

FOREWORD BY
E.D. HIRSCH, JR.

The THEORY & PRACTICE

of *Biblical*

HERMENEUTICS:

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF
ELLIOTT E. JOHNSON

H. WAYNE HOUSE
FORREST S. WEILAND
EDITORS

The following chapter is part of a collection of essays in honor of Dr. Elliott Johnson, longtime professor at Dallas Seminary. It was my privilege to pay tribute to him and his influence in my life.

Used by permission of Lampion Press LLC

Chapter Fourteen

Seeing the Risen Messiah from the Psalms:

Inerrancy and Insight in Acts 2

Gregory V. Trull

The New Testament utilizes Old Testament texts in widely varied ways. Most represent true end-user perspective, giving the reader only the results of the New Testament author's hermeneutics. A few, however, grant us insight into the interpretive mind of the author. Peter's Pentecost sermon declaration concerning Psalm 16:10 provides a crucial example for interpretation. His comments provide insight into his understanding of David's intended message and to the question of whether the Old Testament author could have knowingly spoken of Messiah's resurrection.

Psalm 16:10 represents the key Old Testament text used by the apostles in Acts to demonstrate the Messiah's predicted resurrection. Both Peter and Paul build their resurrection argument around Psalm 16:10. These two apostolic sermons (Acts 2; 13) serve as paradigmatic speeches for the entire book. They distill the apostolic message proclaimed by the two key leaders of the early church. Therefore, Psalm 16:10 serves as a critical theological support for Christ's resurrection in the two key gospel proclamations in Acts.

Psalm 16:10 also stands apart from many Old Testament usages by the New because of the inspired commentary offered by Peter. Many Old Testament passages are utilized without detailed explanation of how the New Testament writer

understood the original context. Modern interpreters often struggle to grasp with certainty the steps between the Old and New Testament settings. In this case, however, Peter offers several personal insights into his perspective on the original meaning of Psalm 16:10.

The early church consistently held that Psalm 16 was messianic. The Alexandrian School applied the psalm directly and immediately to Christ. Athanasius interpreted the entire psalm as of Christ, while Eusebius of Caesarea exempted only vv. 3-4 as not speaking of Christ.¹ The Antiochene School's concept of *theoria* allowed them to say that the original author could speak simultaneously of himself and a future referent. Theodore of Mopsuestia held that David spoke of himself, the nation of Israel and of Christ all at the same time.² Later, Jerome and Augustine taught that the psalm did not speak of David at all, but only and directly of Christ.³ In the Reformation, Luther and Calvin understood the psalm as speaking only of Christ. David's relationship to his words were "only so far as he beheld himself in Christ."⁴ So then, throughout the early centuries of the Church, Psalm 16

¹ Athanasius, *De titulis Psalmorum in Patrologiae Graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1856), 27:696. Eusebius understood vv. 3-4 to refer to Christ's saints. See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Psalms*, in *Patrologiae Graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1856), 23:153.

² Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Expositio in Psalmos in Patrologiae Graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Migne, 1856), 66:660.

³ Jerome, *Psalteries Saint Hieronymi de Hebraica Veritate Interpretatum* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1960), 151. Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, trans. Members of the English Church (London: F. and J. Rivington, 1847), 111.

⁴ Helmut T. Lehman, ed., *Luther's Works*, vol. 10 (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1958), 104-10. See additional substantiating comments in vol. 14:324-25. John Calvin, *The Commentaries of John Calvin upon the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Henry Beveridge, trans. Christopher Fetherstone (London: Impensis G. Bishop, 1585; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 101. Cf. conclusion by Bell, "Die buchställiche Bedeutung von Psalm 16 ist nach Luther die, dass er eine Prophetie über Christus selbst, vor allem über seinen Tod und seine Auferstehung ist" (Theo Bell, "Martin Luther über Psalm 16 in den 'Operationes in Psalmos'," *Bijdragen* 41 [1980]: 435).

was understood to speak of Christ and v. 10 of His resurrection. The sense of resurrection in Psalm 16, however, began to face challenges in the early nineteenth century.

Psalms scholars such as Hermann Gunkel argued that Psalm 16 could not express resurrection, but only spoke of preservation from premature death.⁵ This shift has resulted in five current views that do not see resurrection in the original context. Two views today resist the shift and understand David as speaking of resurrection. One non-resurrection view sees that Peter's interpretation stemmed from hermeneutical errors in the LXX. Driver asserted that application to Christ "was facilitated by the mistranslations of the Septuagint." Psalm 16 "will not support the arguments which the Apostles built upon it."⁶ Others hold that Peter arrived at his conclusions by utilizing the hermeneutics of the Jewish rabbis of his day. Longenecker, as an example, contends that Peter linked psalms through shared phrases until it pointed to Christ. The meaning came through midrashic and pesher exegesis.⁷ A third perspective understands that Acts 2 represents the *sensus plenior* of Psalm 16. Hagner summarizes the original meaning as David's confidence in deliverance from death. However, the New Testament changes that meaning to "a fuller sense not in the original context of David's writing." The meaning is found only

⁵ Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*, trans. T. M. Homer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 51. See also S. R. Driver, "The Method of Studying the Psalter: Psalm XVI," *Expositor* 11 (1910): 26-37.

