between divine sovereignty (Matt 13:11-12) and human responsibility (Matt 13:13-15), and it seems that both concepts are affirmed without contradiction.[66] Blomberg (2007:48) argues that, God's word is only concealed from outsiders after they have chosen to reject his word, but the possibility for the word to be revealed to them, if only they repent, is still present. Blomberg (2007:48) thus confidently asserts that, neither Matthew nor Isaiah is suggesting predestination to eternal damnation.

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[64] See also Albright and Mann (1971:cxxxiii).
[65] See also Blomberg (2007:48).
[66] See Blomberg (2007:48) and Hagner (1993:375).

7.3. Conclusion

In conclusion on Isa 6:9-10 in Matt 13:13-15, we may note the following. Other than Mark, who indicates that Jesus speaks in parables to cause the people not to understand, Matthew tells that Jesus speaks in parables since the people already do not understand. So, the people's lack of understanding is an already present condition. Because of this, the LXX could have served Mathew well as the source of his quotation, since the LXX has already made away with the idea that God causes lack of understanding, and simply indicates that the people already do not understand.

Even though the parables are not used in Matthew to cause a lack of understanding, there is still a hint of the predestination theme, as can be seen, for example, in Matt 13:11, which states, "… "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." However, when the parable of the sower/soils, in which we find the quotation of Isa 6:9-10, and the surrounding circumstances of the quotation, are taken into consideration, it seems reasonable to conclude, that true understanding is indeed possible if the people repented. As has been pointed out, even the disciples do not fully understand at first, but because they have faith in Jesus, they approach him in order to receive an explanation of his teaching so that they can truly understand. It seems that if the other people also wished to know the true meaning and came to Jesus to enquire this from him, he would not turn them away. So, faith is still an important element to truly understanding Jesus' teachings and parables. It does not seem that Matthew intended to indicate that some people cannot come to a true understanding even if they earnestly wanted to.

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CHAPTER 8
LUKE-ACTS[1]

8.1. Background

8.1.1. Date

The dating of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles may be discussed together, since it seems there was no great passage of time between the writing of these two documents.[2] The prologue of the book of Acts indicates that the Gospel was written first: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen." (Acts 1:1) (Culpepper, 1995:8-9).

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles have mostly been dated to a time late in the 1st century CE,[3] however, within that range, there are still various propositions regarding the possible date. According to Barrett (2002:xxv), the external evidence for dating suggests a date not much earlier than 150 CE, but the internal evidence indicates an earlier date. If we accept that Luke made use of Mark when writing his own works, the date for Luke's writings must be later than Mark, which is often dated somewhere between 65 and 75 CE of the first century.[4] Conzelmann (1987:xxxiii) mentions that, the question regarding the composition date for Acts, is closely interwoven with questions regarding the book's authorship. In this respect, if it is accepted that Luke, the physician and companion of Paul, was in fact the author, a dating between 60 and 100 CE may be likely (Conzelmann, 1987:xxxiii).

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[1] It is commonly accepted by scholars that the Gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, were both written by the same author, comprising a two-volume work (Albright & Mann, 1981:xv; Bovon, 2002:1; Nolland, 1989:xxxiii-xxxiv; Powell, 2009:150, 194; Schnelle, 1998:259; VanderKam, 2012:142 & Wansbrough, 2015:91; see also Evans, 1990:4; Fitzmyer, 1986:35 & Wall, 2002:5). Because of this, the present study will handle the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles under the same chapter.

[2] Nolland (1989:xxxviii); see also Albright and Mann (1981:xvii, xlvi).

[3] VanderKam (2012:142).

[4] Refer to chapter 6 on Mark. See also Fitzmyer (1986:53, 57); Nolland (1989:xxxvii) and Barrett (2002:xxv).

Advocating an early date, we may note that, the attitudes towards Roman power throughout Acts, is such that it seems improbable that the persecutions under Nero, 64 CE, had already started (Bruce, 1976:11-3). Another argument for an early date (i.e. before Paul's death) is that, it appears as though matters which were of importance for the church before the fall of Jerusalem, is prominently featured, while these matters lost their practical importance after the fall (e.g. Gentile admission into the church, the relationship between Jews and Gentiles within the church, and food requirements) (Bruce, 1976:11-3). Moreover, the terminology and theology of Acts betrays a sense of "primitiveness", which may point towards an early date[5] (Bruce, 1976:11-3). Arguments that tend towards the earliest dating[6] are usually based on the lack of mention of Paul's death[7] – assuming that it is not mentioned since it had not yet occurred.[8] At the end of Acts, we are left wondering how the trial of Paul actually transpired (Bruce, 1976:11-3). Surely it could have been written in this way for dramatic effect in terms of the narrative, ending with the climax of the good news being proclaimed in Rome (Bruce, 1976:11-3). However, this still seems a strange place to end the volume (if the author indeed had knowledge of the trial when writing).[9] Furthermore, there is the matter that Luke-Acts does not make any mention of Paul's letters (see Albright & Mann, 1981:xlix). Thus, it seems probable that both Luke and Acts were written before the letters of Paul became collected and circulated (the letters began to be collected around 90 CE).[10] This is often used as argument for an early dating[11] (Conzelmann, 1987:xxxiii). Albright and Mann (1981:xlviii) further contend, in favour of an early date, that the information in Acts pertaining to the existing conditions at the time of Paul, as well as references to the geographical, historical, and political conditions in Palestine and many Roman provinces, are of

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[5] Although this is a possibility, Bruce (1976:11-3) does admit that this might alternatively be due to the sources used by Luke, and reminds that it remains an uncertain criterion. For elaboration on these points, see Bruce (1976:11-3).

[6] Bruce (1976:14) argues for a very early dating, claiming that there is evidence that Luke collected much of his material for his history in Palestine around 57-59 CE; that he added other material in Rome; and that the completed Gospel was sent to Theophilus around 61 CE, and Acts not very long afterwards.

[7] Although Paul's words in Acts 20:25(38) have been taken as an indication of his death, Bruce (1976:11) argues that this could be understood as an expectation on Paul's part, rather than a foreboding.

[8] Bruce (1976:11-3) and Conzelmann (1987:xxxiii). See also Albright and Mann (1981:liii-liv).

[9] Bruce (1976:11-3); see also Albright and Mann (1981:liii-liv).

[10] See Bruce (1976:11-3); Culpepper (1995:8) and Fitzmyer (1986:53, 57).

[11] It has been pointed out that, the individual points of contact that does in fact exist between Acts and Paul's letters, are due to traditions that existed within the Pauline churches (Conzelmann, 1987:xxxiii).

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such a nature that it does not seem likely that this information was only obtained at a later time. Albright and Mann (1981:xlix) have also taken the prominence of Paul in Acts as indicating an early time. On the other hand, some of these arguments may also be taken to indicate a later date. Williams (1964:15) reports,

> … if Acts was not written before the Neronian persecution and Paul's death, and either event occurred or was known in the writer's locality to have occurred, one must allow time for Christian emotions roused by these events to become stable. Unless dependence on Josephus is postulated, which would mean that Acts was written ca. 93-100 CE, then a date soon after 64 CE or else ca. 85 CE can be maintained.[12]

A further consideration when talking about a possible date for Luke, is Luke's form of Jesus' prediction of the fall of Jerusalem.[13] Some[14] argue that, throughout the book of Acts, there does not seem to be a hint towards the Jewish War of 66-70 CE, or the subsequent fall of Jerusalem.[15] On the other hand, there are scholars[16] that maintain that, the Gospel of Luke, and subsequently Acts, was composed after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE. According to Culpepper (1995:9), for example, it may be the case that Luke drew on the tradition of Jesus' words, read them and reflected upon them in light of OT prophecies of destruction, and then set forth the predictions of Jesus in such a manner that his own readers could easily discern that the predictions were fulfilled during the war of 66-70 CE. Fitzmyer (1986:54) sees in Luke 13:35a an almost certain reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. Moreover, where Jesus mentions the Temple (Mark 13:2; cf. Luke 21:5) and that it will be desecrated by an abomination, Luke says more specifically that, the city of Jerusalem will be surrounded by camps (Luke 21:20) (see Wansbrough, 2015:92). Many see this reference in Luke as a *vaticinium ex eventu*. Bruce (1976:13) also

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[12] Concerning possible literary dependence on Josephus' writings, see Conzelmann (1987:xxxiii). Passages that apparently may support such an argument are: Acts 5:36 and *Ant.* 20:97-98; Acts 12:21-23 and *Ant.* 19:343-350; Acts 21:38 and *Bell.* 2:261-263/*Ant.* 20:169-172 (Conzelmann, 1987:xxxiii). However, such a literary dependence on the writings of Josephus cannot be confirmed (Conzelmann, 1987:xxxiii; see also Albright & Mann, 1981:xlvii-xlviii).

[13] Culpepper (1995:9) and Fitzmyer (1986:35).

[14] E.g. Bruce (1976:11-3).

[15] It has been argued (e.g. by Williams, 1964:15) that, it is incomprehensible to think that Luke would not have made reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, if he wrote after it had occurred. To this, Evans (1990:14) contends that such an assertion is "singularly unconvincing". Evans (1990:14) maintains, "It is difficult to imagine how or where such a reference would have been germane to the narrative in Acts, or could have been made with any semblance of verisimilitude." Albright and Mann (1981:xlvii) contend that Luke's references to the future do not go beyond the OT predictions of such events, so the agreement seen by some with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE remains unconvincing.

[16] E.g. Conzelmann (1987:xxxiii) and Fitzmyer (1986:53, 57).

argues that the Jewish War is rather explicitly predicted in Luke (19:27, 41-44; 21:20; 23:28-31), but he contends that it is "absolutely uncritical to assume that every prediction that comes true must be a *vaticinium ex eventu*, quite apart from the consideration that these were the predictions of the Messiah Himself."[17] Furthermore, it was quite commonplace in history to make predictions of wars and the ruin of cities before they occurred (Bruce, 1976:13). Also preferring a later date, it has been noted that, it does not seem to make sense that Luke would allude to "many" other attempts to writing the story of Jesus (Luke 1:1) before his own writing, if he was writing very early (Fitzmyer, 1986:54).

The following dates have thus been proposed for the writing of Luke-Acts: ca. 62 CE;[18] between the late 60's and late 70's of the 1st century CE;[19] 70-85 CE;[20] 80-85 CE;[21] 80-90 CE;[22] late 80's or early 90's.[23] Based on this, all that can really be proposed is that Luke-Acts was written somewhere between 60 and 90 CE, or even 60 and 150 CE if all the possibilities mentioned are taken into account.[24]

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[17] See also Albright and Mann (1981:xlvii).

[18] E.g. Nolland (1989:xxxviii). Williams (1964:13) informs that, due to the decision of the papal commission that Acts was written by Luke ca. 62 CE, many Roman Catholics have appealed to such an earlier date. Albright and Mann (1981:liv) also advocate a date in the beginning of the 60's CE.

[19] E.g. Nolland (1989:xxxix).

[20] See Williams (1964:13).

[21] E.g. Fitzmyer (1986:57).

[22] E.g. Bovon (2002:9); see also Culpepper (1995:8); Powell (2009:195) and Williams (1964:13). Schnelle (1998:243) proposes a date around 90 CE for the Gospel of Luke, based on the assumptions that: Luke looked back upon the destruction of Jerusalem as well as the death of Paul; and the author wrote from a third-generation Christian perspective.

[23] See Barrett (2002:xxv).

[24] Evans (1990:14) ultimately proposes that all that can really be advocated regarding a date for Luke-Acts is somewhere between 75 and 130 CE.

8.1.2. Location

There is much uncertainty regarding the location of writing for the Gospel of Luke, but Fitzmyer (1986:57) proposes that the only thing that seems certain is that it was not written in Palestine. It does not seem like the author is a native Palestinian, since he has inadequate knowledge of the area's geography and customs (Fitzmyer, 1986:35). There are various ancient traditions for a possible place of writing for the Gospel, e.g. Achaia, Boeotia, or Rome[25] (see Fitzmyer, 1986:57). According to Fitzmyer (1986:57), there are some modern commentators who propose other locations, but he maintains that these remain guesses, e.g. Caesarea, Decapolis, Asia Minor. It is also uncertain where exactly Acts was written, but the following locations have been suggested: Rome, Antioch, Ephesus, Macedonia, Achaea and Asia (Barrett, 2002:xxv). Bovon (2002:9) contends that, because of the fact that Luke engaged in a lot of travel, the location for writing his two volumes is not a pressing matter. Moreover, it seems that the intention was for the Gospel to gain widespread publication (Powell, 2009:152).

8.1.3. Author

As with many of the NT writings, the author of the Gospel of Luke is not mentioned by name.[26] The Gospel itself does not indicate who the author is or where or when the writing originated (Culpepper, 1995:4). The supposed second volume of the same author is also anonymous.[27] Bruce (1976:2) deems it clear that the "first book" referred to in the beginning of Acts, is the Third Gospel. According to Bruce (1976:2), there should not be any doubt that the Theophilus addressed in the beginning of Acts, is the same Theophilus for whose instruction the Third Gospel was written (Luke 1:1-4).[28]

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[25] Bovon (2002:9) and Bruce (1976:11-3). Barrett (2002:xxiii) also mentions that Luke seems to have had knowledge of the Roman world bordering the Mediterranean, as well as of Roman administration.

[26] Albright and Mann (1981:xvi); Bovon (2002:8); Culpepper (1995:4); see also Fitzmyer (1986:35) and Nolland (1989:xxxiv).

[27] Albright and Mann (1981:xvi) and Wall (2002:5).

[28] Arguments for the case that the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles share the same author is based on the following points (see Bruce, 1976:2 & Wall, 2002:7): Luke and Acts share a common language and similar style. They show a consistent theology. Both works also seem to harbour catholic sympathies. Interest in Gentiles is pertinent in both, and a particularly prominent place is afforded to women in both narratives. Furthermore, both seem to show an apologetic tendency.

The earliest traditions that designate "Luke" as the author of Luke-Acts come from the latter part of the 2nd century. The first occurrence of the designation "Gospel According to Luke", seems to come from the earliest manuscript of the Gospel, P[75], which contains major parts of the Gospel, and is dated ca. 175-225 CE (*Papyrus Bodmer XIV*).[29] The following sources also make mention of Luke: The anti-Marcionite[30] (ca. 160-180 CE[31]). The Muratorian Canon/Fragment (ca. 170-200 CE).[32] More or less contemporaneous with these are writings from Irenaeus (writing ca. 180/185 CE).[33] Writing somewhere between 200 and 230 CE, figures such as Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian[34] (writing ca. 207-208 CE[35]), and Origen show that by that time it was firmly accepted that Luke was the author.[36] Eusebius (writing ca. 303 CE[37]), and Jerome[38] (who merely recapitulates the earlier tradition, ca. 398 CE[39]). It seems that from ca. 170 CE onwards the consensus was that Luke, the beloved physician (see Col 4:14) was the author of the two works who were directed

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Resurrection appearances seem to be related only in Judaea in these works. Luke alone tells that Jesus appeared before Herod Antipas, and this instance is also alluded to in Acts 4:27. The end of Luke leads closely into the beginning of Acts. Also, both writings reflect a lack of knowledge regarding a 2nd-century body of Pauline letters. Unfortunately, there exists no definitive proof of these claims (see Wall, 2002:7).

[29] Culpepper (1995:4); Fitzmyer (1986:35); Nolland (1989:xxxiv-xxxv); see also Evans (1990:5) and Fitzmyer (1989:2).

[30] According to this prologue, Luke was a Syrian from Antioch, a physician, disciple of the apostles, companion of Paul, unmarried and childless and he died in Boeotia when he was eighty-four years old and full of the Holy Spirit (see Albright & Mann, 1981:264; Bovon, 2002:9; Evans, 1990:7; Fitzmyer, 1986:38; 1989:2 & Williams, 1964:1). The Monarchian prologue offers similar information, with the exception that Luke's death is indicated as having occurred at age seventy-four in Bithynia (Bovon, 2002:9). See also Albright and Mann (1981:xvii).

[31] See also Nolland (1989:xxxv). However, this date may be in question, and a date in the 3rd or early 4th century CE might rather be possible (see Albright & Mann, 1981:264; Evans, 1990:7 & Williams, 1964:1). Fitzmyer (1989:9) gives to that a late date may be possible for the final redaction of the prologue, but prefers to see the first paragraph thereof in the Greek form as dating from the 2nd century CE.

