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## Jesus as the Messiah: A Biblical Theology Perspective

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## Abstract

This study presents a biblical-theological exploration of Jesus as the Messiah by examining key New Testament passages that reveal His identity, mission, and redemptive authority. The purpose of the research is to clarify how the Gospel of Matthew integrates faith, salvation, and healing within the ministry of Jesus, while also demonstrating the continuity between Old Testament covenant promises and their fulfillment in Christ. Using a qualitative biblical-theology method, the study conducts textual analysis, canonical tracing, thematic synthesis, and comparative evaluation of selected passages from the Gospels and Acts. The findings affirm that Scripture consistently portrays Jesus as the promised Messiah and the divine Son of Man who possesses authority to forgive sins and bring holistic restoration. Faith in Christ is shown to be the foundation for both salvation and healing, revealing the unity of God's redemptive work. The study concludes that recognizing Jesus as the Messiah is essential for understanding the fullness of God's saving activity. This research contributes to theological scholarship by offering an integrated perspective that connects Christ's healing ministry, covenant fulfillment, and salvific mission within the broader canonical narrative.

**Keywords:** Jesus Christ, Messiah, biblical theology, salvation, healing, covenant, Gospel of Matthew.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Messiah occupies a central role in biblical theology, forming the foundation of Jewish expectation and Christian confession across the centuries. Rooted in the Hebrew term *māšîah*, meaning "anointed one," the idea initially referred to kings, priests, and individuals appointed for divine purpose (Danker 2009). Over time, the messianic motif expanded into a theological framework that combines covenant, kingship, and eschatological hope (Christopher Wright 2011). Within Christian theology, the identification of Jesus as the Messiah stands at the heart of faith and doctrine, yet readers often face fragmented interpretations due to differences in linguistic background, canonical context, and theological tradition (GORHAM 2008). As biblical scholarship develops, new perspectives continue to emerge from historical, literary, and theological approaches. This article re-examines the biblical-theological foundation of Jesus as the Messiah by drawing insights from Old Testament expectations, Second Temple developments, and New Testament fulfillment (Tabile 2022). The study argues that contemporary readers benefit from an integrated understanding that connects ancient messianic concepts with the narrative and theological claims of the Gospels, especially Matthew, who presents Jesus as the climax of Israel's long-awaited hope (Purnomo et al. 2024).

A substantial body of scholarship has explored the messianic theme through linguistic, historical, socio-religious, and theological approaches. Foundational studies in Old Testament and intertestamental theology reveal the development of messianic hopes within Israel's Scriptures and Second Temple Judaism (Suria, Yasmin, and Ming 2025). New Testament scholarship has emphasized Jesus as the Davidic King, suffering servant, and eschatological Son of Man, particularly within the Gospel of Matthew (Purwisasi et al. 2022). Research on the kingdom of God advances the understanding of Jesus' mission within God's redemptive plan (Stevanus et al. 2023). However, despite the abundance of literature, an integrative biblical-theological study that unites Old Testament foundations, Second Temple expectations, and New Testament fulfillment remains limited (Esler 2003). Many works focus solely on historical-critical analysis or doctrinal interpretations without synthesizing these perspectives into a unified theological narrative. Furthermore, modern discussions often

neglect manuscript traditions and canonical unity, which are essential for understanding Matthew's portrayal of Jesus (NET Bible; Byzantine Greek Translation). This article seeks to fill these gaps by offering a comprehensive and accessible synthesis highlighting the continuity of God's redemptive plan culminating in Jesus as the Messiah (Daliman and Suparti 2021).