⁶ Driver, "The Method of Studying the Psalter," 35.

⁷ Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 34. Also see J. W. Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 315; and Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 116-18.

by reading the psalm through the lens of the New Testament.⁸ Similarly, the canonical approach sees the psalm's meaning developed as the canon expanded. Waltke sees four canonical stages for the psalm: the original context, first temple worship context, Old Testament canonical context, and the New Testament context.⁹ In each stage the meaning shifts until it reaches messianic resurrection in the New Testament. The fifth non-resurrection view is typological. The original language spoke of deliverance from premature death, but it spoke with sufficient ambiguity to set a pattern that Christ would ultimately fulfill. Like the canonical approach, the clear meaning cannot be known except when seen through New Testament perspective.¹⁰

Two modern views defend a more direct reference to Christ. The single message view holds that the sense of resurrection originated in the authorial context rather than morphing until the New Testament. The referent, though, moved from David the author in the Old Testament to Christ his ultimate Son in the New

⁸ Donald A. Hagner, "The Old Testament in the New," in *Interpreting the Word of God*, ed. Samuel J. Schultz and Morris A. Inch (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 99. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore, MD: Saint Mary's University Press, 1955); William S. LaSor, "The Sensus Plenior and Biblical Interpretation," in *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation*, ed. W. W. Gasque and W. S. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 260-77.

⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, "A Canonical Approach to the Psalms," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 7. For a general discussion and defense of Waltke's canonical approach, see J. E. Shepherd, "The Book of Psalms as the Book of Christ: The Application of the Christo-Canonical Method to the Book of Psalms" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1995).

¹⁰ Adherents include C. T. Fritsch, "Biblical Typology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 104 (1947): 214-22; G. W. H. Lampe, "Hermeneutics and Typology," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 34 (1965): 17-25; James Earl Gilmore, "Apostolic Interpretation of Typicoprophetically Messianic Psalms: Seven Rules Demonstrated From Psalm 16 and Elsewhere" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979); Walter Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?" in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann, trans. James Barr (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1963), 224-45; Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation From Prophecy and Pattern*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, ed. David Hill, vol. 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987). Bock, "Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament—Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142:568 (Oct 1985): 306-319.

Testament. David, as God's "favored one," was one of the historical fulfillments of God's covenant with David and his line. "For David, this was all one word: God's ancient but ever-new promise."¹¹ The direct view holds that both the sense of resurrection and the messianic referent are in the 16:10 original context. Though adherents differ on how much of the Ps 16 quote directly refers to the Messiah, all agree that at least the 16:10b statement of the referent not experiencing decay speaks only of Messiah.¹²

Luke's record of Peter's sermon relies on the Septuagint for the Old Testament quotations. Some scholars have alleged that these quotations veered from the Hebrew text and that those changes led to the apostolic interpretations. Did the original intent of the psalm or its subsequent translation shape Peter's interpretation at Pentecost?

First, some argue that the translation of ἐπ' ἐλπίδι for נַחֲמָה (v. 8) allows for a resurrection understanding in the psalm. Steyn, agreeing with Schmitt and Boer, takes this translation as an illustration of the imposition of a resurrection belief by

¹¹ Walter C. Kaiser, "Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25-33 and 13:32-37," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (1980): 229. Similarly, Elliott Johnson shares the single message, multiple referent view. See Elliott E. Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990); and "Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 409-29.

¹² Adherents include R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1934), 85-93; Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Psalms*, trans. J. Thomson and P. Fairbairn, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1977); Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Jewish Question* (New York: Our Hope, 1912); David Cooper, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled* (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1939); J. Barton Payne, "Psalms," in *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 940-43; Stuart, "Psalm XVI," 51-110. This also seems to be the view of Walvoord as well: "The New Testament makes clear, however, to all who accept the infallibility of the Scriptures that Psalm 16:10 is specifically a reference to Christ." He later says that Ps 16:10 directly predicts the resurrection of Christ (John F. Walvoord, "Series in Christology: Part 2: The Incarnation of the Son of God," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105 [1948]: 150-51).

LXX translators.¹³ Steyn argues that changing the emphasis from security (תְּשׁוּבָה) to hope (ἐλπίς) permits the translation of “corruption” in verse ten.¹⁴ Bock, however, agreeing with Rese, sees this change as “not decisive for a new understanding of the text.”¹⁵ The broader sense of the psalm determines whether this translation points to preservation or resurrection.

The most debated translation in Ps 16 is διαφθοράν for תְּשׁוּבָה (v. 10). Steyn states that this change made possible a bodily resurrection that was not found in the Hebrew text.¹⁶ He acknowledges however, that the LXX consistently renders both the noun (תְּשׁוּבָה) and the verb (תְּשׁוּבָה) with the idea of διαφθορά. He still sees these as “changed consciously or unconsciously by the LXX translators” and as rendering a sense that “in the Hebrew . . . is clearly excluded.”¹⁷ Others however see this rendering as a “conscious LXX word-play.” “The alteration would emerge conceptually, not linguistically.”¹⁸ The translation comes from the Hebrew context, not from the LXX translators’ theology. The rendering of διαφθοράν for תְּשׁוּבָה is not, however, a change at all. As demonstrated in the author’s previous article on this

¹³ Gert Jacobus Steyn, “Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches of the Acta Apostolorum,” in *Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology*, ed. T. Baarda, A. van der Kooij, and A. S. van der Woude (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 106.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bock, *Proclamation From Prophecy and Pattern*, 172-73.

