Failed Human Models: A Christological Biopic

Wann Fanwar, Gerard Bernard, Soontorn Thanteeraphan, Robert Augustin

Introduction

This article explores four of the most significant biblical motifs with typological and Christological implications: servant, watchman, shepherd and messiah. The pursuit of these motifs is driven by a simple conceptual construct. Framed in question it would be this: 'If Jesus is the chosen deliverer, anointed by God, is it possible to see precursors of his work in persons who lived before him?' To put this differently, are there scriptural previews through which we may better understand the mission of Christ?

Here we examine the four stated models to determine if there is something to discover about the mission of God's son. This journey into an age old consideration is an exegetical attempt to uncover the Christological biopic embedded in Scripture but fulfilled in Christ. To accomplish this, we are focusing especially on three areas of biblical material, Isaianic, Ezekiel and Johannine works. The choice of primary material is dictated by the level of discussion presented by these biblical authors that is germane to this study.

A further aim of this study is to provide a comparative view of the fallibility of any human model and the necessity of a divine one. Perhaps, within such rubric we can better fathom the depth of biblical Christology and its ramifications to faith and praxis.

Servant

The first model pertains to the use of the designation 'servant'. The motif is a significant pointer to the nature of biblical portrayal of Christ's redemptive work. This motif is basic to our discussion here. The Hebrew word 'ebed (servant) occurs some 799 times in the Hebrew Bible (Kaiser, 1980; in TWOT 2:639). It is employed in a wide variety of ways ranging from a slave who works for another human to the ultimate servant of Yahweh, a messianic designation (Kaiser, 1980). For control purposes, this study zeroes in on the appellative 'My servant' ('abdi in Hebrew) as uttered by God himself. Outside of Isaiah, the designation 'my servant' is applied to two important figures, Moses and David. Several times, God speaks of Moses as 'My servant' (see Num 12:8; Josh 1:2,7), an accolade indicating a unique relationship between Moses and Yahweh. In an acrimonious attack by his own siblings, Yahweh comes to the defence of his 'servant' with these words:

> If there is a prophet among you from the Lord, I make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My household. I speak with him directly, openly, and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. (Num 12:6b-8a HCSB; italics supplied)

Miriam and Aaron are then asked, 'So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?' (Num 12:8b). The question intimates that Moses' position is sufficiently elevated as to demand an honour similar to one accorded Yahweh himself. John Sailhamer suggests that this entire episode was a vindication of Moses' divinely appointed leadership. It also serves as a reminder that Moses was not a mere prophet but God's servant (1992, 386-387). Philip Budd, despite his critical leanings, points to Moses as a 'heroic savior of the nation' (1984, 138). The redemptive possibilities raised by Moses' leadership provide a foundational view of the 'servant' model. Moses, servant of Yahweh is also Israel's deliverer.

The title 'My servant' is raised a notch further in the figure of King David. The term is used a number of times in such passages as 2 Sam 7:5,8 and Ps 89:3,20. The context of Ps 89, with its distinct covenantal and typological overtones (see Ps 89:3-4; cf. 2 Sam 7:16), is highly suggestive of Christological significance. As Gerald Wilson suggests, Ps 89:1-37 speaks favourably of the covenant God made with David, while Ps 89:38-51 recounts the rejection of David's rule and the apparent failure of the covenant; 'the impression left is one of a covenant remembered, but a covenant failed' (1985, 213-214; cited in McCann, 1993, 43). This great King would ultimately preside over a failed experiment.

However, it is in the book of Isaiah that 'abdi takes flight into becoming the Christological biopic informing this study. First, it should be noted that several figures are called 'abdi in Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah is once referred to as 'abdi (20:3) but this appears to have no particular Christological significance. Second, David is also referred to once as 'abdi (37:35) but again the context pertains to a historical event during the time of King Hezekiah. Third, Jacob/Israel is referred to a few times as 'My servant' ('abdi) by God (see 41:8-9; 44:1-2,21) but in these verses Jacob is not performing some heroic act of deliverance but is depicted as a recipient of divine favour and aid. However, Isa 45:4, set within the Cyrus prophecy, may be an exception because it portrays Jacob/Israel as the reason for choosing Cyrus as 'anointed' (Hebrew m-sh-y-kh from which we get mashiakh or 'messiah'; to be discussed in a later section) by God; Cyrus is anointed 'for the sake' of Israel (Paul, 2012). We may detect a faint trace of messianic preview in this verse. God's special interest in Israel underlines their special status befitting the service of a human mashiakh (Motyer, 1993).