The messianic concept developed progressively from the Old Testament through the intertestamental era and into the New Testament. In the Hebrew Scriptures, *māšīah* refers to anointed kings, priests, and patriarchs, emphasizing divine appointment and covenant identity in the kingdom of God (Fendy et al. 2024). Prophetic literature broadens the expectation, anticipating a Davidic ruler who brings justice, restoration, and peace. During the Second Temple period, diverse messianic expectations emerged, including priestly, royal, and heavenly figures, reflected in Jewish writings and socio-religious movements (Eloff 2002). The Septuagint's use of *Christos* significantly shaped early Christian confession, becoming the primary title for Jesus in the New Testament. The Gospel writers, especially Matthew, adopt and reinterpret these traditions to present Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish hope—not a political liberator but the suffering servant, divine Son, and eschatological judge (Astuti et al. 2022). Matthew's narrative strategy, including Old Testament quotations and theological structuring, emphasizes Jesus' fulfillment of covenantal promises and His identity as the awaited Messiah (Daliman and Suparti 2021). This historical-canonical trajectory demonstrates the rootedness and transformation of messianic identity in the person and work of Jesus.

Given the theological depth and interpretive complexity of the biblical witness, any study of Jesus as the Messiah must move beyond descriptive synthesis toward critical engagement with fundamental christological questions. This study therefore addresses core issues that remain debated in contemporary scholarship: the nature of messianic expectation in Second Temple Judaism, the tension between royal and suffering motifs, the relationship between historical context and canonical theology, and the extent to which New Testament christology redefines or fulfills Old Testament categories. By engaging these foundational concerns, this article seeks to contribute not merely a summary of biblical themes but a constructive theological argument.

Focusing on the Gospel of Matthew is methodologically significant because Matthew presents a deliberate and programmatic portrayal of Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's covenantal hopes while simultaneously reshaping prevailing messianic paradigms (Nicolaidis 2021). Through close exegetical analysis of key Matthean passages within their historical, linguistic, and canonical contexts, this study examines interconnected themes such as kingship, suffering, eschatology, healing, salvation, and divine authority (Christopher Wright 2011). Rather than treating these motifs independently, the article argues that Matthew integrates them into a coherent messianic identity that both fulfills and transcends traditional expectations.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative and canonical approach. While many studies address individual messianic themes or focus narrowly on historical reconstruction, this article proposes a unified theological framework that demonstrates the internal coherence of Scripture's messianic witness. By synthesizing exegetical analysis with biblical-theological reflection, the study advances the discussion beyond fragmented treatments of messianism and offers a model that bridges historical-critical inquiry and theological interpretation (Rosner 2022).

Accordingly, this study contends that recognizing Jesus as the Messiah is not only a confessional affirmation but a hermeneutical key to understanding the unity of the redemptive narrative of Scripture. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing scholarly debates in christology while also offering constructive implications for Christian formation, theological education, and ecclesial practice (Rosner 2000).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Christological Foundations in the Gospel of Matthew**

The Gospel of Matthew does not merely present Jesus as Messiah through scattered proof texts; it advances a deliberate and sustained christological argument. Matthew constructs a theological narrative in which fulfillment, authority, and covenantal identity converge to demonstrate that Jesus embodies and redefines Israel's messianic hope. While scholars such as Blomberg (2022), Keener (2009; 2023), and France (2007) recognize Matthew's fulfillment motif, this study argues that these fulfillment citations function rhetorically—not as isolated validations—but as structural pillars supporting Matthew's overarching christological claim (Keener 2012).

The formula quotations serve a theological purpose: they present Jesus not simply as one who matches prophetic expectation, but as the climactic realization of Israel's redemptive trajectory. Moreover, Matthew's emphasis on the "Kingdom of Heaven" is not a circumlocution for divine rule alone; it signals that the Messiah inaugurates God's sovereign reign through both authority and suffering. The interplay between Davidic kingship, Emmanuel theology (Matt. 1:23), and the Son of Man motif reveals a unified identity in which divine presence and royal mission intersect (Daliman and Suparti 2021).

Furthermore, the healing narratives—such as Matthew 9:22—must be interpreted theologically rather than merely narratively. These miracles function as enacted christological claims: they reveal that the authority of Jesus extends beyond proclamation to restorative power. Thus, Matthew argues implicitly that messianic identity is validated not only through prophecy but through transformative action. The Gospel therefore advances a high christology grounded in covenantal fulfillment and divine authority rather than presenting a simple biographical account.