¹⁶ Steyn, “Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches,” 107.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 175-76.

Hebrew text, the idea of corruption for תַּחַשׁ is in fact the preferred rendering.¹⁹ Thus διαφθοράν represents an accurate representation of the Hebrew meaning.

The significance of the third major translation is in direct relation to the previous two changes. Bock notes that ὁδοῦς ζωῆς for אֲרָרָה יְיָ is “not regarded as decisive in itself.”²⁰ Steyn only notes that the Masoretic Text emphasizes “a life to which God responds,” while the LXX conveys the idea of eternal life.²¹ Bock rightly observes that the LXX does not do injustice to the Hebrew text. The sense of the phrase “depends on how one views the whole Psalm’s context and its conceptual frame of reference.”²²

The three proposed significant differences between the MT and the LXX prove then to be not differences at all. The first and third translations are only changes if the psalm does not speak of resurrection. The decisive rendering concerns the use of διαφθοράν for תַּחַשׁ. As demonstrated elsewhere, corruption is the proper sense of תַּחַשׁ and therefore διαφθοράν is a correct rendering. So the LXX did not make changes that would have steered Peter away from the psalm’s original intent.

Much of Peter’s interpretation of Ps 16:8-11 surfaces in his commentary following its citation (2:29-32). However, key facets of Peter’s understanding arise from his introduction of the quote (2:24). Peter introduces the Ps 16 quote with three significant statements concerning the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

¹⁹ See Gregory V. Trull, “An Exegesis of Psalm 16:10,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004): 304-21.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

²¹ Steyn, “Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches,” 108.

²² Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 176.

First, God raised Him from the dead. Second, it was not possible for death to hold Jesus. Third, David spoke concerning the Messiah. Jesus' resurrection was a result of the direct intervention of God to accomplish His plan. Peter argued in the previous verse (v. 23) that Jesus' crucifixion was a part of God's overall plan of salvation.

Acts consistently reflects God's sovereign accomplishment of His design.²³ As Barrett states, "Jesus indeed rose, but he rose because he was raised."²⁴ The term for "raised," ἀνέστησεν is from ἀνίστημι. This is the most common expression for the resurrection in Acts (cf. 2:32; 3:36; 13:32, 34; 17:31).²⁵ Jesus not only died according to God's plan, He also was raised to life by God's intervention.

The second statement used by Peter to introduce the Psalm 16 quote emphasizes that it was impossible for Jesus to remain among the dead. Jesus had to be raised because (καθότι) death could not hold Him.²⁶ The word καθότι is found only six times in the New Testament. All usage is in Lucan literature. Often the word means, "according as" (cf. 2:45; 4:35; 17:31). Here the sense is best rendered

²³ This important theme may be seen in the use of βουλή (2:23; 4:28; 5:38-39; 13:36; 20:27) and θέλημα (21:14; 22:14) of God's plan. Acts also implies God's plan through the usage of δεῖ (1:16, 21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6, 16; 14:22; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 19:21; 20:35; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10; 27:24). Acts also describes events as predetermined by God (10:42; 17:31; 22:14; 26:16). David Peterson, "The Motif of Fulfillment and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting, The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 86.

²⁴ C. K. Barrett, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, ed. J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield and G. N. Stanton, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1994), 143.

²⁵ Other expressions in Acts for the resurrection include ἐγείρω (3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37) and the intransitive tense of ἀνίστημι (10:41; 17:3).

²⁶ The next verse will give the reason for this impossibility. See discussion on v. 25 concerning the connecting of the two verses by γάρ.

“because” (cf. similar sense in Luke 1:7; 19:9).²⁷ The reason it was impossible for Jesus to remain dead was David had prophesied that Messiah would rise from the dead. This connection is seen in the use of the explanatory γὰρ in v. 25. This conjunction indicates that the prophecy of David in Psalm 16:8-11 is the reason death could not hold Jesus.²⁸

The logic of the first two introductory statements may be summarized as follows. After Peter had demonstrated that Jesus was attested to by God (2:22), and that Jesus’ death was a part of God’s sovereign plan (2:23), Peter showed that Jesus’ resurrection was necessary because death could not hold the Messiah (2:24). The reason death could not hold the Messiah was that David foretold His resurrection (2:25). So Peter argues more than Ps 16 potentially speaking of Christ, Peter argues that the prophecy of Psalm 16 compelled the resurrection.

The third introductory statement declares that David spoke of the Messiah in Ps 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25). The construction of this introductory phrase “David said (λέγει) about (εἰς) Him” is unique in the New Testament.²⁹ Though both λέγω and εἰς are quite common, they do not often occur together. The closest examples are found

²⁷ Barrett, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 144.

²⁸ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaptation of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schriften Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, 2nd rev. ed., rev. and aug. F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker from Walter Bauer's Fifth Edition (1958) ed., trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 151, 1a; H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), 243, 213(1).