Arguably, the most Christological use of 'abdi occurs in Isa 22:20. A man by the name of Eliakim is chosen by God to serve as the highest ranking officer most likely in King Hezekiah's court. His designation is that of soken or king's representative (Watts, 1985, 290). The striking feature of the Eliakim episode pertains to several descriptions of him that are picked up in the New Testament and applied to Christ. Isa 22:22 reads:

> I will place the key of the house of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes, no one can open.

This particular description is applied directly to Christ in Rev 3:7 (Wolf, 1985; see also Fanwar, Bernard and Thanteeraphan, 2014). There is an intentional Christology involved in this passage. Nevertheless, there is an uncomfortable truth which emerges particularly from the Eliakim story. Clearly he was a type of Christ but his story ends up in abject failure. Isa 22:25 recounts how this peg so securely fastened in v. 20 is loosed, cut down and falls. The reasons for Eliakim's failure are not directly spelled out in the text and any suggestion is conjectural at best (Fanwar, Bernard and Thanteeraphan, 2014). The text appears intent on highlighting his failure instead; almost as prelude to one who will not fail. What Eliakim, Moses and David have in common is their failure despite spectacular achievements. Each of these figures features prominently in the plans of God; each has an almost messianic aura. They are deliverers and perform heroic deeds to accomplish such deliverance. Yet, each one ended life and ministry on a sour note. Moses strikes the rock, dishonours God and is prevented from entering the land of promise (Num 20:1-13). David orders the death of a loyal officer so as to claim his wife and brings disaster on his own family (2 Sam 11-12), while also presiding a monarchy that would eventually fail. Eliakim falls from grace (Isa 22:25) unexpectedly. That is where we encounter a different 'abdi, a servant who does not fail. Human models, even the very best, will at some juncture falter and fail completely. This is why God has to send someone who will not fall prey to this human malady. Isaiah offers a view of this perfect servant in the form of the Servant Poems. It is these poems which provide a Christological biopic of 'servant' via an unfaltering demonstration.

In the first Servant Poem (Isa 42:1-9) God utters these words:

> This is My Servant; I strengthen Him, My Chosen One; I delight in Him. (42:1)

The parallelisms in the verse establish the elect nature of this Servant and the special connection he has with God. In contrast to Eliakim and other human servants, this Servant does not fail.

> He will not grow weak or be discouraged until he has established justice on earth. (42:4)

Shalom Paul suggests translating the second verb, 'be discouraged', as 'be crushed' because the Hebrew verb yaruts used here denotes 'shattering' or 'bruising' (2012, 186). The second line in the verse is best understood as underlining the completion of the designated task; the Servant will bring about God's justice on earth (Paul, 2012, 187). As Gary Smith puts it,

> God will empower this Servant 'to accomplish God's purpose and protect him in times of trial or discouragement (42:2-4). God's strong hand of support indicates that the servant will not succeed on his own strength but will depend on God's strong hand to undergird his efforts. (2009, 160)

The application of this Servant Poem in Matt 12:15-21 clearly heightens Christological meanings; Christ is the Servant. The contrast with the Eliakim ending (22:25) could not be sharper; an 'abdi who fails versus one who succeeds.

In the second Servant Poem (Isa 49:1-9), the sense of certainty is captured in these words,

> Kings will see and stand up, and princes will bow down, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel—and he has chosen you. (49:7)

The imminent reversal of the Servant's fortunes is spelled out in this brief description (Paul, 2012). The thoughts embedded in this passage are given further voice in the Servant's own soliloquy, recorded in the third Servant Poem (Isa 50:4-9), where the Servant asserts,

> The Lord God will help Me; therefore I have not been humiliated; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. (50:7)

These verses are filled with a sense of certainty and victory; there is no possibility of failure here. In J Alec Motyer's words, from the confidence of help promised in v 6 'comes certainty of the outcome' (1993, 400). The Servant is not like the other servants. He succeeds and accomplishes his mission despite evident opposition. Nothing can undermine his success.