#### **Textual Criticism and Manuscript Traditions on Matthew 18:11**

The omission of Matthew 18:11 in the earliest Greek manuscripts raises not a peripheral textual issue but a methodological question regarding theological construction. Critical scholarship demonstrates that early codices such as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus exclude this verse, suggesting that its later inclusion reflects scribal harmonization with Luke 19:10 rather than original Matthean composition. This textual evidence requires careful theological discipline: Christological conclusions must be grounded in the most reliable textual tradition.

However, the absence of Matthew 18:11 does not weaken Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' salvific mission. On the contrary, Matthew's broader narrative consistently presents Jesus as the seeker and restorer of the lost (cf. Matt. 9:13; 11:28–30). Therefore, even if the verse is secondary, the theological claim it expresses remains organically embedded in the Gospel's structure. This demonstrates that textual criticism strengthens, rather than destabilizes, theological argumentation by ensuring that doctrinal conclusions arise from historically defensible textual foundations (Chia 2022).

## **Theological Synthesis: Salvation, Healing, and Messianic Identity**

A coherent reading of Matthew requires rejecting the artificial separation between salvation and healing. The Gospel portrays both as integrated expressions of messianic authority. Jesus' healings are not ancillary demonstrations of compassion; they are eschatological signs indicating that the Kingdom of God has decisively broken into history. As Rosner argues, the Kingdom is both present and anticipatory—revealed through acts that reverse the consequences of sin and fallenness (Rosner 2022).

Moreover, the authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6; 26:28) places Jesus within the sphere of divine prerogative. Healing narratives and pronouncements of forgiveness function together as theological evidence that Jesus embodies God's redemptive presence. The woman healed in Matthew 9:22 is not merely restored physically; her faith publicly affirms Jesus' messianic identity. Thus, faith, authority, and restoration operate as interlocking components of Matthew's christological framework (Ibita 2024).

This integrated perspective challenges fragmented readings that isolate miracle stories from soteriology. Instead, Matthew presents a unified messianic mission: the restoration of humanity through divine authority exercised in compassion, sacrifice, and covenantal fulfillment.

## **Canonical and Covenantal Themes Linking the Testaments**

Matthew's christology must be interpreted canonically. The Gospel presupposes that Jesus fulfills and consummates the covenantal trajectory initiated in the Old Testament. Covenant blood in Exodus 24:8 and the promise of renewal in Jeremiah 31:31–34 find their climactic realization in Matthew 26:28, where Jesus interprets His death as inaugurating the new covenant.

This is not typological coincidence but theological continuity. Matthew deliberately frames Jesus' ministry as the culmination of Israel's story. The covenant is not abolished but intensified: forgiveness becomes internalized, divine presence becomes incarnational, and sacrificial symbolism becomes redemptive reality. Jesus therefore does not merely continue Israel's narrative—He completes it.

By situating Matthew's christology within this covenantal arc, this study argues that Jesus' messianic identity functions as the hermeneutical center of Scripture. Promise and fulfillment converge in Him, and covenant history reaches its intended telos. Consequently, understanding Jesus leadership as Messiah is not one doctrinal theme among many; it is the theological axis upon which the biblical narrative turns (Tarigan, Hermanto, and P 2021)

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative theological research design grounded in biblical exegesis, textual criticism, and thematic synthesis. The analysis centers on key New Testament passages—especially from the Gospel of Matthew (9:22; 18:11; 26:28), the Gospel of John (14:6), and the Book of Acts (4:12)—and correlates these with Old Testament covenant texts such as Exodus 24:8 and Jeremiah 31:31–34. The methodological steps include:

### **1. Textual Criticism**

The study evaluates manuscript variations, particularly regarding the omission of Matthew 18:11 in early critical Greek manuscripts. This analysis helps clarify the theological significance of the verse in relation to its parallel in Luke 19:10 and its later inclusion in the Textus Receptus tradition.