²⁹ It is unique in that no other OT quotation is introduced in this way. Similar constructions do occur, as seen in the discussion that follows.

in Luke 22:65, John 8:26,³⁰ and Ephesians 5:32. The similar construction in Luke 22:65 describes how the guards spoke blasphemies against Jesus. The John 8:26 phrase depicts Jesus addressing the world in His speech. In Ephesians 5:32, Paul explains that in his description of proper marital relationships he is actually speaking of Christ's relationship with the Church. The senses of the phrase in the Luke and John passages do not match the Acts 2:25 context. Luke 22:65 means speaking against someone, while John 8:26 describes speaking to something. David neither spoke against or to Messiah. Ephesians 5:32 seems quite close to Acts 2:25. Here, Paul uses εἰς to indicate the referent of his description. Winer understands this to be the sense in Acts 2:25. He concludes that it points to the direction of David's thoughts. He renders the preposition "aiming at" or "referring to."³¹ Louw and Nida similarly interpret εἰς in Acts 2:25. They describe this usage as one of the "markers of content as a means of specifying a particular referent."³² The grammars by Abbott-Smith and Robertson include a similar usage of εἰς.³³ Regarding the significance of the preposition, Kaiser states, "Acts 2:25 carefully introduces the

³⁰ The verb in John 8:26 is λαλέω. It is included because of its close relation to λέγω. Other verbs of speaking were searched as well, but no other verb of speaking is used with εἰς in a similar construction to that in Acts 2:25.

³¹ For similar usages of εἰς, Winer cites Eph 1:10; 5:32; and Heb 7:14. George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament Prepared As a Solid Basis for the Interpretation of the New Testament*, 7th ed., trans. Gottlieb Lünemann (Andover, MD: Draper, 1883), 397.

³² They include Rom 16:19 as a comparable example. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 90.23. This is also the conclusion of Dana and Mantey, *Greek Grammar*, 103.

³³ Abbott-Smith has a relational category, rendering the preposition "in regard to." He, however, does not discuss Acts 2:25 or the use of the preposition with verbs of speaking. G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937), 133. Robertson cites Acts 2:25 as an example of εἰς essentially serving the function of a dative (setting forth disposition). A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), 594.

quotation from Ps 16:8-11 with the phrase, 'David says with reference to (εἰς) him,' rather than 'concerning (περὶ) him' (which would have meant that the total reference was of the Messiah alone)."³⁴ The lack of informative parallels to the λέγω + εἰς construction and the wide range of use for εἰς do not seem to allow for such precise distinctions, however. The context must ultimately define the sense of this introductory statement.³⁵ This introductory phrase though, serves to indicate the Messiah as the referent of David's speech in Ps 16:8-11. Therefore, the conjunction utilized here reveals that Peter understood that the original context spoke of Messiah.

Following his quotation of Ps 16:8-11, Peter continues to explain that David was speaking not of himself, but of the Messiah. Peter makes five important declarations that demonstrate his view of the messianic reference in the psalm. First, Peter uses the presence of David's tomb as proof that David could not have been speaking of his own physical resurrection. Second, David could speak of the future Messiah because David was a prophet. Third, David could speak of the Messiah because the Davidic Covenant required a messianic hope. Fourth, David had prophetic insight into the future appearance of Messiah. The fifth declaration of Peter specifies the prophetic statement within Psalm 16:8-11. Peter asserts David spoke of the resurrection of Messiah in Psalm 16, specifically v. 10b.

³⁴ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25-33 and 13:32-37," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (1980): 228.

³⁵ So concludes Strauss. He states that the context demonstrates that this introductory phrase means that David "was speaking prophetically in the voice of Messiah." Mark L Strauss, *Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: the Promise and Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*, *Journal for the New Testament Supplement Series* 110 (Sheffield Academic Press, 1995): 137.

Peter's first declaration is that David's entombed remains demonstrate that David could not have been speaking of his own resurrection (2:29). David's tomb was mentioned as part of the description Nehemiah gave of the wall reconstruction during the Return (Neh 3:16). According to Josephus, John Hyrcanus spoiled the tomb of 3,000 talents of silver during the siege of Jerusalem in 135/134 B.C.³⁶ Josephus wrote that Herod later stocked his own coffers by taking gold furniture and other valuable items from David's tomb. When two of Herod's soldiers attempted to search further into the tomb and disturb the body of David, a flame burst out and killed them. Herod then built a large monument in an attempt to make right his violation.³⁷ Josephus' account of the flame of judgment cannot be substantiated, but likely his description of the monument was reliable. If this were the case, this monument would have been standing in the New Testament period. David's tomb and monument were not destroyed until Hadrian's campaign around A.D. 133.³⁸ On the day of Pentecost, David had been dead and buried for more than a millennium. The Jews continued to have great interest in the preservation of the forefathers' tombs (cf. Luke 11:48). The presence of David's remains in his tomb demonstrated that David did not speak of his own resurrection. If David had spoken of a general resurrection of the righteous, the force of Peter's argument would be blunted. David will indeed be raised to receive his reward from the Lord. In Peter's mind however, Psalm 16:10 describes a resurrection before decay, a special

³⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.249; *War* 1.61.

³⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 16:179-82.

³⁸ Dio Cassius 64:14. See discussion in R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1945), 93-94.

resurrection, rather than general. Peter's argument states that David's decay proves that he did not speak of himself because his experience did not fulfill the words of Psalm 16:10. Just as Peter's audience could examine David's tomb, so too they could see Jesus'. In contrast to David's grave, however, Jesus' tomb stood empty, His undecayed body raised to life by the Father.