The final piece of the puzzle is recorded in the last Servant Poem (Isa 52:13-53:12). Of particular significance is the assertion in 52:13:

> He will be raised and lifted up and greatly exalted.

Paul observes that the triad of synonymous verbs accompanied by the adverb m-'-d ('very' or 'exceedingly') 'emphasizes the servant's overwhelming future success'; the Servant's future ascendancy is guaranteed (2012, 399). Motyer astutely observes that his 'threefold exaltation' is a precursor 'of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus' (1993, 424). The Servant Poems depict the work of Christ and the assured outcome of his mission. In the mission of this Servant we catch a glimpse of New Testament Christology.

The failure of human models provides a biopic for Christological considerations. Jesus Christ is not merely fulfilment of prophecy, he is an operational necessity for the redemption of humanity. Without the Servant, there would be no retrieving of a lost world.

Watchman

Watchman is another common metaphor that is fulfilled in Christ. This section of the article focuses on human watchman model which is best described in Ezek 3:16-21. We will first explore the role of the watchman through the selected text in Ezekiel. Then, we will discuss the failure of human watchman. Last, Christ's role of perfect watchman found in John 10 will be examined.

In order for us to understand the concept of watchman, certain basic questions need to be answered to provide context and boundary: 1) What is the watchman metaphor?; 2) Which biblical office uses this metaphor?; and 3) What is the task of the watchman? The word 'watchman' is derived from the Hebrew word ts-p-h which the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) (2003, 431-432) places 'watchman' into three categories—general, military and prophet. The first definition is the general meaning of the word. It means someone who 'watch out over' or 'pay attention to' (Ibid.). Next is the secular military usage. The military usage refers to someone more specific as sentinel, functioning on the watch tower at the field or city gate to observe and warn the people of danger (Ibid.). The third definition, which sheds light on question number 2, 'What biblical office use watchman metaphor?', is the prophetic office. The office of prophet uses the metaphor in a similar sense as sentinel; they are charged with warning the people of danger (Ibid.). In an attempt to answer question 3, Johnson (1995, 186) explains that the prophet is given the title 'watchman' to highlight special task given by God as God's mouthpiece. Hebrew prophets often speak with special missions in mind and these fall under two categories; reformation and re-defining implication of Law (Fanwar & Bernard, 2014, 79). Greenspoon (1999, 9-34) and Tiemeyer (2005, 400) add to the major tasks for the watchman as someone who intercedes on behalf of God and his people.

In summary, a prophet is also known as the watchman of Israel whom God appoints as his mouth piece; speaking in behalf of God, interceding for God and his people. As the sentinel was to constantly watch for and warn the people of harm and danger, so also the watchman prophet is expected to watch and warn people to repent from their wicked ways and return to God.

In the prophetic writings, Ezekiel is the prophet who is specifically called to be a watchman. Therefore, we will concentrate of the specific tasks, role and consequence of the watchman as presented in Ezek 3:16-21 which contains the following structure:

vv. 16-17: God's commission to Ezekiel to be a watchman; God's mouthpiece
vv. 18-19: role of the watchman to the wicked
vv. 20-21: role of the watchman to the righteous

The passage begins with God's commission to Ezekiel to be a watchman (vv. 16-17). The text establishes title for Ezekiel as 'Watchman for the house of Israel.' Then, God gave job description accompanying the title 'watchman' as one to listen (sh-m-') to the word of God and to warn (z-h-r) them on behalf of God. Johnson (1995, 186) describes the role of the watchman as someone who needed to hear God and communicate in God's behalf to targeted audience. Wright (2001, 66) encapsulates the role of the watchman as 'God is the source of warning' to warn people about God and against God. The watchman needs to hear God and bring his message toward his people. Then the passage continues to a description of two general audiences to whom the watchman is urged to deliver messages. The first audience comprises the wicked (vv. 18-19) and the section begins with the action word to indicate hearing, 'When I say' (b'amri). This expression indicates the

expectation of God for the watchman to respond with expected action, that is, to warn (z-h-r) the wicked. The second audience comprises the righteous who have gone astray (vv. 20 – 21). Ezekiel uses another action word to indicate hearing; to lay stumbling block (wnatati makshul). The watchman is expected to give warning (z-h-r) by listening to God and warning the people.