[32] See Albright and Mann (1981:xvii); Evans (1990:6); Schnelle (1998:240) and Williams (1964:2). Fitzmyer (1986:37) and Nolland (1989:xxxv) state that it has usually been dated around 170-180 CE. See also Fitzmyer (1989:2).

[33] See Albright and Mann (1981:xvii); Culpepper (1995:5); Evans (1990:6-7); Fitzmyer (1986:37; 1989:2); Nolland (1989:xxxv); Schnelle (1998:240) and Williams (1964:2). Irenaeus mentions Luke in relation to Paul, but does not offer much more information than what can be gleaned from the NT itself (see Culpepper, 1995:5 & Nolland, 1989:xxxv).

[34] Tertullian mentions Matthew, John, and Paul as apostles, and names Mark and Luke as those who followed the apostles (Culpepper, 1995:5). Tertullian apparently also claimed that the Gospel of Luke was actually an assimilation of Paul's preached Gospel (Nolland, 1989:xxxv).

[35] See Culpepper (1995:5) and Fitzmyer (1986:39).

[36] See also Williams (1964:2).

[37] See Fitzmyer (1986:40).

[38] See Bruce (1976:1).

[39] See Fitzmyer (1986:40).

at Theophilus (Bruce, 1976:1). How many of the early traditions are historically true and how many are legendary, is uncertain, but Fitzmyer (1986:40-1) reckons that the data should not necessarily be seen as exploitation and/or speculation. Moreover, later traditions continued to accept Luke as the author and there are no contrasting traditions that ascribe authorship to another person (Nolland, 1989:xxxv). Fitzmyer (1986:41) maintains that,

> … to dismiss the substance of the tradition—that Luke wrote the Third Gospel and Acts—seems gratuitous. As in all cases, the tradition has to be scrutinized; what cannot be explained as "inferences from the text" of the NT or as obvious legendary accretions should be accepted, unless one encounters serious, insoluble, or contradictory problems.

Furthermore, since Luke was not a prominent figure during the time of the apostles, it does not seem to make sense that his name would be attributed by tradition to the Gospel of Luke and Acts, unless it was already connected with it.[40]

From the texts of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, we may note the following about Luke as author: The cultivated language may indicate that the author had roots in one of the higher societal classes, and had received a good education,[41] which included Greek rhetoric and Jewish exegetical methods[42] (Bovon, 2002:8). However, the fact that Luke speaks of Theophilus as "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3), is taken by Culpepper (1995:7, 9) to mean that Luke was Theophilus' subordinate and thus not part of the elite, but probably a member of the artisan class. Culpepper (1995:7, 9) notes that, even if Luke was a physician (see Col 4:14), this still would not have meant that he was wealthy or part of the elite group. Luke was further proficient in Greek,[43] a skilled writer[44] and even a good storyteller.[45] It also

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[40] Fitzmyer (1986:41; 1989:11); see also Albright and Mann (1981:xxix). Fitzmyer (1986:41-53) admits though, that there are some problems one has to face when accepting that Luke was the author of the Gospel and Acts, like: Luke's ethnic background, that is, whether he was a Gentile or Jewish Christian; Luke as a companion of Paul; and Luke as physician. For more on this, see Fitzmyer (1986:41-53).

[41] So also Barrett (2002:xxiii); Fitzmyer (1986:35) and Wall (2002:5); see also Powell (2009:147) and Schnelle (1998:242).

[42] Wall (2002:16) is of the opinion that Luke's use of sacred tradition is influenced by the Greco-Roman world that he finds himself in, but says that ultimately his use of Scripture in Acts is Jewish in nature. Nevertheless, Sanders (1982:146; 1993:16) argues that it is not necessary to look to a Pharisaic-rabbinic type of Jewish Scriptural interpretation to understand Luke's own reading and understanding of Scripture. Sanders (1993:16) states that, apparently, Luke's knowledge of Scripture came from "assiduous reading".

[43] Luke wrote in a Koine Greek that was prevalent in his world (Sanders, 1982:146; 1993:16; see also Haenchen, 1971:73). According to Sanders (1993:16), the Semitisms in Luke's work can be ascribed to the fact that semitization was quite widespread in the Hellenistic language and literature of that time. See also Albright and Mann (1981:xxvi-xxviii).

appears that the author was knowledgeable in the OT literary traditions (especially in the Greek form – LXX),[46] as well as Hellenistic literary techniques[47] (Fitzmyer, 1986:35). He seems, for example, to have been familiar with the Hellenistic historiography[48] conventions of the time (Culpepper, 1995:7, 9). However, among the various literary styles that Luke seems to employ, it appears that he was particularly fond of the style of the LXX (Evans, 1990:57). Bovon (2002:9) expresses that Luke writes "… with the care of a historian, the apologetic enthusiasm of a convert, and the earnest appeal of a missionary".[49]

Bovon (2002:8) speculates that Luke was most likely a native Greek who, early in life, turned to Judaism. Wall (2002:5) merely says that, he may have converted to Judaism before he became a Christian missionary and even possibly an associate of Paul.[50] He was part of the group known as the "God-fearers"[51] and upon hearing the Gospel message he converted to being a Christian believer (Bovon, 2002:8). According to Nolland (1989:xxxii), it is traditionally believed that Luke was a Gentile Christian[52] who also wrote for a Gentile church in the late first century. Culpepper

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[44] According to Barrett (2002:xxiii), Luke used a good Greek style, and more than one style is also evident in his writing, e.g. a plain "businesslike" style, an OT style and a finer style.

[45] Culpepper (1995:7, 9); see also Boring (2012:565-6).

[46] So also Culpepper (1995:7, 9).

[47] Brawley (1987:52) writes, "Whereas one dimension of Luke's thought depends heavily on the LXX and continuity with Judaism, Hellenistic storytelling comprises another prominent dimension."

[48] Luke's work has often been described as ancient history writing (Evans, 1990:44). Some even argue that Acts is best understood as a form of ancient historiography, albeit fluid in terms of form and function (see Wall, 2002:12). Barrett (2002:xxiii) suggests that, Luke writes as a popular historian, in a bright and interesting style. See also Sanders (1982:147). According to Conzelmann (1987:xl), the best description of Acts as a whole is "historical monograph." Prototypes for this genre can be seen in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature (e.g. 1, 2, 3, Maccabees), and the tendency of dividing histories into monographs can even be observed in universal history (e.g. the works of Diodorus). However, it is still true that literary genres overlap with each other (Conzelmann, 1987:xl-xli). Albright and Mann (1981:lvi) maintain that, when Luke is compared with Greek historians, it is showcased how much they differ. In Albright and Mann's (1981:lvi) view, the only link between Luke and Greek historians is their "honest determination to relate what they thought had happened".
Important though, is that the entire Acts is characterized by the particular historical and theological perspectives of the author, as is also evident in the Gospel of Luke (Conzelmann, 1987:xli).

[49] Schnelle (1998:242) reckons that Luke presents himself as a theologian and historian. Powell (2009:147) and Wansbrough (2015:92) also note that Luke may be described as a historian.

[50] The author is, however, not concerned with ingratiating himself into his story, and does not even identify himself when mentioning that he joined Paul on his "European" mission (Wall, 2002:5).

[51] See also Nolland (1989:xxxii).

[52] Some have taken Col 4:10-14 as evidence that Luke was a Gentile Christian (see Evans, 1990:12 & Fitzmyer, 1986:43-4). This is based on the fact that Luke and Demas' greeting is separated from the greeting of Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus, who are designated "the only men of the circumcision" (ESV) (Evans, 1990:12). Although this could designate these men as Jews, Evans (1990:13) notes that, in the end, it is not entirely certain what is meant by the words "of the circumcision". For more

(1995:7, 9) agrees that Luke was likely a Gentile, but that he had, not only knowledge about the OT, but also a good understanding of Jewish practices and institutions.

In Acts, the narrator alternates between a first-person and third-person perspective.[53] The "we" passages in Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) have been cause for arguments of an association between Luke and Paul.[54] Some have suggested that this indicates that Luke was with Paul on these particular occasions and so wrote from firsthand experience.[55] So, the "we" sections may be from the diary of the author, which was later used to compose Acts.[56] Others argue that Luke wrote from a diary of one of Paul's other companions[57] and did not bother to alter the narrator's voice.[58] Furthermore, it might be that Luke merely wrote in the first person to heighten the narrative interest or follow "a literary convention in the reporting of sea voyages".[59] It has been noted that, since the Paul portrayed in Acts differs from how Paul is depicted in his own letters, Luke was not close to Paul (see Albright & Mann, 1981:xxxiv). It seems that Luke does not paint himself as an eyewitness, but counts himself among those who came later and then learned the tradition (Culpepper, 1995:7, 9). Thus, he is sketched as part of the second- or third-generation of the church and, as such, did not have direct experiences of the events he narrates.[60]

The rest of the NT offers the following, limited, information regarding Luke:[61] In Philemon 24, Luke is listed among Paul's "fellow workers"; Colossians 4:14 mentions Luke as one of Paul's companions and names him the "beloved physician"; 2 Timothy 4:11 mentions that, in Paul's final imprisonment, only Luke was with Paul. Although Nolland (1989:xxxvii) concludes that, we cannot determinedly confirm Luke

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detail on this, see Evans (1990:13) and Fitzmyer (1986:43-4). See also Albright and Mann (1981:264-7) on Luke's ethnic background.

[53] Culpepper (1995:4); see also (Bruce, 1976:2).

[54] Culpepper (1995:4); see also Fitzmyer (1986:36). For more on the first-person and third-person sections in Acts, see Williams (1964:3-4).

[55] See Albright and Mann (1981:xxix); Bruce (1976:2) and Culpepper (1995:4).

[56] See Fitzmyer (1986:36-7; 1989:7).

[57] See also Bruce (1976:2).

[58] See Culpepper (1995:4).

[59] Culpepper (1995:5). On different viewpoints regarding the "we" sections in Acts, see also Williams (1964:5).

[60] Bovon (2002:8); see also Fitzmyer (1986:35) and Nolland (1989:xxviii-xxix).

[61] Barrett (2002:xxiii); Culpepper (1995:4); Fitzmyer (1986:36) and Powell (2009:194-5).

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as author, he does mention that there are no decisive arguments against the assertion, and as such we ought to accept the tradition that is based on a continuity of memory that likely goes back to the first readers who knew who the author really was.

8.1.4. Audience

It is commonly accepted by scholars that Luke wrote for Gentile Christians or at least predominantly for Gentile Christians.[62] An influential argument in this regard, is that Luke makes it clear that salvation is available for Gentiles as well as Jews (Koet, 1989:94). In addition, Luke shows an interest in relating his version of the story of Jesus and what followed to a Greco-Roman literary tradition (Fitzmyer, 1986:58). It further appears as though Luke omits material from his sources (i.e. Mark and Q) that have mainly Jewish concerns (see Fitzmyer, 1986:58). Certain stories or sayings of Jesus, which are altered by Luke, seem to have been amended from a Palestinian tradition to a non-Jewish Hellenistic situation (Fitzmyer, 1986:58). Finally, most of Luke's OT quotations seem to be taken from the Greek OT, or at least shows close affinities with it (Fitzmyer, 1986:58). So, Fitzmyer (1986:59) concludes on this matter that Luke was mainly writing for Gentile Christians in a Gentile setting, although there may have been a few Jews and/or Jewish Christians among them (as is especially suggested by the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in Acts 28).

However, Koet (1989:94) interestingly observes that, if Luke's writings were in fact directed mainly at Gentiles, it seems strange that there is such emphasis on Paul's mission being in accordance with the prophets. It also does not make much sense that there would be a concern to designate Paul as law-abiding, since a Gentile community would not be so concerned with an understanding of Judaism (Koet, 1989:94). Because of this, Koet (1989:95) argues that it is most plausible to assert that Luke-Acts was actually written for a community that consisted of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. In support of such a claim, Koet (1989:95) mentions that the message to the Gentiles regarding salvation, is combined with an indication that this message has its roots in Scripture and is faithful to the Law. Luke shows much effort to make a connection between salvation promised to Israel in the OT, and salvation

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[62] Koet (1989:94) and Schnelle (1998:244); see also Fitzmyer (1986:57-8; 1989:195).

for Gentiles.[63] The Gentile mission is even sketched as one of the promises that had been made to Israel (Koet, 1989:95).

Schnelle (1998:244-7) proposes that the situation in which the Lukan community found themselves, was characterized by issues that faced third-generation Christians: e.g. hope for the *parousia* was fading; there was both wealth and poverty present in the community; and the relation between the state and the church had to be addressed.

8.1.5. The Old Testament in Luke-Acts

Brawley (1995:3) aptly expresses that, "Intertextuality ripples through Luke-Acts in an analogous way. It ripples in Luke-Acts because it ripples in all texts." Throughout the two-volume document of Luke-Acts, textual patterns from Scripture is folded into the text.[64] This understanding of "intertextuality" goes beyond mere citations or allusions within a text, and includes the incorporation of an entire cultural repertoire of material.[65] Wall (2002:15-6) asserts that, the intertextuality between Acts and preceding sacred Scripture serves to offer support and depth of understanding to Luke's aim. Wall (2002:16) also makes the following statement: "Significantly, the cited or echoed text recalls not only a particular story or idea but also a history of reception (both within and external to Scripture) that adds still additional layers of information to the interpretive matrix. The result is that the reader is able to discern a fuller, richer meaning."

It appears that Luke had a rather remarkable knowledge of Scripture (Sanders, 1982:146; 1993:16). Barrett (1988:231) argues that, all of the major concepts found in Luke-Acts can be shown to reflect the beliefs and theological vocabulary of the OT to some extent or another. It has been proposed that Luke mainly made use of the LXX as his OT Bible.[66] According to Sanders (1982:146; 1993:16), Luke used a

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[63] Fitzmyer (1986:58); see also Fitzmyer (1989:194).
[64] Brawley (1995:3); see also Marshall (2007:513).
[65] See Brawley (1995:4) and Powell (2009:151).
[66] Reventlow (2009:72); see also Marshall (2007:516).

Greek form of the OT as it was then.[67] According to Mallen (2008:4-5), the texts that Luke quotes[68] usually follow the Alexandrian form of the LXX precisely or very closely. Where there are citations that diverge from the LXX, rather than asserting that Luke made use of the MT in these instances, some argue that Luke may have made use of another Greek version that differed from the LXX, or he might have cited from memory (Marshall, 2007:516). In the instances where some quotations differ from any known LXX text, it is possible that here Luke altered the text to make a theological point (Mallen, 2008:5). Müller (2001:321-2) proposes that, although Luke might have had direct access to the Jewish Scriptures in LXX form, he used these freely with regard to wording. In this sense, Müller (2001:322) sees Luke's use of Scriptures as separate, for example, from the tradition followed by Mark and Matthew. Müller (2001:322) further argues that, the Scriptures play a far greater role in Luke in terms of its use for the author's theological arguments. Luke also seems thoroughly at home with the language of the LXX[69] (Moyise, 2001:61). Bovon (2002:3) claims that, in terms of style, Luke aims for simplicity. Luke's focus is not on a persuasive rhetorical style, but he prefers to follow the Biblical style of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible in his narrative technique (Bovon, 2002:3). In Bovon's (2002:3) view, Luke does this in order to show a continuity between the LXX and his own writings. We may also note that Luke often alludes to a particular text and then also quotes it[70] – in this case the allusion can be accepted as intentional (Koet, 2005:80). Isa 6:9-10 is among those texts that Luke first alludes to (Luke 8:10) and then later quotes (Acts 28:26-27) (Koet, 2005:80).

Luke understands the OT mainly as prophecy, which acts to point towards and interpret Christ.[71] Or in another way, Christ provides insight into the proper meaning

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[67] Sanders (1982:146; 1993:16) reckons that Luke was so deeply familiar with particular portions of Scripture, that the modern reader can very well miss important points Luke wanted to make if he/she does not have a thorough knowledge of the Greek OT or LXX.

[68] Luke's citations usually feature an introductory formula using various forms of "write" (γράφω) or "speak" (λέγω) (Mallen, 2008:5).