The line of argument Peter employs here parallels his later logic proving that Jesus is Lord and Christ. Peter has declared that God's work through Jesus attested to His identity (2:22). He now argues that Jesus' resurrection proves He is Messiah. Later, he will show that the giving of the Spirit resulted from Jesus' exaltation (2:34-35). He concludes that God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah (2:36). Jesus was not made Messiah because of His works, resurrection and exaltation. Instead, these key events provided evidence of who He already was. Jesus worked signs, was resurrected and exalted because He was already Messiah. Peter argues this same way concerning David's death and Psalm 16. The death and decay of David did not change the sense or referent of the psalm passage. His empty tomb proved what was always true, that David did not speak of himself. In this distinction, Peter distances David from being the referent of Psalm 16:10b. The introductory phrase pointed to the Messiah as David's referent, but at this point did not specify Him as sole referent. Next, Peter begins to separate David the psalmist from Messiah the sole referent.

The second, third and fourth declarations by Peter connect grammatically to the summative fifth declaration. The three statements are causal participles that provide the basis for Peter's conclusion that David spoke (ἐλάλησεν) of Messiah's

resurrection (2:31).³⁹ David spoke of this resurrection because of his being (ὑπάρχων) a prophet, his knowing (εἰδὼς) God's promise to him, and his foreseeing (προϊδὼν) the future Messiah (2:30-31). These caused David to speak of Messiah's resurrection. This truth was then illustrated by Peter's first declaration concerning the decayed body of David versus the raised body of Jesus.

Peter introduces his second declaration that David spoke Psalm 16 as a prophet with the conjunction οὖν. The NASB translates the word inferentially, "and so, because," while the NIV renders it adversatively, "but." Dana and Mantey explain that when the conjunction is used inferentially, the inference is expressed by the main verb rather than by an infinitive or participle.⁴⁰ The οὖν, then, points to the main verb ἐλάλησεν ("spoke") as the result of the three causal participles.

Johnson and Marshall argue that Luke assumed that the psalmists were prophets. They note passages where prophecy seems implicit in a psalm (Mark 12:36; Luke 20:41-42; 24:44; Acts 1:16, 20; 4:25; 13:33-36).⁴¹ The designation of prophet for David was not a New Testament novelty, however.

Fitzmyer argues that David was recognized as a prophet in first century Palestine.⁴² In a Hebrew text published by Sanders, 11QPs^a 27:2-11, David was

³⁹ The first two are linked by οὖν and the third modifies the main verb as a causal participle.

⁴⁰ Dana and Mantey, *Greek Grammar*, 253.

⁴¹ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary Series, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 76-77; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 51.

⁴² Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "David 'Being Therefore a Prophet . . .'," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972): 332-39.

associated with prophecy.⁴³ The Psalms Scroll contains about one-third of the canonical psalms mixed with some apocryphal psalms. A prose insertion into the collection summarizes David's prodigious writing and then closes by saying that David "spoke through prophecy which was given him from before the Most High."⁴⁴ Fitzmyer notes that it is difficult to ascertain with clarity the Qumran concept of a prophet, but it "would seem to be a divine gift resembling the biblical prophetic inspiration of old, and in virtue of this David composed his psalms and songs."⁴⁵ Fitzmyer also offers that David may have been viewed as a prophet by Qumran literature because of the association of prophecy with the "anointed ones."⁴⁶ The Old Testament often referred to David as the "anointed one" (2 Sam 19:21; 22:51; 23:1; Pss 20:6; 89:20). Qumran literature applies the term "anointed one(s)" to the prophets in 1QM 11:7, 6QD 3:4, and CD 2:12.⁴⁷ Fitzmyer admits that, though this link is plausible, it is "remote."⁴⁸ The connecting of the prophetic gift to David was not only found in Qumran literature, it also is reflected in Josephus' writings.

Josephus described David's anointing by Samuel in similar terms as Saul's: "But the Divine Power departed from Saul, and removed to David, who upon this removal of the Divine Spirit to him, began to prophesy"⁴⁹ Josephus did not

⁴³ J. A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 134-37.

⁴⁴ 11QPs^a 27:11.

⁴⁵ Fitzmyer, "David 'Being Therefore a Prophet . . .'" 337.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 337-38.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁴⁹ Josephus, *Ant.* 6:166.

precede Peter or Luke, but was roughly a contemporary. He likely recorded a perception of David present in first century Israel.⁵⁰ The view of David as a prophet may have connections in the Old Testament as well.

Josephus' description of David's prophesying after his anointing by Samuel may be a logical inference from the Old Testament narrative. Saul prophesied when the Spirit came upon him following Samuel's anointing of him (1 Sam 10:6, 10). Later, the Spirit departed from Saul and came upon David (1 Sam 16:13-14). The descriptions of the coming of the Spirit on Saul and David are very similar in wording. One might conclude that the Spirit that moved Saul to prophesy was given to David. David could therefore be seen as a prophet. Further, in his final words, David himself recognized that it was the Spirit who spoke the oracle through him (2 Sam 23:1).