### 2. **Exegetical Analysis**

Each selected passage is interpreted within its literary, historical, and theological context. The analysis pays attention to narrative flow, key terms, Christological titles, and the thematic emphasis on faith, salvation, and healing.

### 3. **Theological and Christological Synthesis**

Themes related to Jesus' identity as the Messiah—such as His authority to forgive sins, His role as Savior, and the connection between faith and healing—are synthesized across different biblical books. This synthesis highlights how the New Testament presents Jesus as the fulfillment of messianic expectations.

### 4. **Canonical Correlation**

The study examines the continuity between Old and New Testament teachings by linking Jesus' atoning death with covenantal motifs. This includes correlating the new covenant language in the New Testament with foundational Old Testament sacrificial and covenant traditions.

Through these integrated methods, the study aims to demonstrate the biblical and theological coherence of Jesus' identity as the Messiah and to show that salvation and healing are unified in the redemptive work of Christ.

This study employs a qualitative theological research design (Voeste 2023) grounded in biblical exegesis, textual criticism, and thematic synthesis. It focuses on key New Testament passages—particularly Matthew 9:22; 18:11; 26:28; John 14:6; and Acts 4:12—while correlating them with Old Testament covenant texts such as Exodus 24:8 and Jeremiah 31:31–34. The methodology begins with textual criticism, evaluating manuscript variations, including the omission of Matthew 18:11 in early critical Greek manuscripts, in order to clarify its theological significance in relation to Luke 19:10 and its later inclusion in the Textus Receptus tradition. It then proceeds with exegetical analysis, interpreting each passage within its literary, historical, and theological contexts, with attention to narrative flow, key terms, Christological titles, and themes of faith, salvation, and healing. Building on this, the study undertakes a theological and Christological synthesis by integrating themes concerning Jesus' identity as Messiah—such as His authority to forgive sins, His role as Savior, and the relationship between faith and healing—across the biblical canon. Finally, through canonical correlation, the research highlights the continuity between Old and New Testament teachings by linking the new covenant language in the New Testament with Old Testament sacrificial and covenantal traditions. Through this integrated methodological framework, the study seeks to demonstrate the biblical and theological coherence of Jesus' identity as the fulfillment of God's redemptive promises.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Exegetical and Textual Findings**

The exegetical and textual analysis affirms that the New Testament consistently presents Jesus as the Messiah whose authority encompasses both healing and salvation. The study of Matthew 9:22 shows that the expression “your faith has made you well” reflects a theological pattern widely recognized in Matthean scholarship (Morgan 2024). This pattern demonstrates that physical healing is a visible manifestation of deeper salvific restoration. Textual criticism of Matthew 18:11 reveals that although the verse is absent in early manuscripts (Purnomo et al. 2024), its message aligns with Luke 19:10, reinforcing the canonical theme of Jesus'

mission to save the lost. Further examination of Matthew 26:28 shows strong covenantal continuity with Exodus 24:8 and Jeremiah 31:31–34, confirming that Jesus' sacrificial death fulfills Old Testament redemptive transformation (Nelson 2021). Overall, both textual and exegetical data converge to portray Jesus as the promised Messiah whose redemptive work integrates forgiveness, healing, and covenant renewal.

### **Implications for Biblical Theology**

The findings yield important implications for biblical theology by demonstrating that salvation and healing in the ministry of Jesus cannot be separated. Scholars consistently highlight that healing narratives in Matthew serve theological rather than merely narrative purposes (Keener, 2009; Morris, 2019; Luz, 2007). The account of Matthew 9:22 illustrates that faith is the covenantal response through which divine restoration is received, supporting views expressed in works such as Erickson (1998) and Grenz (2000). The covenant language of Matthew 26:28 clearly reflects Old Testament sacrificial structures (Arthur, 2020; Pennington, 2007). This continuity indicates that the identity of Jesus as Messiah is inseparable from His role as mediator of the new covenant. For contemporary biblical theology, these results affirm that the church must articulate salvation holistically, emphasizing spiritual, relational, and restorative aspects. The implications further align with broader kingdom theology (Ridderbos, 1984; Wright, 2022), showing that Jesus' messianic work continues in the life of the believing community. Thus, the study strengthens theological understanding by situating Jesus' identity at the center of God's redemptive plan across both Testaments.