The passage paints the picture of a watchman who constantly watches God's action toward his people. The command of watchman is to hear (sh-m-') the word of God. Ezekiel uses two words as part of hearing God; God speaking to the wicked (b'amri) and God laying stumbling block (wnatati makshul) for the righteous to repent. In response to this hearing, God expects the watchman to warn the people with two accompanying conditions to remember: 1) if the watchman fails to warn, he will be held accountable for the sins; and 2) if the watchman warns the people, he will be free from it (Wood, 1979, 77).

God has appointed the prophet, in this case Ezekiel, to be his mouthpiece in observing God's words and speaking on behalf of God. Wood (1979, p. 77) summarises the task of the watchman in this way,

> He was a person to give warning in the face of danger; if he gave warning, and people still plunged onto their death, his own hands at least were free from guilt, but, if he did not, God held him responsible for not being the watchman he should have been.

Though great expectation is placed on the prophet watchman, there are also real limitations. Whereas Ezekiel's role is to watch and warn, his limitations come into focus in at least two possible ways—his inability to save and his human nature. The watchman has to work closely with the shepherd (to be discussed in the next section); he is to speak on behalf of God. Ezekiel is God's spoke person yet he is not called to save the people. The task of the watchman lies completely outside of the salvific act. Further, the watchman is also limited by his human nature. Isa 56:9-10 describes how God's watchman fails to complete the task because of human desire, blindness, sleeping and slumbering. Even though watchmen are appointed by God, yet they are bound to their humanity. The best human agents fail, opening the door for a much-needed Christological biopic; a need for someone whose salvific ability transcends the work of the human watchman.

In John 10, Jesus identifies himself as a good shepherd. While the text does not use the word watchman (ts-p-h), it does imply the quality of watchman. The phrases 'the door of the sheep' (v. 7), and 'lay down own life for the sheep' (v. 11) resonate with the OT watchman who is considered to be the door of the city and upon whom the life and safety of the people in the city were dependent (Greenspoon, 1999, 29-30). However, human watchman prophet fails to complete the task as God assigned because of their limited human nature. This demonstrates why Christ should appear as the ultimate watchman.

Another reason for the failure of human watchmen is the inability to lay down their lives for their sheep. A watchman's job is to warn, not to save the city. Though failure to warn means people's lives may be lost, the watchman cannot save the city. Protecting the welfare of the city is the responsibility of others (TDOT, 2003, 431). However, Christ is not confined to such a limited task. He has the ability to save the people and this makes him the ultimate watchman. He is the salvation of the sheep, the door for the sheep and the one able to save the sheep.

The common OT metaphor of watchman as designation of prophet suggests that a watchman is appointed to a specific task of constant watching and warning the people from any danger that would come to the city. The failure of the human watchman prophet is not replicated in Christ, the perfect watchman.