[69] According to Haenchen (1971:72), around nine-tenths of Luke's vocabulary is also found in the LXX. The vocabulary used by Luke additionally shows contact points with writings from Josephus, Plutarch and Lucian, as well as other written works like Greek Comedy and Papyri, though the most similarity appears to be with the LXX (see Conzelmann; 1987:xxxv-xxxvi & Haenchen, 1971:72-3). For more on precisely how Luke shows contact points with the language of the LXX, see Conzelmann (1987:xxxvi).

[70] So also Pao and Schnabel (2007:251-3).

[71] Pao and Schnabel (2007:251-3) and Reventlow (2009:76).

of Scripture (Conzelmann, 1987:xlvi). Luke's use of Scripture leads the reader to understand the narrated events as happening within the wider purposes of God (Mallen, 2008:99). According to Wall (2002:16), the view of Scripture, as used in Acts, is that the cited or echoed text is produced by the Spirit of God, which leads interpreters to come to the Divine meaning of Scripture. Luke does not merely use Scripture to defend his faith, but he views it as an essential part of his narrative's theological meaning (Wall, 2002:16). Scripture is applied, to explain and interpret historical events within the narrative (Mallen, 2008:100). Sanders (1982:147; 1993:17) asserts that, Luke was certainly (as his OT predecessors) a good theological historian.

In particular, Mallen (2008:100) suggests that, Luke interacts extensively with Isaiah when he describes the language, programme and scope of salvation that comes through Jesus. Koet (2005:80) maintains that, although Luke might use fewer explicit Isaiah quotations than Matthew for example, one should not let this persuade you to think that Isaiah is less important to Luke, since although the quantity might be low, the quality of the Isaiah quotations are of importance.[72] Koet (2005:80) claims that, Luke tightly weaves Isaiah into the structure of his double work and quotes from it at crucial places within his narrative. Through the use of Isaiah, Luke explains why many of Israel rejected the salvation of Jesus, which is an important theme for Luke (Mallen, 2008:100-1). Isaiah was also used in this way by other NT writers (Sanders, 1993:15). Specifically, attention was given to Isa 6:9-10 to illuminate such understandings (Sanders, 1982:145; 1993:15). As stated by Mallen (2008:101), at the end of Luke's narrative, as well as at various points throughout the narrative, "Isaiah provides an appropriate perspective from which to interpret the message of Jesus and various responses to this message." Mallen (2008:101) is ultimately of the opinion that the mission to proclaim salvation to all nations, as well as the rejection of this salvation by many of Israel, form Luke's characteristic use of Isaiah.[73]

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[72] Pao and Schnabel (2007:251-3) also state, about Luke's use of the OT in general, that although the amount of citations in Luke might appear much less than what is found in Matthew for example, this must not be understood as Luke taking a lesser interest in the OT, since Luke is saturated with allusions to the OT.

[73] The fact that Luke uses motifs from Isaiah and also alludes to and quotes from Isaiah, may further mean that he presupposed knowledge of the book of Isaiah on the part of his audience (Koet, 1989:133; 2005:80).

According to Evans and Sanders (1993:3), Luke (and Matthew) seems to represent "an early stage of rewritten Bible." But Luke is not in that sense a retelling of Tanak (torah, nevi'im (prophets) and ketuvim (writings)), but is instead a retelling of the story of Jesus (Evans & Sanders, 1993:3). However, like Jewish retellings of the Tanak, Luke does import material from the rest of Scripture, so we find appearances of Tanak material in the Gospel (Evans & Sanders, 1993:3). According to Evans and Sanders (1993:3), Luke's use of the Tanak showcases some *midrashic* (commentary on Scripture) and *targumic* (paraphrasing of Scripture) tendencies, but it would be going too far to say that the Gospel is itself a *midrash*. Evans and Sanders (1993:3) note that, Luke edited Scriptural materials and adopted the language and themes of Scripture in a manner similar to what was done in *Jubilees*, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, Qumran's *Genesis Apocryphon*, and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*. Similar to these writings, Luke also "added genealogical materials, qualified and summarized the contents of his sources, expanded, abbreviated, and omitted altogether" (Evans & Sanders, 1993:3-4). According to Evans and Sanders (1993:4), Luke did not do any of this with the intention to produce a commentary on Mark or any other Gospel source, nor did he attempt to render a commentary on the Greek OT, but Luke rather rewrote the Jesus story in a similar way as Josephus rewrote the history of Israel.

8.2. Isaiah 6:9-10 in Luke 8:10

9. Ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τίς αὕτη εἴη ἡ παραβολή.

10. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς, ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν.

9. *Then his disciples asked him what this parable was (i.e. meant).*

10. ***And he said: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but for the rest (it is) in parables, in order that looking they do not see and listening they do not understand."***

8.2.1. Luke 8:10

Evans (1990:58) mentions that, in the Gospel of Luke, other than what is found in Acts, there are few explicit or implicit quotations from the OT, and the quotations are largely from the sources Luke used, which he generally reproduced without changing them much. Luke used the Isa 6:9-10 quotation from his source, Mark 4:12,[74] who features only a portion of the Isaianic verses. Luke's quotation of the same passage (Luke 8:10) is even shorter than what is found in Mark,[75] however, Acts 28 features a longer, fuller quotation of these Isaiah verses[76] (Ringgren, 1986:228). Luke's use of Isa 6:9-10 might even be regarded as an allusion, instead of a quotation.[77] Luke ultimately abridged and consequently softened the Markan use of Isa 6:9-10.[78]

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[74] Evans (1989:115). Evans (1990:374) regards the quotation of Isa 6:9-10 in Luke 8:10 as a stylistic abbreviation of Mark's version of Isa 6:9f LXX, rather than an alternate form of the LXX text. Fitzmyer (1986:709) agrees that Luke's version does not resemble the LXX, but has rather been taken and altered from Mark 4:12.

[75] Culpepper (1995:177) and Fitzmyer (1986:706). Luke 8:10b cites Isa 6:9-10 in the briefest manner of all the Gospels handling these verses (Childs, 2004:7 & Moyise, 2001:57). Marshall (1969:61) reckons that Luke has stylistically adjusted Mark to such an extent that if we did not have Mark available anymore we would not be able to reconstruct it when working back from Luke. Luke's version of the parable is also shorter than what it appears in Mark (almost three-quarters of the length of Mark's parable) (Marshall, 1969:62-3).

[76] So also Moyise (2001:57).

[77] Freed (1965:87) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:306-7).

[78] Childs (2004:7); Culpepper (1995:177) and Fitzmyer (1986:706).

Luke does not indicate that Jesus had withdrawn to a private place at the stage when the disciples ask him about the parables, as is told in Mark.[79] So it seems the disciples ask their question where the full crowd, mentioned in 8:4, is present (Fitzmyer, 1986:706). Luke, like Matthew, designates the people in conversation with Jesus as the disciples specifically.[80] Some scholars argue that Luke softens the interpretation with regard to the distinction between the disciples and the others/rest (Koet, 2005:97). Evans (1990:373) reckons that, the designation "the others", seems "less exclusive and predestinarian than Mark's 'those outside'."[81] However, the sharpness of the quotation still comes through in Paul's final speech at the end of Acts (Koet, 2005:97). In Luke, the disciples are still set against the "others" though, and portrayed as being favoured by God, since they can understand Jesus' preaching (Fitzmyer, 1986:707).

Luke has Jesus express to the disciples that, to them "… it has been given to *know* the *mysteries* of the kingdom of God …" (Luke 8:10), other than Mark, who merely states "for you the mystery of the kingdom of God has been given …" (Mark 4:11) (Culpepper, 1995:177). Matthew reads more similar to Luke: "To you it has been given to *know* the *secrets* of the kingdom of heaven …" (Matt 13:11). So, Luke agrees with Matthew in speaking of *knowing* the "mysteries/secrets" of the kingdom of God, rather than using the singular "mystery/secret", as found in Mark.[82] Additionally, Mark's version might be understood as the disciples/in-group receiving the "mystery/secret of the kingdom", as in a share in it, whereas Matthew and Luke's versions rather afford an understanding that the disciples will receive *knowledge* about the mysteries/secrets of the kingdom[83] (Fitzmyer, 1986:707).

Noteworthy, is that in Luke 8:9-10 the concern is not about the use of parables in general, as is the case in Mark and Matthew, but the focus is instead on the meaning

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[79] Culpepper (1995:177); Evans (1990:372) and Fitzmyer (1986:706).

[80] Culpepper (1995:177) and Evans (1990:372).

[81] See also Culpepper (1995:177).

[82] Childs (2004:7) and Fitzmyer (1986:706).

[83] Regarding the word "mysteries", Culpepper (1995:177-8) mentions the following: In the Greco-Roman world, one found mystery cults, to which people were drawn because it was said that those who were initiated into the mystery would receive eternal life. In a Jewish understanding, the prophets received the mystery of the redemptive work of God (Dan 2:28; Amos 3:7). But at Qumran it was later claimed that the prophets only received the mysteries, but did not understand it – only the Teacher of Righteousness received the interpretation of those mysteries. See also Evans (1990:373) and Fitzmyer (1986:707-8) for more on "mysteries".

of "this" parable (αὕτη ... ἡ παραβολή) (8:9), i.e. the parable of the sower/soils.[84] It might be because Luke understands this particular parable as the key to understanding Jesus' teachings as a whole (Pao & Schnabel, 2007:307). Evans (1990:372) reckons that it is actually over concise that the disciples ask about the one particular parable, since the disciples' question leads directly to its interpretation in the following verses, and also leaves one with a difficult statement about parables in a more general sense.

Luke agrees with Mark in introducing the Isa 6:9-10 quotation with ἵνα "in order that".[85] This probably preserves the telic sense of the clause – so Jesus preaches in parables *in order to* cause obduracy in the hearers, or keep the truth from them (or at least some of them).[86] According to Bovon (2002:312), ἵνα can introduce a purpose or a result clause. But here ἵνα as meaning "in order that" is rather preferred, as is also the case in Mark. Bovon (2002:312) argues that in this Scriptural citation, human responsibility stands next to divine power, which is here in the form of an indictment. Bovon (2002:313) ultimately holds though that, paradoxically, Luke emphasizes the successful carrying out of God's plan, and the importance of human responsibility. It seems though that, as in Mark, although a difficult understanding theologically, the most straightforward understanding is again that Jesus offers his teaching to the rest in parables in order that they will see but not really see, and hear but not understand.

Luke, as well as Mark and Matthew, all differ from the MT and LXX in the order they feature the clauses of Isa 6:9: whereas the MT and LXX has the clauses hear – see, the NT has see – hear (see Ringgren, 1986:228). According to Ringgren (1986:228), this phenomenon can often identify that the writers were working from an oral transmission or that they were quoting from memory. We must take note that even though this reversal of clauses is true for the allusion to these Isaianic verses in Matthew 13:13, the order of the clauses in the actual quotation in Matt 13:14-15 are the same as what is found in the MT and LXX. And the order is also the same when Isa 6:9-10 is quoted at the end of Acts.

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[84] Bovon (2002:311); Brawley (1987:76); Childs (2004:7); Culpepper (1995:177); Evans (1990:372); Fitzmyer (1986:706) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:307).

[85] Childs (2004:7); Evans (1989:115) and Moyise (2001:46).

[86] Evans (1989:115, 117; 1990:374) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:307); see also Fitzmyer (1986:706, 708-9).

Luke omits Mark's μήποτε-clause "lest they convert and it be acquitted (/forgiven) them" from his Gospel,[87] resulting in a softening of the statement.[88] However, Luke adds a similar phrase within the parable of the sower/soils, "… then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved" (8:12).[89] The fact that Luke adds this phrase in the parable, while omitting the phrase "lest they convert and it be acquitted (/forgiven) them", may be to prevent any idea that Jesus' tried to prevent anyone from understanding (and subsequently repenting and being forgiven) through the use of his parables.[90] It must also be remembered though, that it is Luke who fully quotes Isa 6:9-10, through Paul, at the end of Acts, and Luke might have intended to indicate a progression, where the hardening already began in Jesus' ministry, but reaches a climax at the end of Acts.[91]

8.2.2. Interpretation

Some argue that in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' preaching functions to reveal an already present state of spiritual blindness in the people, instead of causing the blindness (Foster & Shiell, 1997:263). When just considering the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, it seems though that, as in Mark, Jesus says that he uses parables so that people will see but not see and hear but not understand. This leaves the reader with the same harsh message as found in Mark. However, we may take note of the following: Luke 8:8 reads, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Pao & Schnabel, 2007:307). And again we find that the disciples actually come to Jesus to ask him about the interpretation of the parable. This seems to imply that those who are open to hear, and who seek Jesus for the correct understanding, will indeed be able to find it. So again it seems that the matter lies with the heart (/faith) of the listeners. It is interesting to note that, other than those who see, but do not really see, and hear but do not understand, there are others in Luke who do *not* see, but are nonetheless able to understand (Luke 18:35-43; 19:1-10) (Harvey, 2000:102): The blind man who

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[87] Pao and Schnabel (2007:307); see also Evans (1989:115).

[88] Culpepper (1995:177) and Moyise (2001:46); see also Guelich (1989:210).

[89] Culpepper (1995:178) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:307).

[90] Childs (2004:7); Culpepper (1995:178); Evans (1989:117; 1990:374) and Fitzmyer (1986:709).

[91] Moyise (2001:46); see also Palmer (1993:67) and Pao and Schnabel (2007:307). Bruce (1987:77) remarks that it is an attested practice within Luke-Acts, that Luke omits, or only shortly addresses a Synoptic theme from his Gospel, just to introduce the idea later in Acts within an appropriate context.

hears a commotion and asks what is transpiring, is informed that Jesus of Nazareth is passing. The blind man immediately shouts for Jesus to have mercy on him, and so Jesus comes to him, heals him, and tells him that his faith has saved him. There is also Zaccheus, who is unable to see Jesus through the crowd, but still tries to catch a glimpse of him. Jesus passes underneath the tree into which Zaccheus had climbed and calls him down. Jesus then tells Zaccheus that he (Jesus) was to stay with Zaccheus, and Zaccheus responded by stating that he would give half of his possessions to the poor and would repay anyone he had defrauded. To this Jesus declared that salvation had come to Zaccheus' house.

Moreover, there is the fact that it is explicitly stated in the parable that it is the devil that comes and takes away the word from the people's hearts so that they cannot believe and be saved. And we still find the predestination idea in the fact that it has been given to the disciples to know the mysteries, while it has not been given to others. Thus, there seems to be a sort of tension: On the one hand Jesus gives the ability to know the mysteries to the disciples and not to the rest. Also, the devil comes and takes away the word from the hearts of some people. Yet, when we consider that Luke 8:8 indicates, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear", and that the disciples also first come to Jesus to receive a proper understanding of his parable, rather than knowing it by themselves, we may understand that true understanding is still open to those who are themselves open and receptive to it (i.e. who have faith).

8.3. Isaiah 6:9-10 in Acts 28:25-27

25. ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπελύοντο, εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἕν, ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν

26. λέγων· Πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπόν· ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·

27. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

25. *But being at variance with one another, they were departing, after Paul said one thing: "Rightly the Holy Spirit said through the prophet Isaiah to your forefathers:*

26. *Saying: "Go to this people and say: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not perceive."*

27. *For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with (their) ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes, and hear with (their) ears, and understand with (their) heart, and convert, and I will heal them.*

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8.3.1. Acts 28:25-27[92]

In the Gospel of Luke, we might define the reference to Isa 6:9-10 as an allusion, but in Acts in is quite clear that Isa 6:9-10 appears in an explicit quotation, since it is introduced by an introductory formula (see Steyn, 1993:31). The quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 at the end of Acts, appears essentially as it is in the reconstructed LXX,[93] though there are some small variations in order.[94] The quotation in Acts begins with λέγων "saying", instead of καὶ εἶπεν "and he said". Then Acts reads Πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπόν "Go to this people and say", where the LXX has Πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὸν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ "Go and say to this people". Other than that, only the first αὐτῶν after τοῖς ὠσίν (28:27) is missing.[95] These changes are, however, rather trivial and do not affect the meaning of the passage.[96] The quotation corresponds with Matthew's citation of the passage, yet features the added line from the beginning of Isa 6:9, "Go to this people and say".[97] Among all the NT texts that quote Isa 6:9-10, only Acts includes this opening clause from Isaiah (Palmer, 1993:66). According to Evans (1989:121), it is quite appropriate to have this addition in light of the missionary character of Acts.