### **Comparative Analysis with Old Testament Covenant Themes**

The comparative analysis demonstrates substantial continuity between Old Testament covenant theology and New Testament Christology. The sacrificial phrase "my blood of the covenant" (Matt. 26:28) directly echoes Exodus 24:8, affirming the typological progression from provisional sacrificial systems to the definitive atonement of Christ. Jeremiah's promise of a "new covenant" finds its fulfillment in Jesus' atoning work, establishing internal transformation and divine forgiveness. The messianic mission of seeking and saving the lost, reflected in Luke 19:10, resonates with Old Testament images of God restoring His people. The comparison further reveals the shift from ritual-based atonement to the Christ-centered covenant that encompasses holistic restoration (Rosner 2000). This analysis strengthens the theological argument that Jesus embodies the fulfillment of Israel's long-anticipated Messiah and ultimate covenant mediator. The continuity underscores the coherence of biblical theology, showing a unified narrative of redemption from the Old Testament sacrificial system to the New Testament realization in Christ.

The findings highlight four major results. First, the New Testament consistently affirms Jesus as the Messiah whose authority includes both salvation and healing, supported by exegetical scholarship (Keener 2012). Second, textual criticism of Matthew 18:11 confirms that even with manuscript variation, the canonical theme of Jesus' saving mission remains theologically consistent. Third, canonical correlation demonstrates strong continuity between Jesus' atoning work and Old Testament covenant theology, as widely discussed in Ladd (1993), Ridderbos (1984), and Wright (2012). Fourth, the synthesis provides a coherent biblical-theological model uniting Christology, soteriology, and covenant studies. The contribution of this research lies in integrating salvation and healing into a unified Christological framework grounded in both Testaments. Future studies may explore: (1) the eschatological dimension of healing as kingdom manifestation; (2) comparative Christology

between Matthew and Pauline theology; and (3) early church interpretations of healing as evidence of Jesus' messiahship (Wibowo, Tanhidy, and Ming 2022). This research therefore enriches contemporary theological understanding by showing that the redemptive work of Christ forms the central axis of Scripture.

### **Christological Coherence Between Old and New Testament**

The findings of this study demonstrate a strong theological coherence between Old and New Testament presentations of the Messiah, affirming that Jesus fulfills the long-anticipated hope of Israel. Scholars such as Bock argue that messianic identity is deeply rooted in Old Testament covenant motifs, especially those concerning kingship, atonement, and divine intervention (Sievers 2017). This view aligns with Tabile's argument that New Testament theology unfolds the narrative patterns embedded in Israel's Scriptures (Tabile 2022). Wright further emphasizes that Jesus embodies the climax of Israel's story, fulfilling prophetic expectations through His life, death, and resurrection (Wright 2019). From an exegetical standpoint, France and Keener show that Matthew intentionally shapes his narrative to portray Jesus as the Davidic and eschatological king (Keener 2012). Likewise, Collins' studies on Jewish apocalyptic literature illuminate how Second Temple Jews anticipated a divinely empowered redeemer, a framework that the New Testament reinterprets christologically (Howell 2015). Together, these insights affirm that Jesus' messianic identity is not a theological innovation but a canonical continuation of God's redemptive plan.