Shepherd

The third model in our discussion concerns the 'shepherd' motif. The term 'shepherd' in the OT is first of all used to denote occupation in its fundamental sense. It is also used metaphorically to signify political and spiritual leaders (NIDNTTE 4:81-84). In the NT, only Luke records occupational shepherds who play an active role during Jesus' birth. Elsewhere, the term is used in parables and figures of speech (p. 84). John 10 is particularly significant in our discussion because here Jesus' twice self-appellation 'I am the good shepherd' (Gr: egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos; vv. 11, 14) appears in a discourse which alludes strongly to the failures of the OT shepherds and identifies himself with Yahweh's role as the ultimate shepherd of his people. Furthermore, it is in this discourse that we find a Christological biopic of 'shepherd' through the embodiment of that model in Christ.   Jesus' discourse on the good shepherd in John 10 has a clear link to Ezekiel 34 (Manning, 2004, 100) on several points which can be divided into two parts. First, Jesus takes upon himself Yahweh's role and does everything that Yahweh says he will do as the shepherd of Israel (cf. Ezek 34:10-16). 'In John's metaphor, Jesus fulfils all the tasks that God fulfils in Ezekiel 34' (p. 114). By saying 'I AM' (Gr: egō eimi) predicated by two images—door and shepherd—'Jesus identifies himself with the role which God would accomplish as the promised Good Shepherd' (Ball, 1996, 225).

In John, Jesus rebukes the leaders of Israel just as God rebukes the leaders of Israel in Ezekiel for not doing their tasks. The story of how the Pharisees treat the man born blind in John 9 highlights just how the shepherds in Ezekiel 34 treat their sheep in contrast to how Yahweh treats his sheep. When the Pharisees throw the man out (Gr. ekballō) of the synagogue (9:34) for daring to challenge them, Jesus 'found' (Gr: heurōn) him (Jn 9:35), implying that Jesus fulfils his role as a shepherd while the Pharisees have failed in their task to shepherd the flock with care (Bernard, 2010, 22). The occurrence of ekballō in 10:34 seems ironic because it provides a contrast to the manner the Pharisees expel the man (cf. Bernard, 2010, 21-22; Keener, 2003, 794). This act has brought not only rebuke from Jesus, but also judgement (John 9:39-41).

Jesus refers to himself as the door of the sheep (John 10:7; 9) and everyone else, who comes before him and who enters not through the door, are thieves and robbers. This statement seems to equate the Pharisees with the thieves and robbers and with those uncaring shepherds described by Ezekiel 34. Jesus, just as Yahweh in Ezekiel 34, is clearly not pleased. In Ezekiel 34, Yahweh punishes those shepherds (v. 10). However, his verdict in Ezek 34:10 is milder as compared to Jer 23:2 (Taylor, 1969, 220). In Jeremiah, he declares that he will 'attend' (Heb: paqad) them, which implies severe punishment. Subsequently, he announces how he will rectify the damages which the shepherds have done. He will do what shepherds of Israel have failed to do (Ezek 34:11-16; HCSB):

> v. 11: ... I Myself will search for My flock and look for them.
> v. 12: As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for My flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a cloudy and dark day.
> v. 13: I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them into their own land. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land.
> v. 14: I will tend them with good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.
> v. 15: I will tend My flock and let them lie down.
> v. 16: I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy that fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.

Wright (2001, 277) notices that verse 16 'echoes and reverses at each point the failure of the human shepherds (4)' by putting the object before the verb in each case, therefore giving emphasis on the repeated 'I will'. This lends powerful effect to Yahweh's declaration in verse 16. Similarly, Jesus is now presenting himself as the one who will truly shepherd his people.

By twice declaring 'I am the good shepherd' (Gr: egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos; vv. 11, 14), he is not only contrasting himself with the bad shepherds of Israel of Ezekiel 34 or the hired man of John 10; he is also implying that he now fulfils Yahweh's shepherd role (Ball, 1996, 226). Jesus' first declaration of himself as the good shepherd (vv. 11-13) parallels and fulfils Yahweh's deliverance of the flock from predators (Ezek 34:28); but even more so, Jesus does it at the cost of his life (cf. Manning, 2004, 114).

In the second instance of 'I am the good shepherd' (vv. 14-18; cf. v. 27), there is a sense of relationship based on knowledge. On the one hand, the shepherd Jesus knows his sheep and lays down his life for them. On the other hand, the sheep also know the shepherd. This echoes Yahweh's promise in Ezekiel that 'they will know that I am the Lord' and that 'they are my people' when he delivers them 'from the hands of those who enslave them' (Ezek 34:27, 30; HCSB). This parallel, however intriguing it may be, only accentuates a distinctive element in John 10:15, 17, 18, which is Jesus' willingness to die for his human flock. His willingness is driven by his knowledge of the flock which is analogous to his knowledge of the Father (vv. 14, 15). Furthermore, this willingness is accompanied by his power and authority to give and to take back his life (cf. Bernard, 2010, 24). This element sets him apart as the ultimate shepherd of Israel.