The fact that the Isa 6:9-10 quotation appears as Luke's final word (from the mouth of Paul[98]), and is also the only major Scriptural quotation in the second half of Acts, certainly places emphasis on this passage (Mallen, 2008:155). It might additionally

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[92] The quotation of Isa 6:9-10 appears within one of the speeches in the book of Acts. The OT quotations featured in Acts appear almost exclusively within the speeches, except for 8:32-33 (see Moyise, 2001:61; Palmer, 1993:66; Steyn, 1993:28, 43 & Ringgren, 1986:232). According to Wall (2002:14), the speeches are very important, making up around one third of the composition of Acts. Often these speeches indicate profound movements in the plot of the narrative, while also providing summaries of the narrator's core theological convictions (Wall, 2002:14). Conzelmann (1987:xli) also notes that, the speeches are composed with the author's specific theological intention in mind, rather than based on patterns that were common to Greek historiography.

[93] Barrett (2002:424); Brawley (2000:420); Childs (2004:7-8); Evans (1989:113); Koet (1989:128); 2005:96); Mallen (2008:95); Palmer (1993:66); Steyn (1993:210); Tull (2010:151); Wall (2002:361) and Watts (2009:222).

[94] Barrett (2002:424); Freed (1965:87) and Steyn (1993:211).

[95] Mallen (2008:95) and Steyn (1993:210).

[96] Mallen (2008:95) and Marshall (2007:600).

[97] Freed (1965:87) and Steyn (1993:206); see also Evans (1989:121).

[98] It has been noted that the Paul portrayed in Acts has quite a different personage from what is depicted in his own writings (see Albright & Mann, 1981:xxxiv; Brawley, 1987:68; Powell, 2009:197 & Schnelle, 1998:241-2). This is, however, not among the concerns of the present study, so this work will refer only to Paul as he is depicted in Acts, particularly in relation to his last speech at the end of Acts, in which he quotes Isa 6:9-10.

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be argued, as by Mallen (2008:155), that the Isaiah quotation carries a heavier sense of judgment where it is located in Acts, than it does when it is used in connection with the teachings of Jesus as in the Synoptic Gospels. This may be said, since in Acts, Israel is rejecting clear evidence of Jesus' resurrection and the accounts of his witnesses, and not merely the cryptic nature of Jesus' parables (Mallen, 2008:155). Furthermore, Paul's final words in Acts, are also backed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25).[99]

8.3.2. Interpretation

In Acts, the Isa 6:9-10 quotation is not employed in relation to the parables, as it is in the Synoptic Gospels, but instead it functions to explain why the Jews rejected the Gospel message (Evans, 1989:127). Wall (2002:362) understands the use of Isaiah 6:9-10 in the Gospels and Acts as an apologia to the troublesome question: Why are the majority of religious Jews unconvinced by the Christian Gospel? To Wall (2002:362), the force of this question is even more prominent in Acts, since the story of the church's mission begins with great optimism in Jerusalem as many devout Jews convert. Although the Gospels employ Isa 6:9-10 to explain why some people accept the Gospel (Jesus' teaching) and others do not, it is not clear that those who do not accept the Gospel are particularly and only the Jews. Such an assertion is clearer in Acts, since Paul quotes Isa 6:9-10 while addressing a Jewish audience (see Acts 28:17).

It is of importance to acknowledge that, although Paul did recognize that in Isa 6:9-10, the prophet was actually speaking to Paul's ancestors, Paul also saw in those he was currently disagreeing with, that they were no different from those ancestors.[100] So, it is not that Paul believed the words in Isaiah was meant solely for his own time and circumstances, but in these words of Isaiah he saw a relevant point of connection to his own current experience with his contemporaries.[101] Paul's words

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[99] Barrett (2002:424) and Mallen (2008:185).

[100] Koet (1989:133) and Watts (2009:222); see also Steyn (1993:212).

[101] Paul applies Isa 6:9-10 to his current audience (Scharf, 2010:84). According to Scharf (2010:84), the apostles in the book of Acts were sensitive to the situations of their listeners, and they felt a certain amount of freedom to make use of recognized Biblical words or passages to verify certain Gospel events, even though such understandings were not something that the original authors likely would have envisioned. Scharf (2010:91) proposes that, when we view apostolic interpretation as a Holy-

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can be understood as a response to what he had experienced, i.e. that not all who heard the Gospel message accepted it (Wall, 2002:361-3). According to Pao and Schnabel (2007:308), this theme of failure of mission is even further connected with the mission of the apostles as the Isa 6:9-10 quotation functions at the end of Acts.[102] According to Wall (2002:363), at most this text should be taken to provide a realistic interpretation of why an inspired prophet from Israel should not be surprised when the entire congregation of Israel does not respond positively to the message about Jesus.

By leading in his quotation of Isaiah with the words, "rightly the *Holy Spirit* said through the prophet Isaiah to your forefathers …", Luke lends authority to the written word (Wall, 2002:363). According to Palmer (1993:65), the distinctive nature of the introductory formula Luke uses here, highlights the importance of the citation to follow.[103] Palmer (1993:65) additionally notes that, this is possibly the only introduction formula in Acts that includes a reference to the Holy Spirit.[104] It can be understood that, when the sacred text is properly interpreted by an inspired prophet (such as Paul or Peter), the living word of God is heard through the text, which establishes a norm for the contemporary hearers of the text in a particular setting (Wall, 2002:363).

Paul's use of "your" fathers, against "our" fathers", clearly indicates a certain distance between him and his audience at this point (Koet, 1989:133). According to Koet (1989:133), the designation "our" fathers (see Acts 13:17; 22:3; 24:14; 26:6[105]), usually pertains to the ancestors as receivers of the promises of God, but "your" fathers is usually employed to refer to obdurate ancestors, and such is also the case with Isa 6:9-10.[106] Paul's use of Isa 6:9-10 is not directed at the entire audience (or

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Spirit-guided hermeneutic, which does not impose a particular meaning on a text, but rather sees what was in the text all along, we may be freed from feeling embarrassed at their practices.

[102] We may also consider that the rejection of the prophetic message is a theme in Luke that can already be observed in the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:16-30) (Pao & Schnabel, 2007:307).

[103] See also Koet (1989:132).

[104] Palmer (1993:65) does admit that 4:25 is another possible reference to the Holy Spirit, but argues that this difficult text should rather be understood as "who spoke through the *holy breath* of the mouth of our father David, your servant."

[105] Scharf (2010:84).

[106] See also Scharf (2010:84).

Jews as a whole),[107] since there are in fact some of the Jews who do come to believe (Koet, 1989:133). The words are directed specifically to those who do not believe and who thus oppose the message Paul brings.[108]

The fact that Luke's quotation of Isa 6:9-10 in Acts corresponds so much to the LXX (or at least the reconstructed form thereof), makes for an understanding in Acts that the hardening is due to the people themselves and not God or his prophet, as is actually the case in the MT (see Evans, 1989:121).[109] It cannot be said for certain that Luke used "the LXX", since he might have used another Greek or Hebrew version that was simply close to the reconstructed LXX we have today. However, when considering the reconstructed LXX text, Luke's quotation of Isa 6:9-10 in Acts corresponds with the understanding found of the same verses in the reconstructed LXX. Thus, the harsh picture of God that the MT sketches, has been toned down in the LXX, since it is not declared that God renders the people unable to comprehend, but their (already present) negative state is merely described.[110] Moreover, the LXX indicates that the people have caused their own blind and deaf state, but repentance is still possible, other than what we find in the Hebrew (Koet, 1989:130). However, God can only heal the people once they repent (Koet, 1989:130). The Isaiah quotation may provide a Scriptural "pattern" for the present response of the Jews to the message Paul proclaimed, which is also in keeping with their rejection of the prophets of God throughout history (cf. Acts 7:35, 39, 51-52) (Mallen, 2008:97). Luke's use of Isaiah in Acts portrays the fact that Israel is continuing in their ways as they have done even from the Exodus.[111] In this sense, the apparent failure of the message to the Jews is due to the attitude of the Jews themselves, rather than to Paul's message or God's plan (Mallen, 2008:97). But having the larger text of Isaiah 6 in mind, it should also be acknowledged that, despite the judgment to come onto some (as Isaiah prophesied), a believing remnant will be saved (Litwak, 2006:235).

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[107] So also Brawley (2000:420) and Litwak (2006:234).

[108] Haenchen (1971:729) though, argues that Paul is describing all Jews as being obdurate, even though there are some that are said to have been convinced. Haenchen (1971:729) proposes that, it comes across this way, since Luke is actually trying to unite two ideas that are in conflict with one another. Firstly, Luke wanted to show that the Christian message was actually in agreement with Judaism (Haenchen, 1971:729). On the other hand, Paul wanted to show the Jewish reserve against the Christian message, i.e. the obduracy of the Jews, which actually led to the Gentile mission (Haenchen, 1971:729).

[109] See also Koet (1989:129) and Watts (2009:222).

[110] Koet (1989:129-30) and Steyn (1993:213).

[111] Litwak (2006:235); see also Marshall (2007:601).

At the end of the day, the Isaiah quotation still appears to serve an apologetic purpose at the end of Acts, indicating that the root cause of Jewish rejection is due to the Jews themselves, and not God or his messengers (Mallen, 2008:186). This can be seen as a warning to Luke's audience not to follow on this path of blindness, deafness and lack of understanding (Mallen, 2008:186). Mallen (2008:96) also makes the noteworthy observation that, in Acts 13:13-52 (the episode at Pisidian Antioch) a pattern of Paul's ministry is established: proclamation about Jesus; divided response from the Jews; a Scriptural warning; and the proclamation that Paul will turn to the Gentiles.[112] This pattern is further seen in Acts 18:6 and is found for the third time in Acts 28:24-31.[113]

Wall (2002:361-3) says that, many contemporary interpreters understand Paul's quotation of Isa 6:9-10 in Acts 28 to be a sign of his resignation whereby he washes his hands of a further mission to Israel.[114] Nevertheless, other commentators[115] stress that, despite how harsh Paul's last words appear to be towards the Jews,[116] this does not mean that the Jews are definitively rejected. Brawley (1987:72) argues that, Paul's ministry in Rome showcases that, although he has declared that he will go to the Gentiles, the Jews still form a central part of his mission (see Acts 28:17-20, 23). Brawley (1987:72) also admits that Paul responds to Jewish obduracy with severe warnings, but still Paul does not give up on them. Instead, the rejection of the

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[112] See also Sawyer (1996:38). Waters (2015:6-7) sees Paul's final speech in Acts as part of an *inclusio* of Paul's ministry, which started in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16b-41).

[113] Conzelmann (1987:227) and Tannehill (1985:72); see also Mallen (2008:96-7). According to Barrett (1988:240), Acts 28:26-27, as well as 13:47 indicates mission to the Gentiles, but Barrett argues that 13:47 does this in a positive note, while 28:26-27 does so in a negative sense. Kilgallen (2009:182) proposes though, that Paul is certainly not giving a spiteful condemnation of the Jews in Acts 28:28, even though this might be the case in Acts 13:46 and 18:6. Litwak (2006:233) contends that Acts 28:24 shows a mixed response on the particular occasion towards Paul's proclamations, but similar to Acts 13:46 and 18:6, it does not convey an end to Paul's mission towards the Jews. See also Palmer (1993:67), for an explanation as to why the mission to the Jews can be seen as continuing despite these passages in Acts.

[114] According to Sawyer (1996:38), for example, Acts delivers one of the most bitter Scriptural attacks on the Jewish people in its quotation of Isa 6:9-10. Sawyer (1996:38) further observes that "this people" who are blind, deaf and beyond redemption are deliberately juxtaposed against "the Gentiles", who will from now on be the main recipients of divine salvation (Sawyer, 1996:38). According to Sawyer (1996:38), Isaiah is used here, not only to explain, but also to authorize this climactic message.

[115] E.g. Brawley (1987:72, 74); Koet (1989:136); Marshall (2007:601); Palmer (1993:69-70); Pao and Schnabel (2007:307); Synge (1980:58); Waters (2015:12) and Wall (2002:363); see also Barrett (2002:425); Brawley (1987:77) and Kilgallen (2009:181).

[116] In Acts, Paul often uses harsh language that stimulates both positive and negative reactions (Koet, 1989:136). For examples of this, see Koet (1989:136).

Gospel by the Jews, has just opened the occasion for the Gospel message to now go to the Gentiles as well[117] (Waters, 2015:13). Koet (1989:136) maintains that, when Isaiah indicates that "the Gentiles will listen", this serves to stir the Jews to a response, and the Isaiah quotation indicates to them that repentance is still possible.[118] Palmer (1993:71) notes, in this regard, that the mission to the Gentiles is mentioned only to Jews, which proves that it functions to spur on the Jews to repentance.[119] Palmer (1993:71-3) goes on to say that Paul's focus at the end of Acts is in fact a continuing of the mission to the Jews.[120] Furthermore, Kilgallen (2009:184) puts forth that when looking at the broader Lukan context, it may be observed that Luke shows a constant interest in motivation towards repentance.[121] The purpose then of the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, is to highlight the hardened hearts, and closed eyes and ears, in the hope that this might move the hearers to investigate this condition in themselves and turn to God for healing.[122]

Tannehill (1985:72) further makes it clear that, in Luke-Acts it must be understood that Jesus means redemption for Israel as well, not merely the Gentiles. Wall (2002:363-4) warns that Paul's last words here should not be interpreted as anti-Semitic.[123] Surely all the Gentiles did/would not listen,[124] just as all the Jews

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[117] According to Wall (2002:362), however, it is a precondition that at least some of the Jews do believe the Gospel message, before the message continues to the Gentiles.

[118] See also Kilgallen (2009:181, 186); Mallen (2008:166, 185-6) and Palmer (1993:70-1). For more elaboration on this, see Koet (1989:134-7).

[119] Tannehill (1985:83) sees the following as hints that there may remain hope for a happier eventual outcome: It is repeatedly stated that salvation and "light" for Israel has been prophesied in Scripture. And as can be seen in Luke-Acts, the fulfillment of prophecy plays an important role for Luke. It seems that Luke also continues hoping that the Jews will repent. Even after they rejected Jesus at the crucifixion, Peter calls those in Jerusalem to repent. It seems that there remains hope for "times of relief" and "restoration".

[120] Slingerland (1986:312) is of the opinion that the second part of Acts indicates that Paul devoted himself primarily to the Jews. Slingerland (1986:312) says this based on the fact that Paul says in Acts, on three different occasions, that his missionary work was directed at the Jews (Acts 13:46; 18:6 and 28:25-28); and it was also customary for Paul to focus on bringing the Gospel to the Jews, as can be seen in Paul's acts at Berea (17:10); Corinth (18:4); Ephesus (18:19, 19:8), Jerusalem (24:14-15), and Rome (28:23). Slingerland (1986:317-9) does continue to argue though, that the picture Luke paints in Acts is rather unusual, because he also portrays the Jews as villains on various occasions. According to Koet (1989:138), on the other hand, the focus of Paul's last words in Acts, lies actually on the Gentile mission and this is the matter he is in fact addressing with this last audience.

[121] For more on this view, see Kilgallen (2009:184-5).

[122] Kilgallen (2009:186); see also Foster and Shiell (1997:264).

[123] Paul describes himself as a Jew and makes mention of Jewish affairs (Koet, 1989:138). Litwak (2006:232) also points out that Paul explicitly identified himself with the people of Israel many times, and despite all he had gone through, still believed in the hope of Israel (cf. Rom 11:26-29).

[124] See also Litwak (2006:237-8).

did/would not listen, yet a portion of Jews[125] and Gentiles did in fact embrace the message about Jesus.[126] So, Paul is not saying that he is washing his hands of Israel, but merely affirming that, whether the Jews approve of it or not, he views it as his mission to continue preaching the Gospel even to the Gentiles (Synge, 1980:57). The main motif here, also running through the rest of the book of Acts, is that nothing can stand in the way of the spread of the Gospel – even if Israel rejects it, others will gladly accept it (Barrett, 2002:425).