The description of David as a prophet in Acts 2:30 was not, therefore, in discord with first century belief or Old Testament characterization. The Qumran literature and the history of Josephus attest that the first century Jews recognized David as a prophet. Though the Old Testament never specifically calls David a prophet,⁵¹ the descriptions of Saul's and David's anointings allow one to infer that David was given a prophetic spirit. Therefore, David was recognized as a prophet in the first century, probably as an inference from the descriptions of the Old

⁵⁰ Fitzmyer, "David 'Being Therefore a Prophet . . .'" 338.

⁵¹ David is called a "man of God" (2 Chr 8:14; Neh 12:24, 36), a common OT designation for a prophet, but each of the three passages emphasize David's role in leading worship. Therefore, the phrase "man of God" describes David's love and loyalty to Yahweh.

Testament narrative. His prophetic capacity would certainly impact his insight into his words concerning the Messiah.

Peter's third declaration concerning Psalm 16:8-11 is that David could speak of Messiah because he knew God would place one of his sons on his throne (2:30). Peter introduces the content of David's knowledge (εἰδὼς) with ὅτι.⁵² The word for knowledge, οἶδα, is virtually synonymous with γινώσκω.⁵³ A slight distinction may be found in that οἶδα refers to "knowledge which may serve as a basis for further thought and action." In this case, οἶδα functions similarly to the perfect of γινώσκω.⁵⁴ Abbott-Smith distinguishes οἶδα from γινώσκω by defining the latter as knowledge gained through experience and observation, while the former is knowledge gained by reflective processes.⁵⁵ This slight distinction fits well the use in 2:30. David's reflections on the implications of the Dynastic Covenant formed the basis of his words in Psalm 16:8-11.

The ὅτι clause denotes David's knowledge as an understanding of a future descendant to reign upon his throne. The clause alludes to Psalm 132:11, a poetic reflection and plea based on 2 Samuel 7.⁵⁶ This allusion to Psalm 132 and ultimately back to the Davidic Covenant demonstrates that David had some knowledge of the

⁵² This construction is common in the New Testament. Cf. BAGD, 556.

⁵³ H. Seesemann, "οἶδα," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:116-17.

⁵⁴ E. Schütz, "Knowledge," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 391.

⁵⁵ Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 92-93.

⁵⁶ Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, 94; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77; Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 52; John B. Polhill, *Acts*, *New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery, vol. 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 114; Brawley, *Text to Text*, 85.

ultimate fulfillment of that promise. “To be sure, these references indicate that David would be the father of a line of kings, the throne would remain in his family and not be taken over by usurpers from some other family. Nevertheless, Peter takes it that one descendant is in mind.”⁵⁷ According to Peter, the resurrection of the Christ is an integral requirement for the accomplishment of the enduring throne promised to David. David’s prophetic words sprang then from his knowledge of the promise of God. The question arises whether David actually knew the messianic implications of the covenant or simply that his language allowed Peter to assert this knowledge.⁵⁸

Peter’s assertion that David knew of an ultimate son on his throne likely stems from two sources. Though one cannot assume to read Peter’s mind, his written expression discloses two key points. First David’s knowledge was prophetic.⁵⁹ Peter has already shown that David spoke Psalm 16:8-11 as a prophet. In 2:31, Peter observes that David foresaw when he prophesied of the Messiah’s resurrection. In the verse immediately preceding the quoted portion in Psalm 16, David himself said that God gave him intimate instruction (Psa 16:7). David did have significant knowledge of God’s plan. The coupling of this prophetic knowledge with David’s receipt of the Dynastic Covenant led David to the conclusion that the fulfillment of the covenant entailed more than a long reign of kings. The second

⁵⁷ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77.

⁵⁸ Bock takes this second alternative, stating that David’s language foresaw the fulfillment of the covenant (*Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 177).

⁵⁹ The general question of what prophets knew when they prophesied will be addressed in the subsequent discussion of προῖδὼν (v. 31).

indication is David's expressed knowledge of a messianic figure. Peter will follow his declaration concerning Psalm 16 with the prophecy by David in Psalm 110.⁶⁰ David was aware of a King greater than himself. This king would be exalted at the Father's right hand until all enemies were made His footstool (Ps 110:1). David received a promise of an enduring dynasty. David saw the ultimate King at the seat of honor at the Father's right hand. The ultimate fulfillment of the throne promise would be in this ultimate King. Peter's argument is not that David's language allowed Peter to assert knowledge of the covenant implications, but that David's personal covenantal and prophetic knowledge allowed him to speak of the supreme implication of God's promise. Peter then proclaims that this supreme implication, the resurrection of Messiah, has been fulfilled in Jesus.⁶¹

Peter's third declaration is that David's awareness of the messianic implications of the Dynastic Covenant contributed to his prophesying of the Messiah's resurrection. The exact content of David's knowledge is not now available.⁶² He did have insight as a prophet (2:30). He also had awareness of the מָלִיךְ who would be raised and of a Lord greater than himself who would be the ultimate King (Ps 110). This insight and awareness allowed David to grasp that the covenant given to him would find its supreme fulfillment in a single eternal King. To this insight and awareness Peter will add David's foresight.

⁶⁰ For a detailed discussion of OT evidence of David's messianic awareness, see Gregory V. Trull, "Peter's Use of Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-32" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002), 164-76.