Second, Jesus fulfils David's role as a single shepherd appointed by Yahweh over Israel. Jesus' reference to 'one flock, one shepherd' (Jn 10:16) echoes Ezek 34:23, 24 where Yahweh promises to appoint a single shepherd over the flock of Israel. The phrase 'one shepherd' (Gr: heis poimēn) in John 10:16 has a strong connection—in spite of the word order—to the 'one shepherd' mentioned in Ezek 34:23 (LXX: poimena hena) and 37:24 (LXX: poimēn heis), because it is found only in John and Ezekiel. Even though David is not called the 'good shepherd' in Ezekiel, he is regarded as 'good' especially when in contrast to the bad shepherds of Israel (Manning, 2004, 115-116). This connection suggests that Jesus, as the good shepherd, is now fulfilling the role appointed for David.

It is intriguing to note that David is mentioned as Yahweh's appointee to shepherd the flock of Israel in Ezekiel 34 even though, chronologically, David has long died. It is reasonable to identify this allusion to David as Christological reference to Jesus (cf. Feinberg, 1969, 198; Wright, 2001, 280). Arguably, the intrigue also reflects how the OT epitomises him as the ideal, chosen shepherd ruler of Israel (cf. Ps 78:70-71; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24). Yahweh calls him 'prince' (Heb: nasi') among the flock of Israel by appointment, which may suggest that 'David was the model shepherd of sheep and the model king of Israel' (Constable, 2016, 190). He is a man after God's own heart who will do what God wants him to do (1 Sam 7:8; Ps 78:70-71; cf. Acts 13:22). His reign becomes the benchmark for the next generations of rulers. Yahweh tells Solomon to follow David's example of loyalty so that the same promises he gives to David can be maintained (1 Kgs 9:4, 5; 2 Ch 7:17, 18). In later years of Judah's kingdom, God's act of saving his people is performed 'for My sake and for the sake of My servant David' (2 Kgs 19:34; 20:6; cf. 1 Kgs 11:12-13; HCSB).

But a close examination of his life reveals his failures. He fails as a shepherd when he commits adultery with Bathsheba and murders Uriah in the process (2 Sam 11:1-27). He also fails when his military census causes God to inflict the death of 70,000 Israelite men (2 Sam 24; 1 Ch 21). His words of repentance in that episode reveal his understanding of himself as a failed shepherd of Israel who has caused the 'sheep' (Heb: tson) to die (2 Sam 24:17). Gordon points out that 'the protective

instincts of the shepherd-king are aroused by the thought of his charges suffering because of his misdeed' (1986, 320).

David fails and so do the rest of the kings after him. 'Indeed, their failure as shepherds was felt to be fundamental. The prophets in their denunciations spoke of the political and military shepherds in unquestionably negative terms; these had all failed because of their arrogance and disobedience to God' (NIDNTTE 4:83). Nevertheless, through David's line, Jesus, the true shepherd of Israel, comes. In Jesus, the personalities and roles of both shepherds, Yahweh and David, are brought together. He embodies them. Fikes notes that 'Jesus is ... the eschatological fulfilment of Yahweh's promises in Ezekiel 34, both as shepherd God and messiah' (cited in Manning, 2004, 117, n. 49). Manning concurs with Fikes, but further points out that 'Jesus, like David, has been given charge over the sheep (John 10:28-29)' which is 'so closely united with God's own shepherding rule that Jesus can speak of a oneness with God' (117; cf. v. 30).