We would also do well to notice that, after the quotation, the following is said of Paul: "He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:30-31). Clearly no distinction is made here between Jews and Gentiles, implying that πάντας "all" is referring to both Jews and Gentiles,[127] who came to Paul and so heard his preaching. In Tannehill's (1985:81) view, the emphasis on the unbelieving Jews that we find in Luke-Acts, goes beyond a mere concern to justify mission to the Gentiles[128] and/or show that there is a continuity of redemptive history. It appears that in Luke-Acts there is throughout an emphasis on the fact that God's purpose is to bring salvation to "all flesh", which obviously includes both Jews and Gentiles (Tannehill, 1985:82).

8.4. Conclusion

Isa 6:9-10 is utilized in quite different ways in Luke 8:10 and Acts 28:25-27. Luke uses the Isaiah quotation to say that some receive Jesus' teaching in parables so that they will not see and understand the true meaning of Jesus' message. The disciples are sketched as the fortunate ones who receive knowledge, yet we must note that they also do not understand the parable (of the sower/soils) at first. However, because they go to Jesus and ask what the parable really means, Jesus willingly gives them the correct interpretation. So, it seems that acceptance of and faith in Jesus is an important element in the correct understanding of his teachings. It

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[125] As seen in Acts 28:24, 30-31, not all the Jews in Rome had been unresponsive (Synge, 1980:57). See also Litwak (2006:234) and Palmer (1993:68).
[126] Wall (2002:363-4); see also Mallen (2008:118).
[127] See Brawley (1987:77) and Kilgallen (2009:182-3).
[128] See also Conzelmann (1987:xlvii) and Mallen (2008:202).

does not appear that Jesus would keep the true meaning of the parable hidden from someone who came and inquired it from him with an earnest heart. Luke also seems to want to avoid the notion that Jesus keeps people from truly understanding. So, Luke states within the parable of the sower/soils, that it is actually the devil that comes and takes away the word from the hearts of some people, so that they are not able to believe and be saved. It seems that here in Luke, there is somewhat of a tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Jesus does in fact offer knowledge and understanding to some and not others. And the devil does indeed steal the word from the hearts of some. However, Jesus still urges his audience to hear if they have the ears to hear. And Jesus willingly offers the true interpretation of the parable to the disciples (who also did not understand it at first), when they merely come to him and ask for it. Yet surely they must have come with a sense of faith.

In Acts, Isa 6:9-10 is used to explain why some of the Jews did not accept the Gospel message as preached by Paul. When taking the rest of Acts into consideration, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul directs these words only to a certain portion of Jews who did not believe, since there are other Jews who are said to have come to believe. Also, when taking the rest of the book into consideration, it seems extreme to assert that these final words of Paul at the end of Acts, are meant to indicate a final rejection of the Jews. It might be that the Jews' rejection of the Gospel message is what lead into the mission to the Gentiles, but it does not mean that "mission" to the Jews themselves will cease. Instead, it would make sense that Paul's words also serve to stir the Jews to repentance, since surely if one of them, after hearing these words and investigating their own heart, would have come to Paul and wished to repent, that person would not be turned away. Just as Jesus would not have turned anyone away that came to him, honestly seeking to understand the meaning of his parable(s).

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CHAPTER 9
JOHN[1]

9.1. Background

9.1.1. Date

The earliest evidence of the Gospel of John is an Egyptian papyrus fragment, P^{52}, containing John 18:31-33, 37-38[2] (dated ca. early 2nd century CE).[3] This suggests that, the Gospel of John was known in Egypt as early as the beginning of the 2nd century,[4] but probably already by 100 CE.[5] Papyrus Egerton 2, a fragment of a non-canonical gospel, appears to be based on John 5 and was possibly written before 150 CE, which means that the Fourth Gospel must have been in circulation for long enough by then that other works made use of it (Lindars, 1972:43). According to Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxv) though, Theopohilus of Antioch (ca. 180 CE) gives us the first clear citation of the Gospel of John. However, even earlier, ca. 150 CE, there seems to be evidence that the Valentinian Gnostics used and revered the Gospel of John as can be gleaned from *The Gospel of Truth*.[6] Within this school, it appears as though Heracleon wrote the first commentary on the Gospel of John (ca. 150 CE).[7] Justin Martyr (writing ca. 155 CE) shows knowledge of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, which is told in John 3:1-5 (Lincoln, 2005:18). It also seems that Tatian used the Gospel of John, together with the Synoptic Gospels, in his *Diatesseron* (harmony of the Gospels).[8] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxv) is of the opinion that the *Diatesseron* was probably compiled in Syriac around 160 CE and in Greek around

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[1] Nowadays, the general view in scholarship is that John did not make use of the Synoptic Gospels (as for example Matthew and Luke made use of Mark in constructing their own Gospels) (O'Day, 1995:502). According to O'Day (1995:502) though, John made use of a stream of oral traditions that overlap with traditions that the other Gospels made use of, but which are nonetheless independent.

[2] This fragment is now kept in the John Rylands Library, Manchester (Lincoln, 2005:17).

[3] See Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxv); Lincoln (2005:17); Lindars (1972:43); O'Day (1995:504); Schnelle (1998:477) and Wansbrough (2015:114).

[4] Lincoln (2005:18) and Wansbrough (2015:114).

[5] O'Day (1995:504).

[6] See Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxv) and Schnelle (1998:476).

[7] O'Day (1995:504); see also Schnelle (1998:476).

[8] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxv) and O'Day (1995:504).

170 CE.[9] Church Fathers of the 2nd century further indicate knowledge of the Gospel (i.e. Irenaeus, writing ca. 180 CE and Melito of Sardis, writing ca. 175 CE) (O'Day, 1995:504). The Muratorian Canon (180-200 CE) indicates the existence of the Gospel of John as well (O'Day, 1995:504).

When considering internal evidence for a possible date of the Gospel of John, it has been observed that the Gospel witnesses to a time of religious turmoil after the destruction of the Temple, which is evidenced in the predictions of expulsion, persecution and martyrdom that was awaiting those who accepted the message of Jesus (O'Day, 1995:505). If the conflict with Jewish leadership, evident in the Gospel, as well as the significant impact it must have had on the religious and social shaping of the community, is taken into account, a date of composition as early as 75-80 CE can be suggested for the Gospel of John (O'Day, 1995:505). The references to the exclusion from the synagogues (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2) might point to an excommunication of heretics from the synagogue.[10] According to Lincoln (2005:18), it does not seem likely that something like this would have occurred a great deal earlier than 80 CE. Such a formal practice was found in the Benediction Against Heretics (*Birkath ha-Minim*) sometime after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE, and probably somewhere between 85 and 95 CE.

If it could be shown that the author of the Gospel of John was familiar with Synoptic traditions, and perhaps even editorial work of the Synoptic Evangelists, a suggestion for an earliest possible date would be 85 CE (Lincoln, 2005:18). There are scholars that wish to assign an even earlier dating to the Gospel of John, contemporary with that of the Synoptic Gospels, or earlier (see Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxxvi). The following is mentioned by Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxvi) as the major points usually offered for such an argument: the Gospel of John shows a certain amount of independence from the Synoptic Gospels; certain primitive traits, in the way Jesus is portrayed, is reflected in the Gospel of John; Jesus' message is portrayed as an extension of Judaism, with Christianity contained within Judaism; some see allusions in the Gospel to buildings in Jerusalem, including the Temple, as still standing; it is argued that there is an absence of any allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem and

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[9] O'Day (1995:504) offers a date for the *Diatesseron* of ca. 175 CE.
[10] See Lincoln (2005:18) and O'Day (1995:504).

the Temple; a remarkable influence of the Qumran literature on the Gospel of John is claimed, whilst it is indicated that the Qumran community ceased to exist by 70 CE; and finally, the concerns of the church seem to reflect the period of 40-70 CE rather than 70-100 CE.[11]

Regardless of the suggestions of a very early date for the Gospel, i.e. contemporary with, or earlier than the Gospels, it seems that most scholars propose a date somewhere between 75 and 95 CE. Lindars (1972:42) is of the opinion that 85-90 CE is a probable date for the Gospel of John. According to Lindars (1972:42) though, we must consider that the absence of reference to the Gospel in the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp (ca. 115 CE), may be a sign that it was only written later. Barrett (1978:128) designates extreme limits for the composition of the Gospel as 90 and 140 CE, but maintains that the traditional date of 100 CE[12] is probably close to the truth.[13] Lincoln (2005:18) remarks that scholars' best estimation for a date when the Gospel of John was completed and began to be circulated is somewhere between 90 and 110 CE. In the end, as with the Synoptic Gospels and many other NT writings, the true date of composition for the Gospel of John is not certain (Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxxviii).

9.1.2. Location

The place of origin for the Gospel of John is unclear, but the following have been suggested: Ephesus,[14] Syria (Antioch), Palestine, and Alexandria.[15] Lindars (1972:43) contends that Ephesus or Syria remain the most likely, but nonetheless, there is no clear evidence for either. According to Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxx), it is practically certain that the Gospel of John had its roots in Palestine, though it is still uncertain whether or not the total development of the Johannine tradition took place in Palestine.

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[11] For elaboration on this point, see Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxvi).

[12] So also O'Day (1995:504).

[13] For more information on this topic, see O'Day (1995:504-7).

[14] So Schnelle (1998:475). See also Powell (2009:176).

[15] See Barrett (1978:128-9); Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxix-lxxx); Lindars (1972:43) and O'Day (1995:506-7).

9.1.3. Author

As with the other Gospels, the Gospel of John is, in actual fact, anonymous (Lincoln, 2005:18). John, the apostle, has often been accepted as the author of the Gospel. Justin Martyr (writing ca. 155 CE) mentions the Gospel of John, but does not mention the apostle John in relation to it, even though he ascribes Revelation to John (Lindars, 1972:28). By the time of the work by Melito of Sardis, *Homily on the Pascha* (ca. 165/175 CE), it appears certain that the Gospel of John was used, but still not connected to the name John (Lindars, 1972:28). According to Lindars, the Muratorian Canon and Clement of Alexandria seem to reflect some doubt regarding John the apostle as author of the Fourth Gospel (Lindars, 1972:28). Clement of Alexandria indicates "John" as composing a spiritual Gospel, after having been encouraged by his friends and inspired by the Holy Spirit (Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.14.7) (Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxvii). The Muratorian Canon (ca. 180-200 CE) also makes reference to "John's" friends who urged him to write the Gospel, and depicts the Gospel as a product of a number of apostles, with John being their spokesperson (Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxvii). The anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke indicates that, the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos, and afterwards wrote the Fourth Gospel (Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxvii).[16] The first indisputable statement of the author as "John", seems to be by Irenaeus (writing ca. 180 CE).[17] It appears as though Irenaeus claimed to have come to know about this traditions through Polycarp[18] (Lincoln, 2005:19). However, that Polycarp and Papias do not mention anything about a Gospel that was associated with John (see Lincoln, 2005:19). Eusebius quotes Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (first half of the 2nd century[19]), who names two Johns, one of which is named John the Elder (Lindars, 1972:29). The one is described as already having died, and assumed by Eusebius to be the author of the Gospel, and another as still alive, who Eusebius regards as the author of the

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[16] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxvii) heeds though, that despite this early evidence appearing impressive, closer examination does show that this evidence is done harm by "unwarranted elaborations and confusions concerning those of whom it speaks." For more on this topic, see Beasley-Murray (1987:lxvii-lxviii).

[17] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxvi) and Lincoln (2005:18-9); see also Schnelle (1998:471). Irenaeus wrote, "John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his breast, also published the gospel while living at Ephesus in Asia." (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2.) (see Barrett, 1978:101; Beasley-Murray, 1987:lxvi; Lincoln, 2005:18-9; Lindars, 1972:29 and Schnelle, 1998:471).

[18] For more on this, see Lincoln (2005:19). See also Barrett (1978:101).

[19] See Barrett (1978:105-9).

Apocalypse (Lindars, 1972:29). Jerome quotes Papias, but rather thinks that John the Elder wrote 2 and 3 John, where the author described himself as "the Elder" (Lindars, 1972:29). According to Lindars (1972:30), however, Papias himself did not have knowledge of the Fourth Gospel and so does not ascribe it to any of the two Johns that he mentions.[20] Additionally, we must take note of the fact that the title "Gospel According to John" is found earliest in a superscription on P[66] (late 2nd century CE) and P[72] (early 3rd century CE) (Lincoln, 2005:18).

It is often presumed that the John, referred to as the author of the Fourth Gospel, was John the son of Zebedee,[21] which if true, would grant apostolic authorship to the Gospel (O'Day, 1995:498). If the author was one of the Twelve Disciples, he was an eyewitness of the events concerning Jesus (Lincoln, 2005:18). According to O'Day (1995:499), however, it is not necessary for the author to be one of the Twelve Disciples in order to have had authority, since the Fourth Gospel itself does not feature the Twelve so prominently. Some attempt to equate John, the son of Zebedee, with the Beloved Disciple, but this cannot be confirmed.[22] There has been much debate on whether the Beloved Disciple should be identified as the author of the Gospel of John.[23] Regarding this, Beasley-Murray (1987:lxx) deems it more likely that others would afford the title "Beloved Disciple" to a particular disciple who was in close fellowship to Jesus, than it is that this disciple would call himself by this name. However, when considering John 21:24, the Beloved Disciple is said to be the one who is bearing witness to these things and written these things, and it is designated, "we know that his testimony is true".[24] According to Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxiii), the Beloved Disciple and the author of the Gospel is *not* one and the same, and although there are certain texts within the Gospel itself that present the Beloved Disciple as a witness, they do not portray him as the author.[25] Wansbrough (2015:114) agrees that the references in John 21:24 and 19:35 refer to the source of the testimony and not the authorship of the literary work. Schnelle (1998:474) holds that the appendix John 21, which indicates the Beloved Disciple as the author of the Gospel, is actually a

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[20] See also Schnelle (1998:471).

[21] See also Lindars (1972:28).

[22] O'Day (1995:498-9); see also De Jonge (1979:109) and Lindars (1972:28).

[23] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxx); see also Lincoln (2005:20).

[24] Beasley-Murray (1987:lxxi-lxxii); see also Lindars (1972:31-4).

[25] According to Lindars (1972:31-4), the only other authentic references to the Beloved Disciple within the Gospel is found in John 13:23, 19:26 and 20:2.

secondary identification,[26] since John 1-20 depicts the Beloved Disciple as a guarantor of the Johannine tradition, but not as the author of the Gospel. Other than identifying the Beloved Disciples with John the apostle son of Zebedee (through a process of elimination among the Twelve Disciples), he has also been identified with the following figures: Lazarus, John Mark, whose house seems to have been the main place of meeting for the early church in Jerusalem (some argue that he was not himself the author, but that he used reflections of the Beloved Disciple), Thomas, Nathanael, and even Paul (though Lindars calls the suggestion of Paul grotesque).[27] It may perhaps rather be, as O'Day (1995:500) argues, that the Beloved Disciple is not the author of the Gospel, but the authorizing voice of the traditions that the Gospel recounts. In the end, it seems the Evangelist wanted to keep the identity of the Beloved Disciple anonymous, although he would have been known within the circle of the author.[28]

The fact that the Beloved Disciple is so difficult to identify, as well as the manner in which he is portrayed in the Gospel, have caused some commentators to propose that he is actually only a symbolic character.[29] In response to this, Lincoln (2005:22) admits that there are certain symbolic elements in the function of the Beloved Disciple, however, as he is mentioned in the epilogue (John 21) he is portrayed as an actual person.[30] This leads most scholars to propose that the Beloved Disciple was actually a founding figure in the particular community, as well as a teacher (see Lincoln, 2005:22). According to Hengel (1990:24-5), "John was the head of an influential school" and a "free, self-assured" teacher. O'Day (1995:500), on the other hand, believes that the author understood himself as being connected with the Jesus traditions through the eyewitness testimony of the Beloved Disciple. John accepted this testimony as true and regarded the transmission thereof as an act of faith (O'Day, 1995:500). In any case, it seems that the author of the Gospel of John was familiar with the Synoptic Gospels, yet he had a critical view of them as being insufficient, and viewed himself as somewhat different from them (Hengel, 1990:24). In the words of Hengel (1990:25), John seems "at home in the Jewish-Christian

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[26] See also Powell (2009:175).

[27] See Lincoln (2005:20); Lindars (1972:31-4); Powell (2009:174) and Wansbrough (2015:114).

[28] Lincoln (2005:22); see also Lindars (1972:33).

[29] Lincoln (2005:22); see also Lindars (1972:33-4).