⁶¹ The connection here of the resurrection to the eternal throne is similar to the connection of the resurrection to the eternal priesthood in Heb 7:15-17.

⁶² Fuller discussion of David's messianic awareness can be found in *Ibid*, 164-76.

Peter's fourth declaration concerning Psalm 16:8-11 is that David foresaw and spoke of the Messiah's resurrection. Peter says that David's resurrection prophecy is linked to this foresight.

The term for "foreseeing" is προῖδὼν. The verb is found only four times in the New Testament.⁶³ It is in the early part of the Psalm 16 quote in Acts 2:25, where it is used spatially to mean, "to see before one's eyes."⁶⁴ The usage in Acts 21:29 signifies having seen someone previously. The only other usage is quite close to Acts 2:31. Galatians 3:8 says that Scripture foresaw (προῖδοῦσα) that God would justify the Gentiles. Michaelis defines the usage in both Galatians 3:8 and Acts 2:31 as "advance knowledge." In David's case, his role as a prophet allowed him "to know in advance" of Messiah's resurrection.⁶⁵ The fact that Peter says David foresaw undermines positions such as typology that argue that ambiguous language allowed Peter to say the psalm foresaw Messiah's resurrection. Peter says that the author's foreknowledge drove the resurrection statements, not that the language allowed Peter to read back a resurrection.⁶⁶

The question of what all prophets understood of their own prophecy cannot be answered with certainty and is beyond the scope of this study. However, Peter has noted that David as a prophet knew in some way the implications of the

⁶³ Besides Acts 2:31, the verb occurs in Acts 2:25; 21:29; and Gal 3:8.

⁶⁴ W. Michaelis, "προοράω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:381.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* See discussion also in Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 954.

⁶⁶ Note Bock's placing the foreknowledge in the text, not the author. "Acts," in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 129.

Dynastic Covenant and, foreseeing, prophesied of Messiah's resurrection. What did David know? Previously, it has been argued that David was aware that Yahweh's covenant with him would culminate in an eternal King. Did David foresee this King's resurrection?

Peter himself describes the prophets' understanding regarding their prophecies. 1 Peter 1:10-11 says that the prophets "searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." Kaiser, citing BDF, BAGD and others, renders the phrase (τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν) as either an emphatic tautology ("time") or as time described ("time and kind of time").⁶⁷ He concludes that the prophets understood their prophecies except for the time of fulfillment. Specifically, Kaiser determines that this passage shows that the prophets knew the sufferings of Christ, the glories of Christ, the order of suffering and glory, and that they as prophets spoke to a future generation (v. 12).⁶⁸ To be precise, however, the passage states that the prophets searched for the times concerning what they spoke (the suffering and glory to follow). It does not say that they understood the suffering and glory, just that they spoke of it. In fact, many commentators offer this passage as support for the idea that the prophets often spoke of things they did not understand.⁶⁹ From 1

⁶⁷ Kaiser, "The Promise to David in Psalm 16," 95.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See for example, R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1945), 46; Edwin A. Blum, "1, 2 Peter," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 222; Roger M. Raymer, "1 Peter," in *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor

Peter 1:10-11, one can conclude that David knew he spoke concerning the future when he prophesied the resurrection of Messiah (v. 12). Acts 2:31 further specifies that David had foreknowledge of Messiah's resurrection.

To summarize Peter's statements concerning David's awareness of the significance of his own words, three points may be made. First, David as a prophet had future insight, though all its details cannot be known. Second, David's prophetic insight was aided by his understanding of the covenant given him by Yahweh. This included the awareness that the covenant would culminate in a messianic figure to rule eternally on David's throne. Third, David's foresight was linked to his prophecy of Messiah's resurrection. This implies recognition on David's part. If David had no foresight related to the Messiah's resurrection, the inclusion of the modifying *προῖδὼν* is superfluous. Therefore, though one cannot directly specify David's thoughts at the writing of Psalm 16:8-11 (beyond his written expression), one may conclude that David had sufficient insight into the future to allow him to foretell of Messiah's immediate resurrection.

Peter's fifth declaration concerning David's prophecy serves to focus the apostle's argument on part of the psalm quotation. Though Peter quotes vv. 8-11, he only employs v. 10 for his argument.⁷⁰ He repeats the two lines of v. 10 exactly, except for two changes. The first is the changing of the two verbs to aorist tense. He

Books, 1975), 842.

⁷⁰ The opening paragraph of the quotation section (above) addresses the possible explanations for Peter quoting vv. 8-11.

does this to indicate that from his point of view the action has already occurred.⁷¹ The second change is the replacing of τὸν ὅσιόν (“Holy One”) with ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ (his flesh). This focuses the passage on Messiah’s body. Peter’s point in citing Psalm 16:10 is that it prophesied that Messiah would neither be abandoned in the grave, nor experience physical decay. As noted above, David’s tomb served to demonstrate that he had experienced decay. This physical decay is the critical issue. God will raise David in a future general resurrection. He is not forever abandoned to the grave. The Messiah, however, would not only be rescued from the grave, but be rescued before His body suffered any decay. In this way, David is differentiated from his ultimate seed, Messiah. In the Old Testament context, this physical decay is tied to the דָּוִד (“favored one”) in Psalm 16:10b. In the psalm, David shifts from a first person pronoun in 16:10a to the third person דָּוִד in 16:10b.⁷² The resurrection before physical decay provides a further specification beyond abandonment to the grave. This דָּוִד is an extension beyond David to his seed, Messiah. The immediate resurrection also extends beyond David to the unique experience of Christ.