Jesus succeeds in fulfilling the expectation of the true shepherd of Israel. What human shepherds fail to do, Jesus fulfils. He supersedes the shepherds of Israel even the best among them such as David. They all fail to meet the expectations God puts upon them. That is why we need Jesus. He does not only fulfil God's shepherd expectations; he goes to a great extent of laying down his life for his sheep in order that he may take it up again (John 10:15, 17, 18) and give them eternal life (vv. 27, 28). Shepherd—faltered by humans but fulfilled in Jesus Christ—provides a biopic for Christology. John's Christology requires that Jesus, as the ultimate good shepherd, must go through death and resurrection in order to fulfil the messianic roles of Israel's shepherds he embodies. By embodying the roles and succeeding in fulfilling the expectations of God's appointed shepherds, Jesus is proclaimed the true shepherd of Israel, both in the historical and spiritual sense. Paul calls him 'the great Shepherd of the sheep' (Gr: ton poimena tōn probatōn ton megan; Heb 13:20; HCSB) and Peter identifies him as the 'chief Shepherd' (Gr: archipoimenos; 1 Pt 5:4; HCSB). These appellations of supremacy of Christ as the Shepherd are true for the Jewish Christians of the first century, but so are they for the Christians today.

Messiah

The fourth model pertains to the use of the term 'messiah' (Heb: mashiakh). The word is used in the verbal sense to refer to the act of anointing as well as to its adjectival reference with respect to certain individuals such as priests and kings whose offices are expressly described with this term (NIDNTTE 4:688-689). In a few cases, prophets too are called mashiakh perhaps due to the parallelism between 'anointed' and 'prophet' in Ps 105:15 and 1 Chron 16:22 (cf. Elisha's anointing in 1 Kgs 19:16). 'Persons who were anointed had been elected, designated, appointed, given authority, qualified, and equipped for specific offices and tasks' (Groningen, 1996). For control purposes, this model focuses only on priests and kings for their appointment is expressly described as 'anointed'. Within God's Covenant, the priests of Israel's cultic system (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 16:15) and kings like Saul (1 Sam 12:3, 5; 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16), David (2 Sam 19:21; 22:51; 23:1; Ps 18:51), Solomon (2 Chron 6:42), are specifically mentioned to be Yahweh's anointed. Outside of the Covenant, Cyrus, the Persian ruler, is mentioned as Yahweh's anointed (Isa 45:1). Priests and rulers, the anointed ones, provide a Christological biopic through which we can see Jesus as the ultimate 'Messiah', who is not limited to human weaknesses.

The priests as Yahweh's anointed are limited in at least two ways. First, they are susceptible to ceremonial uncleanness and sin. As a result, the cultic system of Israel makes provision for their cleansing (Lev 4:3-12). They will have to make animal sacrifices in order to atone for their sins before they can perform their priestly duties (e.g. Aaron's purification before performing his duties during the Day of Atonement; cf. Lev 16:3-14). Second, they are sinful despite their best appearance in

representing the best of humanity among God's people. The High Priest Joshua in Zechariah's oracle (3:1-10) is vulnerable to Satan's accusations because of his 'filthiness' (sinfulness).

The kings of the united kingdom of Israel, though Yahweh's anointed, are short of fulfilling the tasks they are anointed to do. Saul disobeys Yahweh with regards to the Amalekites (cf. 1 Sam 15). Samuel's words to Saul reveal Yahweh's rejection: 'Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king' (v. 23b, HCSB). Furthermore, it is said that 'the LORD regretted He had made Saul king over Israel' (v. 35b). David's failures are blatantly sinful despite the favourable appellation 'man after God's own heart' and the covenant made with him. He has not measured up to his 'servant' title and 'shepherd' designation (see previous sections). Ps 89:38-51 testifies to the David's apparent covenantal failure. Solomon angered Yahweh 'because his heart had turned away from the LORD God of Israel' (1 Kgs 11:9) and 'did not do what the LORD had commanded' (v. 10) by following other gods. The record says that 'Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not completely follow the LORD' (v. 6). The succeeding generations of Davidic dynasty also fail to obey Yahweh completely.

Cyrus's description as Yahweh's 'mashiakh' hints at an important theological significance since he is not 'anointed as king in accordance with Hebrew custom' (NIDNTTE 4:689). Yahweh chooses him despite his origin in order to fulfil a divine plan. The selection of Cyrus is an act of divine sovereignty of the Creator for the sake of Israel. Isa 44:28-45:13 provides a lucid Christological lens via descriptions of what Cyrus will do as Yahweh's anointed and as results of Yahweh's empowerment.