[30] For more on this, see Lincoln (2005:22).

milieu of Palestine, or more precisely, in the Jerusalem aristocracy". The author does not seem to be aware of any definite ecclesiology or church office, but he is instead characterized as having a free following of disciples that are led by the Spirit (Hengel, 1990:25).

9.1.4. Audience

The precise historic context in which John found himself is uncertain (Hengel, 1990:24). However, in terms of the possible prevailing social situation wherein the Gospel of John originated, the following may be pointed out (Lincoln, 2005:82-6): There appears to have been conflict in the local Jewish communities of the time, between those who had views that agreed with the views of the Evangelist, particularly concerning Jesus, and those who were against such views. It seems the conflict was so rife that the religious leaders eventually expelled those who held the same views as the Evangelist (see John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Lincoln admits that it is not certain how much time passed between such events and the composition of the Gospel, but he proposes that it must have been enough that the Jewish Christians had formed their own community, and that Gentiles had become part of this community as well. However, the time that passed between the events and the composition of the Gospel does not seem to have been so much that everything was forgotten about such conflicts. Lincoln suggests that the manner in which Jesus' confrontation with "the Jews" is sketched within the Gospel, indicates that the issues between the groups were still vital at that stage.

In De Jonge's view (1979:110), the Gospel of John reflects a somewhat long history of the development of particular ideas among communities who were experiencing various problems, such as: the breaking away from the synagogue; debates and disputes with "the Jews"; interactions with other Christians who had a different Christological understanding; and even a split within their own group.

O'Day (1995:506) finally states, "The Gospel of John was thus written by a Jewish Christian for and in a Jewish Christian community that was in conflict with the synagogue authorities of its day (represented in the Gospel as "the Pharisees" or "the Jews")." Boring (2012:672) instead proposes that the Gospel presupposes a

readership that consisted mainly of Gentiles, to whom it was necessary to explain Jewish customs and terminology (e.g. John 1:38, 41; 2:4; 4:9, 25; 11:55; 18:20, 28; 19:40).[31] Boring (2012:672-3) also suggests that the Gospel showcases a universalistic perspective and in this way looks beyond the synagogue and the church to the world at large. In the end, Boring (2012:673) holds that the Gospel was written to help the Johannine community clarify the meaning of their own faith, as well as deepen it. The community's mission was to bear witness of the gospel message beyond its own borders, to the wider world (Boring, 2012:673). In the words of Dodd (1954:9),

> It seems therefore that we are to think of the work [i.e. Gospel of John] as addressed to a wide public consisting primarily of devout and thoughtful persons (for the thoughtless and religiously indifferent would never trouble to open such a book as this) in the varied and cosmopolitan society of a great Hellenistic city such as Ephesus under the Roman Empire.

9.1.5. The Old Testament in John

O'Day (1995:505) expresses that the Gospel of John is saturated throughout by OT language and imagery. Themes from the OT permeated John's own thought (Barrett, 1978:29). It is noteworthy that, although John only has a few stories that correspond with the Synoptic Gospels, he does in fact use a number of the same OT quotations (Moyise, 2001:63). Nevertheless, John still has a relatively small number of explicit quotations when compared with the Synoptic Gospels (Moyise, 2001:73). Although John may not feature as many explicit OT quotations as other NT books, this must not fool us into thinking that he did not greatly make use of the OT (see Barrett, 1978:29). John does not merely quote, allude to or echo individual texts from the Scriptures as indications of fulfillment, but the saving events of the OT rather feature like a backdrop for John against which Jesus is understood (Hanson, 1991:240). Westermann (1998:76-7) expresses it well when he says, "… the atmosphere of the Old Testament can be seen in the Gospel of John", and the Gospel cannot be understood properly if this background is not taken into consideration.

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[31] Boring (2012:635-6) does seem to indicate though, that the community started out as mainly Jews, but eventually it separated from the synagogue and became a distinct community apart from the Jews. The community might have included some Gentile God-fearers from early times, however, by the time that the Gospel of John was written, the community had come to consist of mainly Gentiles, to whom it is necessary to explain Jewish terms and customs (Boring, 2012:636).

Köstenberger (2007:417) puts forth that John's default OT version to work from was the LXX, but this is not to say that he used it slavishly. Köstenberger (2007:418) rather observes that, John seems to have been familiar with both the Hebrew and LXX text (as well as Jesus' own use of the Scriptures and Christian quotation practices). According to Barrett (1978:28), it appears as though John often used the LXX when quoting from the OT, but that he had the ability to go directly to the Hebrew, and he very well sometimes did. As mentioned with the other NT authors, we must be careful to make claims about which version a NT author employed when quoting an OT text. The NT authors might very well have made use of Greek or Hebrew texts that were not identical to the MT and LXX as we have it today.

Hanson (1980:157-176) mentions five ways in which John makes use of Scripture: 1.) He uses Scripture when it has come to him in his sources; 2.) He cites Scripture using the formal indications ἵνα πλεηρωθη, ἡ γραφη, or (once) ἵνα τελειωθη ἡ γραφη. Of the seven passages[32] that fall into this category (including Isa 6:10), Hanson notes that all of them are concerned with the rejection, betrayal, passion, or death of Jesus. Apart from using quotations that fall within the tradition of the early church, John also uses other citations, that Hanson believes to be his own discovery and application. 3.) John explicitly quotes Scripture and discusses it, but there is no formal introductory formula. 4.) In other instances, it appears that Scripture forms the basis of his Christology (yet it is not formally quoted). 5.) And finally, it can be seen at some points that Scripture influenced his narrative.

In the Gospel of John, Scripture functions to bear witness to Jesus and provide models against which John understands/depicts Jesus.[33] John's understanding of God's revelation focuses on Jesus to such an extent that, Menken (1999:125) asserts, it leaves no room for any other revelation of God - Jesus is not merely seen as the climax to God's revelation, but he is the *only* revelation of God. John read the Scriptures and saw in them passages that he deemed appropriate for his own understanding of Jesus, and so saw in them "divinely inspired information about the

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[32] I.e. John 12:38-40; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28-29; and 19:36-37.
[33] Menken (1999:125); O'Day (1995:505); see also Beasley-Murray (1987:lix); Hanson (1991:240); Köstenberger (2007:415-6) and Lindars (1972:439).

Messiah" (Hanson, 1991:246). Menken (1999:141) proposes that it was important for John to legitimate Jesus as the envoy of God, by using Scripture, because his community had to defend their Christian beliefs against Jewish rivals who interpreted the same Scriptures differently (cf. 9:28-29); and also to showcase Jesus as the climax of God's dealing with Israel. According to Carson (1988:248), John wants to stress the fulfillment of Scripture in relation with the passion of Jesus and the obduracy motif he links to it, which suggests that his audience requires a rationale for the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. The fact that explicit quotations are bunched together around the Jewish obduracy theme (12:38, 40) and the passion of Jesus (19:24, 28, 36-37) may suggest that John especially uses the OT to explain the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (Köstenberger, 2007:416).

Williams (2005:101) emphasizes that Isaiah plays a very prominent role in the Gospel of John, and even argues that, among the Scriptural texts that John use, Isaiah possibly occupies the highest position. Williams (2005:101) recognizes that the explicit quotations of Psalms may well outnumber that of Isaiah, but says that, in providing striking parallels to John's language and imagery, Isaiah and the Psalms are certainly on equal ground. Williams (2005:101) additionally observes that we find several expressions, themes and motives in John that are clearly influenced by Isaiah,[34] especially Deutero-Isaiah. The Gospel of John does not feature many direct OT quotations, but of the explicit citations, five are from Isaiah (only outnumbered by the Psalms).[35] It, thus, seems that Isaiah occupied a rather prominent position in John's understanding (Young, 1954:221-2). John does not necessarily quote passages from Isaiah and relate them to fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ, but it may be observed that he interprets the metaphors and figures found in Isaiah in a symbolic and spiritual sense, and through these he expresses the meaning of Jesus Christ and his message (Young, 1954:231).

It has been claimed in the past that, John was influenced by Gnostic literature, especially when considering: his dualistic references, for example to "light and darkness"; the idea of Wisdom that descends from somewhere else and reveals truth; the "revelation speeches" in which Jesus proclaims himself as the Son, sent

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[34] See also Young (1954:222-30).

[35] Young (1954:221); see also Evans (1982c:80).

from the Father, and; the emphasis on knowledge.[36] However, according to Lincoln (2005:82), such claims have rightly been abandoned. Considering Gnostic influence on John, O'Day (1995:506) asserts that many of the elements that later came to describe Gnostic tendencies are also found in some form (albeit not so developed) in Jewish Wisdom literature, Qumran[37] documents and the writings of Philo. The Qumran documents also place emphasis on "light and darkness" and "good and evil".[38] Moreover, as remarked by Witmer (2006:313), it has long been noted by Johannine scholars that there is certain similarities between the Qumran *pesharim* and the Gospel of John, particularly in the way that they employ the OT.[39] However, commentary usually focuses attention on the similarities in content between these two textual bodies, rather than their similarities of Scriptural usage (Witmer, 2006:313-4). Furthermore, there exist some similarities between the Gospel and the writings of Philo of Alexandria, in their use of Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom traditions (Lincoln, 2005:82). In John's Gospel, Wisdom is personified as the presence of God's Word in the world (O'Day, 1995:505). These wisdom traditions are found in canonical and extra-canonical Jewish documents (e.g. Proverbs, Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon) (O'Day, 1995:505). Both Philo and John were concerned with interpreting the Jewish Scriptural traditions in the light of the circumstances they found themselves in (O'Day, 1995:506). John additionally shows certain contact points with the works of Philo in relation to the prominent usage of "word" (λόγος) and "light" (φῶς) (O'Day,

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[36] See Hengel (1990:24) and Lincoln (2005:82).

[37] See also Hengel (1990:25).

[38] O'Day (1995:506) and Lincoln (2005:82).

[39] In comparing the use of the OT in the Gospel of John and the *pesher* exegesis at Qumran, Witmer (2006:319) finds the following similarities: In terms of content, both approaches claim that their interpretation of the Scriptures is divinely revealed (e.g. the Habbakuk *pesher*, 1QpHab 2:7-9; 7:4-5 and John 6:31-46 and 2:17, 22; 12:14-16; 14:26). Also regarding content, both the Qumran and Johannine communities have the conviction that when the OT is properly interpreted it points to the eschatological events that the community is experiencing in their own time (John specifically understands this in relation to the life of Jesus). Regarding exegetical technique, the Qumran *pesharim* employed many of the exegetical techniques that was also used in early Judaism. And this is also the case in the Gospel of John, at least for certain parts thereof. Also to be noted is that, John makes many changes to the Scriptures that he quotes, and makes use of the textual traditions that most clearly highlight the point he wishes to make. Witmer mentions Isa 6:9-10 as an example of this (see more on the specific discussion on these verses in John below). This willingness on the part of John to alter the Scriptures with theological motives and to use various textual traditions as they better suit his objective, is similarly found among the Qumran *pesharim*. All this said, Witmer (2006:319) urges that we do honestly also accept the differences between the Gospel of John and the *pesharim*. Witmer (2006:319) concludes that the exegesis of the Gospel of John, although showing definite similarities with the Qumran *pesharim*, should still not in full be regarded as *pesher* exegesis. For more on similarities and differences between the Gospel of John and the *pesharim* at Qumran, see Witmer (2006:319).

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1995:506). However, as with the Qumran writings, it cannot be proven that there was any direct influence from the writings of Philo on John (Lincoln, 2005:82).

9.2. Isaiah 6:9-10 in John 12:39-40

39. διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεύειν, ὅτι πάλιν εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας·

40. τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

39. *Therefore they were not able to believe, because again Isaiah said:*
40. *"He has blinded their eyes and he hardened their heart, in order that they should not see with the eyes and perceive with the heart and convert, and I will heal them."*

9.2.1. John 12:39-40

The Isa 6:10 citation, in John, appears to be an independent adaptation of the LXX and/or MT,[40] not matching either the LXX or MT perfectly.[41] It differs from the quotation of the same verses in the Synoptic Gospels (Freed, 1965:87). According to Steyn (1993:206), the versions of the quotation in Mark, Matthew and Luke are closer to the LXX reading, whereas John's citation is nearer to the MT. Some scholars[42] have suggested that the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in John is based on the Hebrew/MT,[43] except for the last phrase "and I will heal them", which follows the LXX.[44] Since the Isa 6:9-10 quotation shows similarities and differences with both the MT and the LXX, there have emerged various explanations for why this is the case (see Köstenberger, 2007:480): it has been proposed that John quoted the LXX from memory; he might

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[40] See also Schuchard (1992:92).

[41] Köstenberger (2007:417, 480); see also Freed (1965:85) and Lincoln (2005:357).

[42] E.g. Lindars (1972:437); see also Stendahl (1968:131).

[43] Barrett (1978:431) concedes that John's citation of Isa 6:9-10 differs from the MT and LXX, but suggests that it is closer to the Hebrew than the LXX. Archer and Chirichigno (1983:95) conclude that John 12:40 is not at all following the LXX, but instead John is probably working from the Hebrew consonantal text directly. See also Witmer (2006:321).

[44] So also Seeligmann (1948:24). Dodd (1965:272, 328) reckons that John is using a non-Septuagintal version, which he cites directly. Schuchard (1992:93) suggests that when considering John's citation of Isa 6:10, he seems to reflect an Old Greek (OG) influence at some points, but also a Hebrew *Vorlage* at other points, and in some instances he seems to be completely independent.

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have depended on the Hebrew, while still being influenced by the LXX; John used a *targumic* source; or John's wording was influenced by other similar Isaiah texts. It may also be that John was perhaps loosely quoting from memory, and/or adapting the OT to suit his own particular purposes (Barrett, 1978:431). Evans (1982a:135) is of the opinion, that John freely composed his quotation of Isa 6:9-10 from certain related Isaiah texts (cf. Isa 56:10; 42:18, 19; 29:10)[45] to serve his own theological purposes. Regarding John's theological purposes, Evans (1982a:135) proposes that he wanted to show that God was the one responsible for the obduracy, blindness and unbelief of the Jews. Such an understanding is in keeping with the meaning of the MT (Evans, 1982a:135). In Evans' (1982a:136) view, the telic force of John 12:39-40 is undeniable. Köstenberger (2007:482) is of the opinion that, in citing Isa 6:10, John does not merely have this passage in mind, but also thinks of Deuteronomy 29:2-4,[46] which expands the meaning in John to include Israel even under the leadership of Moses. Thus, it spans a long line of the Israelites rejecting the ways of God, through to the time of Isaiah and even now to the time of Jesus (see Köstenberger, 2007:482). The Deuteronomy text makes clear that it is necessary for God to give people the eyes to see and ears to hear, otherwise understanding would not be possible (Hartley, 2009:270). According to Hartley (2009:270), the people's inability to believe in spite of visible signs is not due to unwillingness (an understanding more appropriate in the case of the hardening of the Pharaoh), but the inability to believe can rather be ascribed to the absence of salvific wisdom. The absence of such wisdom can be seen as inability on the part of the people, yet a perpetuation of this absence may be understood as part of God's doing (Hartley, 2009:270). Noteworthy on this point, is that John 6:44 reads, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." (Hartley, 2009:278). In this sense, man, by nature, does not have the ability to believe apart from God, so ultimately God is the one who overcomes this condition for man or perpetuates it in man (Hartley, 2009:279).

John's quotation does not start off with any reference to "this people", as is found in the MT and LXX (Williams, 2005:109). John further differs from the MT and LXX by

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[45] Looking, for example, at the presence of ἐκτυφλοῦν and τυφλοῦν in Isa 56:10 and 42:19 respectively, Evans (1982a:135) puts forth that, this might account for John's use of τετύφλωκεν in his citation of Isa 6:9-10. See also Evans (1989:131).

[46] See also Hartley (2009:270).

omitting the reference to "ears" and "hearing",[47] placing more emphasis on the notion of "seeing"[48] and spiritual blindness.[49] This is probably due to the fact that John focuses more on the seeing of signs[50] performed by Jesus.[51] Moreover, Jesus has expressed in 12:36 that people should believe in the light, so again, seeing as mode of perception, is more appropriate here (Lincoln, 2005:357). The fact that "eyes" is also placed before "heart" (reversing the order of the MT) puts further emphasis on the notion of sight (Williams, 2005:109). Evans (1989:129) also makes the noteworthy observation that, before the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, John 12:38 (citing Isa 53:1) does involve the idea of "hearing". So "ears" and "hearing" might be omitted from the Isa 6:9-10 quotation since it was already addressed in the previous citation. John additionally agrees with Mark in using ἵνα[52] (Dodd, 1965:328). This results in the understanding that the people have been blinded and their heart fattened "in order that" they not understand and convert and be healed.