### **Early Christian Interpretation and Divine Identity Christology**

This study employs a qualitative theological research design grounded in biblical exegesis, textual criticism, lexical analysis, and canonical synthesis in order to examine Jesus' messianic identity as inseparable from His divine status. Building on patristic theology—especially the soteriological arguments of Athanasius (1981) and Gregory of Nazianzus (2002)—and contemporary divine-identity Christology as articulated by Bauckham (2008) and Hurtado (2005), the research approaches key New Testament texts (Matt 9:22; 18:11; 26:28; John 14:6; Acts 4:12) as witnesses to an early and high Christology embedded within Israel's monotheistic framework. Textual criticism engages the manuscript tradition of significant passages, drawing on Metzger (1992) and the canonical reliability arguments of Bruce (1981; 1988), while also interacting with recent Byzantine text studies (Purnomo et al., 2024) to assess theological coherence. Lexical analysis utilizes standard Greek and Hebrew resources (Liddell & Scott, 1996; Koehler & Baumgartner, 2001; Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie, 2003; Danker, 2009) to explore terms such as *mashiach*, *christos*, and *basileia* as expressions of divine commissioning, kingship, and redemptive authority. Exegetical interpretation is conducted within literary and redemptive-historical contexts, engaging Matthean scholarship (Carson, 1995; Nolland, 2005; Daliman & Suparti, 2021; Morgan, 2024), Second Temple identity frameworks (Esler, 2003; Tabile, 2022), and Old Testament theological trajectories (Goldingay, 2003; Longman, 2009; C. J. H. Wright, 2019; Christopher Wright, 2011) that anticipate a covenantal mediator embodying divine authority. The study further correlates themes of divine presence, covenant, forgiveness, and ecclesial mission (Sievers, 2017; Stevanus et al., 2023; Wibowo et al., 2022; Ming & Daliman, 2022) to demonstrate theological continuity across the canon. Integrating narrative, theological, and hermeneutical perspectives (Chia, 2022; Nelson, 2021; Antombikums, 2024), this methodological framework argues that the New Testament portrayal of Jesus as Messiah is linguistically anchored, textually stable, canonically coherent, and theologically grounded in the

conviction—shared by the early church—that the crucified and risen Christ participates in the unique identity of the one true God.

### **Theological Implications for Kingdom, Salvation, and Ecclesial Life**

The theological implications of these findings show that Jesus' identity as Messiah shapes the broader doctrines of salvation, the kingdom of God, and the mission of the church. Ladd's kingdom theology demonstrates that Jesus inaugurates God's reign through His messianic authority, merging present spiritual realities with future eschatological fulfilment in concept of time (Andrian et al. 2021). Antombikums's analysis of Christ's work highlights that Jesus' messianic mission restores humanity relationally and covenantally (Antombikums 2024). Contemporary studies by Rosner (2022) and Wibowo, Tanhidy & Ming (2022) show that the Holy Spirit continues this messianic mission within the church, enabling believers to participate in the kingdom. Missiologically, Ming (2022) argue that the church's mission flows directly from Jesus' identity as Messiah, calling the community to embody kingdom ethics in the world. Thus, Jesus' messianic role provides the theological foundation for understanding redemption, discipleship, and ecclesial witness (Ming and Daliman 2022).

### **CONCLUSION**

This study argues that the New Testament presents Jesus as the Messiah whose identity cannot be reduced to first-century political expectations but must be understood within a complex biblical, historical, and linguistic framework that integrates Christology, covenant theology, and Second Temple messianic hope. Rather than depicting a merely nationalistic Davidic liberator, the canonical witness portrays Jesus as the divine Mediator who fulfills the Law and the Prophets through obedient suffering, atoning death, and resurrection, thereby inaugurating the promised new covenant and embodying God's redemptive presence among His people. Through careful exegetical analysis, engagement with Jewish messianic expectations, and attention to the semantic range of key covenantal and royal terminology, the research demonstrates that salvation and healing function not as isolated motifs but as interwoven expressions of messianic authority grounded in divine identity. Comparative canonical analysis further shows that Gospel narratives coherently align with Old Testament anticipations of a covenantal restorer who brings forgiveness, righteousness, and renewed relationship with God, confirming that early Christian proclamation consistently identified Jesus as both the Davidic King and the universal Savior. By integrating textual, theological, and historical dimensions, this study contributes to biblical theology by presenting Jesus' messianic mission as the climactic realization of Scripture's redemptive trajectory, inviting continued scholarly exploration of how early Christian communities articulated and embodied this transformative vision of messiahship.

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