> ... he will fulfil all My pleasure and say to Jerusalem: She will be rebuilt, and of the temple: Its foundation will be laid. (44:28)

> ... whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him, to unloose the loins of kings, to open the doors before him and the gates will not be shut: (45:1)

> I have raised him up in righteousness, and will level all roads for him. He will rebuild My city, and set My exiles free, not for a price or a bribe, say the Lord of Hosts. (45:13)

Verses 2-4 describe Yahweh's assurance of his presence for Cyrus through a series of acts.

> I will go before you and level the uneven places; I will shatter the bronze doors and cut the iron bars in two. I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches from secret places, so that you may know that I, the Lord, the God of Israel call you by your name. I call you by your name, because of Jacob My servant and Israel my chosen one. I give a name to you, though you do not know Me. ... I will strengthen you, though you do not know Me.

An intriguing aspect with respect to Cyrus is the title he bears—shepherd (44:28) and mashiakh (45:1). This duplex designation of Cyrus parallels David's designation. Both rulers bear both titles at the same time, making him (Cyrus) as the 'new David' (Baltzer, 2001; cited in Fried, 2002, 374) and a type of the Davidic Messiah (Oswalt, 1998, 197). This offers a significant theological ramification with respect to Cyrus; he is a foreign ruler whose policy fulfils Yahweh's redemptive plan. 'Since Israel in exile had no king, Cyrus functioned in a sense as her king (the anointed one) to bring about blessing' (Martin, 1985, 1099). It also implies, however, that he is just as dependent upon Yahweh's favour as any other king of Judah.

Notwithstanding Cyrus's prominence in being used by Yahweh, his employment is only temporary. He is only an instrument in Yahweh's hand to accomplish his plan for his people's sake. Furthermore, the fact that he does not function within the covenantal system excludes him from being a direct

participant in the fulfilment of the Covenant. Israel's redemption through Cyrus is only political. He is unable to accomplish the ultimate redemption of God's people. That is why Jesus as the Christ provides the answer to humanity's need of salvation. He is the anointed one, the good shepherd of Israel.

The NT reveals that Jesus is the Christ (Greek equivalent to Mashiakh; it is transliterated as Messias only in John 1:41 and 4:25). As Christ, Jesus is the great high priest (4:14), the priest/high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:17). The book of Hebrews describes Melchizedek as both the priest of the Most High God (7:1) as well as the king of righteousness and king of Salem or king of peace (v. 2) who is without origin (v. 3). Jesus as the high priest is presented in the order of Melchizedek because of the fact that he does not become a priest based on physical descent but 'based on the power of an indestructible life' (v. 15). Arguably, he takes that order also because he is portrayed as a king (cf. John 12:13; 1 Tim 6:15), therefore a priest-king similar to Melchizedek. However, it is not that Melchizedek sets the pattern and Jesus follows it. Rather, the record about Melchizedek is so arranged that it brings out certain truths, that apply far more fully to Jesus than they do to Melchizedek. With the latter, these truths are simply a matter of record; but with Jesus they are not only historically true, they also have significant spiritual dimensions (Morris, 1981, 64).

Human models of Yahweh's anointed fail despite their outstanding performances. Jesus Christ succeeds; he is the ultimate fulfilment of Yahweh's anointed one. He is the Messiah.

Conclusion

In pursuing the four models of servant, watchman, shepherd and messiah, we have uncovered two significant elements: (1) the apparent failure of humans in the models despite spectacular successes, and (2) the presence of one who is the perfect fulfilment of each model. Jesus is presented as the perfect servant, watchman, shepherd and messiah. The distinction between Jesus and previous human models pertains to his ability to accomplish the ultimate demand of the models; his work is truly salvific. Jesus is not merely typological fulfilment but more to the point he is the operational necessity for the redemption of humanity. This is the Christological biopic which the four models supply and upon which biblical Christology is founded.

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