9.2.2. Interpretation

The quotation of Isa 6:10 in John 12:39-40 is contained within the epilogue/summary of Jesus' public ministry (12:37-50).[53] John places the quotation of Isa 6:9-10 in a different setting than do the Synoptic Gospels.[54] Whereas the Synoptic Gospels link the quotation with Jesus' teaching in parables, John instead connects it with the deeds of Jesus,[55] "Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not

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[47] See also Barrett (1978:431); Hartley (2009:279-80); Schuchard (1992:93) and Williams (2005:109).

[48] Köstenberger (2007:481); see also Lincoln (2005:357) and O'Day (1995:716).

[49] See Lindars (1972:438).

[50] Examples of such signs are the healing of the man that was born blind, and the resurrection of Lazarus (Haenchen, 1984:101).

[51] Köstenberger (2007:481); see also Barrett (1978:431); Freed (1965:88); Haenchen (1984:101); Hartley (2009:280); Lincoln (2005:357) and Williams (2005:110).

[52] Dodd (1965:328) remarks though, that this is not to say that John took this word over from Mark.

[53] Lincoln (2005:356) and O'Day (1995:716); see also Williams (2005:108).

[54] Moyise (2001:63) and Schuchard (1992:85).

[55] Isa 6:9-10 (together with other OT texts) seems to be representative of the earliest reflections of the church on the rejection of the gospel by many people (Dodd, 1954:380). Not just was the message rejected when spoken by Jesus, but also when relayed by the apostles (see Dodd, 1954:380). According to Köstenberger (2007:481), although the Synoptic Gospels cite Isa 6:9-10 only to explain why Jesus' teaching in parables is not understood, John expands this to explain why Jesus' ministry as a whole was not understood.

believe in him" (12:37)[56] (Moyise, 2001:63). The fact that John describes the people as unbelieving, in spite of all the signs they witnessed, indicates that the responsibility for the failure of the people to respond, does not lie with Jesus, but rather with the obdurate people themselves (Köstenberger, 2007:477). This can be seen, for example, in their negative reactions to a series of signs that find a climax in the resurrection of Lazarus (Köstenberger, 2007:477).

Before the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, John also employs another quotation from Isaiah, i.e. 53:1. John is the only NT author that juxtaposes these two Isaiah references in this manner (Schuchard, 1992:85). Williams (2005:108) observes that both of these Isaiah passages were widely known and used as early Christian proof-texts to explain the unbelief of the Jews. Williams (2005:108) argues though, that John's unparalleled linking of the two passages, as well as their textual forms and the comments that accompany them, ask for the passages to be analyzed together. Though this study will still only focus on Isa 6:9-10,[57] it is interesting to take note of the fact that John uses these two Isaiah quotations next to one another, both speaking to the unbelief of the people.[58] Isa 53:1 may be regarded as pointing out the *fact* of unbelief, while Isa 6:9-10 gives a *reason* for the unbelief.[59] In John, the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, together with the Isa 53:1 citation, addresses the rejection of Jesus' ministry by the Jews.[60] So highlighting the theme of the unwillingness of the Jewish people to listen, which could already be seen from John 1:11 onwards (Tull, 2010:151). According to Childs (2004:8), the Isa 6:9-10 quotation functions specifically in relation to the unbelief of the Pharisees towards the signs performed by Jesus. Williams (2005:110) merely asserts that the quotation is directed at a particular group within Judaism who did not believe. It is not certain to whom precisely the citation was directed, but at most we can agree with Williams that it was directed at a particular unbelieving group of people within Judaism.

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[56] Steyn (1993:213) also observes that, where the Synoptic Gospels link the Isa 6:9-10 quotation with "the kingdom of God", John's quotation of the same verses are employed in relation to the unbelief of the people towards the signs that Jesus had performed.

[57] For more on the use of Isa 53:1 and 6:9-10 together, see Evans (1989:133); Hartley (2009:271) and Williams (2005:113).

[58] See Lindars (1972:437).

[59] Lindars (1972:437); see also Evans (1989:132).

[60] Tull (2010:151); see also Blenkinsopp (2006:162); Childs (2004:8) and Williams (2005:108).

Noteworthy, as Childs (2004:8) indicates, is that John 9:39-41 already alludes to Isa 6:9-10,[61] before John 12:40 cites it. John 9:39-41 reads, "Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." Interestingly, John 9 features the story of Jesus healing a man that was born blind, which results in conflict with the Pharisees.[62] In this story, the blind man who gains sight, is placed in contrast with the Pharisees[63] who are "blind" for not seeing the miracle performed by Jesus.[64] A very important factor, is that the disciples try to understand why this man was blind, by asking whether it was due to his own or his parents' sin (Hartley, 2009:280). Jesus gives an unexpected answer, when he explains that the reason for the man's blindness is actually so that the acts of God can be revealed (Hartley, 2009:280).

John explicitly states with his Isa 6:9-10 quotation that *he* has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, but he does not explain who this *he* is (Williams, 2005:110). In the MT, God brings about the hardened state of the people through the prophet Isaiah.[65] According to Williams (2005:110), John also has this understanding in mind[66] (which may indicate the Hebrew source for John's quotation). O'Day (1995:716), on the other hand, argues that the introduction to Isa 6:10 in verse 39, makes it clear that the hearers' inability to believe is not due to the doing of the prophet (as is the case in MT Isa 6:9-13), but rather it is seen as part of God's plan for the history of salvation – that is, "… Isaiah said: "*He* [God] has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts …" Where it appears that some of the other NT authors have attempted to soften the harsh words of Isa 6:9-10, specifically trying to make away with God's implication in the hardening of the people, it seems that John makes

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[61] See also Beasley-Murray (1987:216); Evans (1989:129); Hartley (2009:280); Lindars (1972:436) and Lincoln (2005:356).

[62] See Childs (2004:8) and Köstenberger (2007:481).

[63] Evans (1989:132) views this as a striking contrast: the man who was blind confesses at three points his ignorance, while he is actually receiving true knowledge (9:12, 25, 36), whereas the Pharisees three times confidently state their perceived knowledge about Jesus, while they are actually becoming even more ignorant of who Jesus really is (9:16, 24, 29).

[64] Childs (2004:8); see also Köstenberger (2007:481).

[65] Lincoln (2005:357) and Williams (2005:110).

[66] Haenchen (1984:101) agrees that John understands God himself to have willed that the people's eyes could no longer see and ears could not longer hear, and consequently not receive salvation.

it rather explicit that it is God himself who hardened the people,[67] not the prophet Isaiah (Beasley-Murray, 1987:216). According to Schuchard (1992:98), most scholars contend that God is the subject of the first lines in John 12:40. Problems with this assertion may be that the idea of God blinding or hardening people, although found elsewhere in the OT and NT, is still foreign within John's eschatological understanding (see 5:22, 27), and additionally, it is difficult to claim that God is the subject in the first lines, when it seems that Jesus is the subject in the last ("and I will heal them")[68] (Schuchard, 1992:98). Williams (205:110) maintains that the shift to the 1st person singular in the last line points to Jesus as subject rather than God. This may then mean that those who have been hardened by God and lack belief, cannot turn to Jesus (the representative of God), in order to be healed (Williams, 2005:110). To support the argument that the last line refers to Jesus and not God,[69] Williams (2005:110) notes the following verse in John (12:41): "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him [Jesus]".[70] Williams (2005:110) contends that the glory Isaiah saw certainly belonged Jesus,[71] since He is consistently the one being referred to by the pronoun αὐτός in the surrounding narrative comments. The glory that Isaiah is said to have seen in John 12:41, can be understood as corresponding with the glory of the Logos,[72] as identified in 1:18; 17:5.[73] According to Beasley-Murray (1987:217), this means that the healing, spoken of in 12:40, refers specifically to the healing that Christ (the Logos) brings. Whatever the case may be, Williams (2005:113) further points out that John is contrasting

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[67] See also Lincoln (2005:357); Sawyer (1996:37); Schuchard (1992:98) and Stendahl (1968:131).

[68] For more on this, see Schuchard (1992:100-1).

[69] So also Hartley (2009:285) and Hengel (1990:27). Bucur (2014:329-30) reports that, early Christian writers, in a straightforward manner, identified the "Lord" in the vision of Isaiah 6 with Christ and did not feel the need to describe how they identified this in the OT. According to Hartley (2009:281-2), some believe the first two statements has Satan as subject and God as the subject of the last statement, but there is no real evidence to support such a claim, especially if Isa 6:9-10 in the OT is properly taken into account; others believe that Jesus is the subject of the first two statement and God the subject of the last; and finally the most commentators argue that God is the subject of the first two statements and Jesus the subject of the last. The last two options indeed do not really need a distinction in terms of the divine modus operandi (Hartley, 2009:282).

[70] See also Evans (1989:133). Some scholars (e.g. Hartley, 2009:285; see also Menken, 1999:135 & Köstenberger, 2007:483) propose that, when John states that Isaiah "saw his glory", the verbal parallel is actually to Targum Jonathan and not the Hebrew text, since both the Hebrew and LXX says "I saw the Lord", but Targum Jonathan says "I saw the glory of the Lord". Menken (1999:135) observes that, in the Targum the object of Isaiah's vision is God's glory and not God himself.

[71] So also Haenchen (1984:101) and Menken (1999:134).

[72] So also Lindars (1972:439).

[73] Beasley-Murray (1987:217); Hengel (1990:27); Menken (1999:134) and Williams (2005:110-13). See also O'Day (1995:717).

Isaiah who saw the glory of Jesus way ahead of time, with those who physically encountered Jesus and saw his miraculous workings and yet did not believe in him. So Jesus' divine glory remained hidden to those who did not have the sight to see, but Isaiah had the spiritual sight to behold the true glory of God (Williams, 2005:113).

Ultimately, Freed (1965:88) argues that the unbelief of the many is predestined[74] by God, and occurs in fulfillment of prophecy regarding the mission of Jesus (Freed, 1965:88). It is important to note that theologically, John explains the unbelief as due to divine action and determination (O'Day, 1995:717). But according to O'Day (1995:717), this should be understood as part of God's plan for salvation history.[75] Although many see a predestinarian theme in John's use of Isa 6:9-10, O'Day (1995:717) insists that it should not be seen as an argument for predestation, since these verses emphasize the element of human choice.[76] The aim is instead to say that, even though Jesus has been rejected as the Messiah by some, everything is still proceeding according to God's ultimate plan[77] (Köstenberger, 2007:481). In the end it is actually observed that, within this section of John, as well as the narrative in general, God's sovereignty and human responsibility are maintained together.[78] The fact that some are unbelievingly blind and so do not see the signs, is willful on their part, but this is not beyond God's sovereignty, and is even part of God's overall purpose (Lincoln, 2005:358). Yet in the end, divine hardening is not the last word from God, and the citation leaves the reader with the idea that Jesus could heal the people (Lincoln, 2005:358).

Finally, Hartley (2009:286) says of the people that they could not believe (volitional act) since they were unable to perceive (cognitive act), and they could not perceive because they were fat-hearted and remained in such a state because God perpetuated this condition (divine fattening). God is not seen as altering the heart of people to counter belief or disable belief, rather He merely withholds His help and lets man go his own way (Hartley, 2009:284).

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[74] See also Barrett (1978:429).

[75] See also Köstenberger (2007:481).

[76] See also Köstenberger (2007:481).

[77] John wishes to show that, just as the Scriptures predicted the Messiah's suffering, so it also predicted the rejection of the Messiah's mission - so the suffering and rejection of Jesus should not be viewed with concern or as a problem (Köstenberger, 2007:482).

[78] Lincoln (2005:358); see also O'Day (1995:717).

9.3. Conclusion

The manner in which John introduces the Isa 6:9-10 quotation, as well as the actual quotation, seems to make it clear that God is the one who made the people blind and fattened their heart. It is impossible to completely avoid a predestinarian understanding in these verses in John. However, as has also been noted of the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in the other Gospels and Acts, it does not seem to be the understanding that God is creating a hardened condition in people that otherwise would have wanted to believe and repent. The people saw many signs of Jesus, yet did not believe. This implies that there is an amount of wilful action on the part of the people. But it seems as if John was concerned to maintain God's sovereignty in the matter, and that is why he describes the people as not understanding because God hardened them. The unbelief of the people is, furthermore, depicted as being in fulfilment of Scripture, emphasising that it actually fits into God's plan. So, it seems that John (perhaps even more so than the other NT authors we have discussed) attempted to maintain a balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Whether John actually made use of the MT for the first section of the quotation, but the LXX for the last phrase, cannot be definitively determined. However, the meaning of the first verses correspond with the meaning of the MT – God actively hardens the people (although hardening may occur through the prophet, the order still comes from God). The last section of John's Isaiah citation corresponds in meaning with the last part of the LXX – "I will heal them". It is clear from the surrounding text that this "I" refers to Jesus. If John did consult the LXX, it is curious though that he would still choose to use the hard message of the MT for the first part of the quotation. So, it seems that John is saying: The people do not believe in Jesus, in spite of all his signs. The reason that they do not believe is because God has made them blind and hardened their heart (it is unclear if God caused this obduracy from the beginning, or whether he is merely perpetuating an already present condition). Since the people have been blinded and hardened, they do not repent, and so Jesus cannot heal them. This leaves us with a rather difficult theological message. But it seems that through this, John is trying to emphasise that everything that is happening in John's time, is actually occurring within God's plan and ultimately God is in control.

CHAPTER 10
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

10.1. Illustration of Texts in Table Form

In conclusion of this study, it may be helpful to view all the texts that have been discussed alongside one another. As space does not allow all the texts to be properly placed into one table, the MT, LXX and DSS versions of Isa 6:9-10 have been put into one table, and all the NT texts which quote Isa 6:9-10 into another table.

Dead Sea Scrolls[1] 1QIsa[a], Column VI (line 2-5)	Masoretic Text (MT)[2] Isaiah 6:9-10	Septuagint (LXX)[3] Isaiah 6:9-10
9. ויאמר לך ואמרתה לעם הזה שמעו שמוע ועל תבינו ראו ראו ועל תדעו	**9.** ויאמר לך מרתוא לעם הזה שמעו שמוע ואל–תבינו וראו ראו ואל–תדעו	**9.** καὶ εἶπε Πορεύθητι καὶ εἶπον τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ Ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·
9. And he said: "Go and say to this people: "Listen (in order) to hear, but do not understand, look (in order) to see, but do not perceive."	**9.** And he said: "Go and say to this people: "Listen (in order) to hear, but do not understand, and look (in order) to see, but do not perceive."	**9.** And he said: "Go and say to this people: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not perceive."
10. השם לב העם הזה ואוזניו הכבד ועיניו השע פן יראה בעיניו ובאוזניו ישמעו בלבבו יבין ושב ורפא לו	**10.** השמן לב–העם הזה ואזניו הכבד ועיניו השע פן–יראה בעיניו ובאזניו ישמע ולבבו יבין ושב ורפא לו	**10.** ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν αὐτῶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσι καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσι καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσι καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.
10. Make fat/unreceptive the heart of this people, make dull his ears and shut his eyes, lest he sees with his eyes and hear with his ears, understand with his heart and he turn back and heal himself."	**9.** Make the heart of this people fat, and make his ears dull, and shut his eyes, lest he sees with his eyes and hear with his ears and his heart understand and turn back and heal himself."	**10.** For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with their ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes and hear with (their) ears and understand with (their) heart and they convert and I will heal them."

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[1] Hebrew text from: *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery, Volume 1: The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* (edited by M. Burrows, 1950).
[2] Hebrew text from: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*
[3] Greek text from: Ziegler, J. (ed.) 1983. *Isaias*. Bd. XIV. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen.