The inference that the prophecy of Messiah’s resurrection stems from Ps 16:10b rather than from the entire quote comes from four observations. First, Peter has already demonstrated that it is not necessary to develop an entire quote. He focused only on the beginning and the end of the Joel quote in his sermon. He does not address the coming of the great Day of the Lord (2:20). Second, Peter focuses his

⁷¹ Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, 95; David J. Williams, *Acts*, New International Biblical Commentary, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 52; Barrett, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 148.

⁷² See Gregory V. Trull, “Views on Peter’s Use of Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-32,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004): 194-214.

argument on the physical decay described only in 16:10b. The reference to David's tomb was to demonstrate that David's body decayed (2:29). Also, the change to ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ emphasized the physical body of Messiah (2:31). Third, the shift from a personal pronoun to the דָּוִד/δָּוִד in the psalm signaled a move away from David as referent in 16:10b.

Fourth, the argument cannot be built on the hope of not being abandoned to the grave. The Old Testament clearly taught a general resurrection. The righteous had hope of not being forever abandoned to the grave. Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:1-14, and Hosea 6:1-3 employ resurrection imagery to describe national restoration. The Isaiah passage describes the actual resurrection of corpses to a life of joy. These passages certainly imply godly people held a resurrection belief in the Old Testament period. By the time of Daniel, a resurrection was clearly specified. Daniel 12:2 describes the raising of both the righteous and the wicked to receive their appropriate rewards. Peter's audience would almost certainly believe in a general resurrection. Therefore, if the emphasis was solely on abandonment to the grave, David's undisturbed tomb only proved that the general resurrection had not yet occurred. Abandonment to the grave cannot bear the argument Peter makes. The necessary component is resurrection before decay. This comes only from 16:10b. Peter, therefore, focuses on Psalm 16:10b as the specific prophecy of the Messiah's resurrection.

In summary, Peter's introduction and commentary on Psalm 16:8-11 provide several important insights into his understanding of the passage. Peter's introduction pointed to Psalm 16:8-11 as the reason why death could not hold Jesus.

His logic was that Jesus had to be raised because death could not hold Messiah. Death could not hold Messiah because of the prophecy in Psalm 16:8-11. Peter's introduction also revealed that David spoke Psalm 16:8-11 in reference to Jesus the Messiah. This introduction ("David said in reference to him") established that David was not the sole referent of the quoted passage. Peter's subsequent explanation of the Ps 16 quote further specified how part of the psalm spoke only of Messiah. Peter stated that David's undisturbed tomb attested to the fact that he did not speak the prophecy of himself. David did not fulfill the words in Psalm 16:8-11. In fact, the words of Psalm 16:8-11 were the speech of a prophet who understood in some way the messianic implications of the Dynastic Covenant given to him. David's prophetic foresight and awareness of the covenant implications allowed him to speak of Messiah's resurrection. This resurrection is specifically prophesied in Psalm 16:10b, where it declares the Favored One's body will not experience decay.

After establishing that Psalm 16:10b predicted the resurrection of Messiah, Peter offers the evidence that Jesus fulfilled that prediction (2:32). Peter had used eyewitness evidence to establish other key points of his christological argument. The Pentecost audience attested to the validating signs God had done through Jesus (2:22). The presence of David's remains in his tomb was also well known to the listeners (2:29). The coming of the Holy Spirit as prophesied by Joel was apparent to the gathered crowd (2:33). Now, Peter offers eyewitness testimony that Jesus indeed had been resurrected (2:32). Peter and the Eleven, and probably many others, could testify that God had raised Jesus from the dead (cf. 1:22). Ps 16:10b predicted Messiah would be raised before decay. The apostles and others testified

that Jesus was raised before decay. Jesus demonstrated that He was the Messiah through His immediate resurrection.

Peter's commentary on Psalm 16:8-11 reveals important insights to his understanding of the original intended message. Psalm 16, especially v. 10b, is a prophecy of the Messiah's resurrection spoken by David. David is both a prophet and a recipient of the Dynastic Covenant. As a prophet, David had foresight of Messiah's resurrection. As recipient of the covenant, he had insight into its ultimate fulfillment in Messiah's rule. The phrase Peter used to introduce the quote served to focus the reference of the text to Messiah, rather than to David. The distancing of David from the referent of the psalm becomes even clearer through Peter's demonstration concerning David's tomb. David's decayed remains could be examined by any of Peter's hearers. This decay attested to Peter's point that David spoke not of himself, but of Messiah. Peter's point is that David moved beyond himself to prophesy of the resurrection of Messiah.

In conclusion, Peter presents Psalm 16:8-11, specifically 16:10b, as a direct prophecy from David concerning the resurrection of the Messiah. Though the detail of Peter's commentary on the original meaning of Psalm 16:10 represents a unique example in the New Testament usage of the Old, it does suggest that the New Testament authors had concern for the Old Testament authors' intended meanings. It also challenges evangelicals to take seriously the inerrant insights that those authors offer on Old Testament interpretation.