Mark 4:12[1]	Matthew 13:13-15	Luke 8:10	Acts 28:25-27	John 12:39-40
10. Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ μόνας, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς παραβολάς.		**9.** Ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τίς αὕτη εἴη ἡ παραβολή.		
10. And when he was alone, those around him together with the Twelve, asked him about the parables.		**9.** Then his disciples asked him what this parable was (i.e. meant).		
11. καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται,	**13.** διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν,		**25.** ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπελύοντο, εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἕν, ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἠσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν	**39.** διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεύειν, ὅτι πάλιν εἶπεν Ἠσαΐας·
11. And he said to them: "For you the mystery of the kingdom of God has been given; but for those outside everything is in parables.	**13.** Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.		**25.** But being at variance with one another, they were departing, after Paul said one thing: "Rightly the Holy Spirit said through the prophet Isaiah to your forefathers:	**39.** Therefore they were not able to believe, because again Isaiah said:
12. ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιῶσιν, μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς.	**14.** καὶ ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἠσαΐου ἡ λέγουσα· ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε.	**10.** ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς, ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν.	**26.** λέγων· Πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπόν· ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε·	**40.** τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.
12. In order that looking they see, but they do not perceive, and listening they hear, but they do not understand, lest they convert and it be acquitted (forgiven) them.	**14.** And it is fulfilled for/to them, what the prophet Isaiah said: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not	**10.** And he said: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but for the rest (it is) in parables, in order that looking they do not see and listening they	**26.** Saying: "Go to this people and say: "Listening you will listen, but surely you will not understand and looking you will look, but surely you will not perceive."	**40.** "He has blinded their eyes and he hardened their heart, in order that they should not see with the eyes and perceive with the heart and convert, and I will heal them."

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[1] All Greek NT Bible texts from: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed.

	perceive."	do not understand."		
	15. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.		**27.** ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν· μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.	
	15. For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with their ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes and hear with (their) ears and understand with (their) heart and they convert and I will heal them.		**27.** For the heart of this people has been fattened, and with (their) ears they hear grievously, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with (their) eyes, and hear with (their) ears, and understand with (their) heart, and convert, and I will heal them.	

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10.2. The Reception of Isaiah 6:9-10 in the New Testament

This study has set out to investigate one text, i.e. Isa 6:9-10, as it appears in various NT writings. In order for such a study to be valuable, it was necessary to first explore the MT, LXX and DSS texts of Isa 6:9-10 to be able to discern whether the NT texts show close resemblances to these texts or whether they diverge greatly. This was firstly done in terms of the text itself. Secondly, the aim was to discover whether the meaning Isa 6:9-10 has in the MT, LXX or DSS correspond to, or differ from, the meaning that the various NT authors have attributed to these same Isaianic verses when quoting them. It is important to remember that even if a particular NT text seems to agree with the LXX against the MT, it is difficult to merely assert that the author used the LXX. It might be the case that the author made use of a different Greek text, perhaps with a Hebrew *Vorlage* quite different from the MT we have today. The author may even have used a Hebrew text that was closer to the LXX we have now, making it seem as though he used the LXX. In the end, it is very difficult to ascertain whether an author really did use the LXX. Yet in this study, as we have proceeded in a synchronic manner, it was still useful to determine whether the NT author's quotation was similar in form and meaning to that of the reconstructed LXX, since the reconstructed LXX shows some significant divergences from the MT.

In the MT, we find a difficult theological message in Isa 6:9-10. God orders the prophet Isaiah to go to His own chosen people and order them to hear but not understand and see but not perceive. The difficulty becomes even worse when God tells the prophet to make the heart of the people fat, make their ears heavy and shut their eyes. The hard message reaches its climax when it is indicated that all of this should be done to the people *lest* they come to see, hear, understand and repent and so come to healing. As has been mentioned above, this message is so hard, not because it is difficult to comprehend, but because it is actually quite clear - God wants to harden his own people to keep them from repenting. And whether this is carried out via the prophet or not, God is still an active agent that commands this to take place. Because these verses portray God in such an unflattering light, it is understandable that many contemporary commentators try to understand them in a softened manner. However, the text itself does not seem to allow for this, unless it is deliberately altered. We must remember though, that these verses in Isaiah cannot

be read in isolation; we have to consider the surrounding narrative and the book of Isaiah as a whole. If this is done, it is clear that God does not want to harden people who otherwise would have wanted to repent. He is hardening people who have been gravely rebellious. The argument which indicates that God hardens the people, in order to ensure that they do not repent, so that the exile definitely takes place, is very intriguing. If the argument is accepted, we understand that God hardens the people as punishment for their wrongdoing, but with the intention of it serving as a purging – just as the prophet himself was cleansed by a coal from the altar. When considering Isa 6:13, it seems that such an idea for restoration after destruction is indeed a possible understanding. The rest of the book of Isaiah also shows evidence of the fact that Isaiah does not merely speak of judgment, but that hope for restoration is present. If this is accepted, the message of Isa 6:9-10 becomes much more understandable. However, God still wilfully brings this judgment over His own people, and these verses remain hard to accept.

In the LXX we see important differences from the MT. Isaiah is still sent to convey a message to God's people, but he is not commanded to order them to listen yet not understand, or look yet not perceive. Instead, 6:9 offers a description of the people, saying that listening they will listen but not understand, and looking they will look but not perceive. The imperatives found in the MT have been amended in the LXX. This already makes for a softening of the message which Isaiah had to convey. Furthermore, 6:10 no longer states that the prophet must fatten the people's heart, dull their ears and shut their eyes, instead the LXX merely describes an already present condition in the people, saying that their heart *has been* fattened, the people hear grievously and they themselves have shut their eyes. This brings about a drastic understanding in the meaning of these verses. Suddenly, God is no longer culpable with regard to the people's hardened state, but they themselves are responsible. In addition, the LXX also ends with the words "and I will heal them", whereas the MT reads "be healed/heal himself". It might be the case that the Greek translator wanted to make away with any ambiguity in terms of who could actually bring about healing. He might have wanted to make it more explicit that healing can only come from God. In the end, it is hard to determine whether the Greek translator deliberately altered the text or if he perhaps worked from a Hebrew *Vorlage* that was different from the MT as we have it now. Either way, somewhere along the lines the text was altered. A

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deliberate alteration from the translator would not at all be surprising, considering these difficult verses.

In the comparison of Isa 6:9-10 from 1QIsa[a] with the MT we noted a couple a differences. However, most of these alterations seem to be merely due to a different means of spelling employed in 1QIsa[a]. One difference that might be significant is the fact that in 6:9 in 1QIsa[a] reads על, against the MT אל. In the MT אל can be understood as "not", resulting in a reading "listen (in order) to hear, but *do not* understand, and look (in order) to see, but *do not* perceive". As has been noted above, some commentators propose that the על in 1QIsa[a] should be understood as "because", which would result in a reading "listen (in order) to hear, *because* you (may) understand, and look (in order) to see, *because* you (may) perceive". But when consulting Holladay's *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, it seems the options for translating על are "on, over, in front of, because of = upon, with regard to, concerning, onto, in addition to, against, down from." It seems as though the understanding of אל more easily makes sense within these Isaianic verses. It might be that the change is due to a scribal error, but this seems less likely since both instances of אל in v. 9 appears as על in 1QIsa[a]. So it seems more natural to accept that he scribe made a deliberate alteration (if he did in fact work from a text was identical or similar to the MT we have today). Yet, even if the scribe deliberately altered the text, it might simply be a variant spelling, as is found in other instances of 1QIsa[a]. Some scholars have further suggested that פן in v. 10 be understood in the passage as "let the people understand …", but this also seems forced and the understanding "lest" should rather be preferred. Ultimately, it seems most reasonable to understand that Isa 6:9-10 in 1QIsa[a] has essentially the same meaning as Isa 6:9-10 in the MT, leaving the reader with the same theological difficulties.

Mark does not quote Isa 6:9-10 in full, but nonetheless offers a harsh message. It appears that, in Mark, Jesus is said to use parables *in order that* those outside do not perceive, understand, convert and so be forgiven. Important to note, is that no-one at first understand Jesus' parable of the sower/soils. Even the disciples do not comprehend the true meaning thereof at first, however, since they go to Jesus and ask for an explanation, they receive it. Thus, it seems that faith is an important necessary element for true understanding. It seems as if the true meaning of the

parables are obscured so that the people would have to come to Jesus for proper understanding. Mark appropriates these Isaianic verses to his own context. The verses are no longer merely about sinful people, but speak specifically to Jesus' teaching and the understanding thereof. Mark takes theses verses and applies them to a new context where they are equally appropriate.

In Matthew, Isa 6:9-10 is used in a similar context as found in Mark, i.e. in relation to the parables and Jesus' teaching. Matthew does showcase some softening of the message. Jesus is no longer said to speak in parables *in order that* the people will not perceive and understand, but instead he speaks in parables *because* they already do not perceive or understand. In Matthew 13:15 we find that it corresponds to the reconstructed LXX. The people's heart *has been* fattened, they hear grievously and have shut their own eyes. So Jesus speaks in parables because the people do not understand, but they do not understand because of their own fault. The message in Matthew is therefore more acceptable, similar to what we find in the LXX. As in Mark, we find that Matthew, even though his verses differ from the MT, has used these verses still in the context of obduracy. So in that sense the original message is respected, but seen to also be appropriate for a new context. Although Matthew certainly softens the Isa 6:9-10 verses, he does not completely avoid the idea of predestination or God's sovereignty. This can be seen in 13:11 "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given". However, the focus is certainly on the people's own responsibility in Matthew. It seems Matthew is trying to hold the tension between human responsibility and divine sovereignty. In Matthew 13:12 we again find the notion of faith being important, "For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away". It seems that, just as in Mark, faith plays a role as to whether a person can come to true understanding or not. Other than causing obduracy though, Matthew may want to indicate that the parables rather highlight the condition of the people within themselves, and upon this they can choose how to respond. Again we must observe that even the disciples do not understand at first. But when they do go to Jesus, he explains the parable to them. So, we may conclude that faith in, and acceptance of, Jesus is an important necessary element to come to proper understanding. It does

not seem as though Jesus is withholding understanding from people who otherwise would have searched for/desired it.

Luke, as the other Synoptic Gospels, features the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in the context of the parables, but the disciples ask Jesus about the meaning of the particular parable of the sower/soils, rather than parables in general. Luke, however, features a very shortened version of Isa 6:9-10. In the beginning of Luke 8:10, as in Matthew, it is indicated that "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but for the rest (it is) in parables ...", hinting at the predestination theme. Interestingly, Luke retains the ἵνα, as also found in Mark, indicating that Jesus speaks in parables *in order that* the rest not see and not understand. On the other hand, Luke omits the μήποτε-clause "lest they convert and it be acquitted (/forgiven) them", which is found in Mark, and so softens the overall message. We must remember that even though the Isa 6:9-10 quotation (or perhaps allusion) in the Gospel of Luke is short and omits this difficult clause, Acts features the Isa 6:9-10 quotation in full. Additionally, Luke omits the μήποτε-clause from the Gospel, but he inserts a similar phrase in the parable of the sower/soils "… then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved" (8:12). This may be to avoid any notion that Jesus is responsible for preventing anyone from understanding. Again, as in the other Synoptic Gospels, we must admit that the disciples have to come to Jesus for an explanation of the parable of the sower/soils. Yet, since they openly come to him and ask for an explanation, He willingly offers it to them. This again emphasises that the correct response to Jesus (i.e. faith) is necessary to come to proper understanding. Finally, all three Synoptic Gospels feature the phrase (or a phrase similar to) "he who has ears to hear, let him hear" (e.g. Mark 4:9, 23; Matt 11:15; Luke 8:8; 14:35), which emphasises that the people do in fact have the ability to hear if their hearts are open to hearing.

Within Acts, the Isa 6:9-10 quotation appears in a completely different context from what it does in the Synoptic Gospels. In Acts, Luke lays the quotation in the mouth of Paul in his last speech addressed to the Jewish leaders. Luke's citation in Acts looks very much like the reconstructed LXX, thus rather describing the state of the people and their own culpability than saying it was created by God. Paul directs these words

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at the Jews, or to be fair, at least a portion of the Jews, i.e. those that did not come to believe the Gospel message that Paul preached. Many commentators have understood these verses as Paul's final turning away from the Jews towards the Gentiles. But as has been noted, when considering how Paul and his mission are portrayed in the rest of Acts, it does not seem reasonable to conclude that Paul means to say that he is now completely turning away from the Jews and solely towards the Gentiles. It is accepted that, although some Jews did not believe, there was actually a portion who did come to believe, and just as some Gentiles came to faith in Paul's message, this does not mean that all the Gentiles that were confronted with his message came to believe. Instead, the point might merely be to indicate that God's purpose for his message to spread will be realized, even if a portion of the Jews, his own people, rejected the message. Furthermore, it makes sense, as has been proposed, that Paul's final words here in Acts also functioned to stir the Jews to repentance. Paul recognized that Isa 6:9-10 was actually directed at his forefathers many years ago, but he also saw that these verses had a node of connection with his current experiences, and so he appropriately used these verses in a new context, whilst not violating what they meant in Isaiah.

Finally, we also find that John employed Isa 6:9-10, though in a different context than the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. In John, the Isaiah quotation is linked with the signs that Jesus performed, and the fact that many did not come to believe in Him despite these signs. It is remarkable that John makes it so clear that God blinded the people and hardened their heart in order that they could not see, understand and convert. Although God is not explicitly indicated as subject it seems the best understanding here. Of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, only Matthew and Acts feature Isa 6:10 in full, and both preferred the passive, as in "the heart of this people has been fattened" together with the description of the people themselves hearing grievously and having shut their own eyes. It is curious that John would have decided to use these verses in such a harsh form. God's sovereignty is made very clear here. The understanding of theses verses seem closer to what we find in the MT, where God actively will the people to be hardened. However, as in the Synoptics and Acts, it does not appear that God is causing a hardened state in people that otherwise would have been willing to repent. It is said that the people have seen many signs, yet they have not accepted these signs. It does appear though, as if John is especially concerned

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(perhaps even more so than the other NT writers) to indicate that all of what is transpiring, i.e. the lack of acceptance of Jesus, is part of God's plan. In this way, John maintains a balance between human responsibility and divine sovereignty. Finally, it appears as though John is closer to the LXX in his last phrase "and I will heal them". Although again not explicitly stated, it seems clear from the context that the "I" referred to here, is Jesus. So, God has hardened the people, so that they do not see, perceive, convert and Jesus will heal them. But this all seems to be depicted as part of God's plan.

10.3. Contemporary Bible Interpretation

An additional concern of the present study is to inquire about what the above findings mean for contemporary Bible interpretation. What can the understanding of the reception of Isa 6:9-10 in the NT contribute to contemporary Bible interpretation? This study showcases that the Biblical text, in this case specifically Isa 6:9-10, is of such a nature that it transcends the time and space in which it was composed, in order to continuously speak to new circumstances. This is so since the Biblical text was not merely composed by human authors, but was also divinely inspired. Although it is not a novel idea to claim that the Biblical text is in fact "living" in this sense, this study might merely aid in illuminating how the text has "lived" over many years, with a specific text as example.

The important fact to observe in this regard, is that none of the NT writers who quoted Isa 6:9-10 did so by merely taking the text as it was understood in its context within Isaiah. However, all of the NT authors appears to have respected the Isaianic context, by using these verses in relation to the obduracy theme. The NT authors did not regard Isa 6:9-10 as referring to their own contexts specifically, but recognized in these verses a connection between what the verses conveyed in Isaiah and what the authors were experiencing in their own circumstances. In this way, the NT writers acknowledged what these verses meant in Isaiah, but also saw in them an additional application. Although every NT authors showcases nuanced differences in the treatment of Isa 6:9-10, they all seem to have applied the quotation to a new situation in a relevant and appropriate manner.

Today we still engage in the same activities, i.e. identifying Biblical texts that speak to our current circumstances and then applying them to a new situation. The difficulty will always be to determine how far the meaning of a particular text can appropriately be applied to a new text, and when a text is being violated. There is unfortunately no simple answer to this matter, but it must be confessed that (although not necessarily an academic concern) the Holy Spirit must be the guiding figure in this matter. Even though this might not be the focus of an academic approach, it is believed that the nature of the Bible is such that this element cannot be denied.

In the end, the quest will always be to understand what a Biblical text meant in its initial context (as far as this can possibly be determined) and then to have seen relevant connections between the message of the text and contemporary circumstances. In this way, the text of God remains living as it is continually interpreted in faith communities by applying it to contemporary contexts in a relevant, appropriate and enlightening manner.

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