

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

completed by a bibliographical review of those works in German philosophy since the time of Kant, which still retain their value in the various departments of science. And he trusts that the final impression left upon the reader will be, the conviction, that "in the country of Kant, sound reason will eventually triumph over the vagaries of speculative imagination and the excesses of a haughty dialectics, which can only be done by constantly putting ourselves anew in the right position for hearing the voice of consciousness and knowing the eternal interests of humanity."

---

## ARTICLE VI.

### COMMENTARY ON THE SECOND AND THIRD CHAPTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

From the German of H. A. W. Meyer. By B. B. Edwards.

[Dr. Meyer is consistorial counsellor at Hanover, and pastor primarius of the city church. Nine Parts of his Commentary on the New Testament are published, embracing the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Owing to the demand for new editions of the earlier parts, and the pressure of other engagements, Dr. M. has called to his aid Prof. Huther, of Schwerin, who has prepared a Commentary on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and Dr. Lünemann, of Göttingen, who has published a Commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Second editions of Meyer's commentaries on the first three Gospels, and on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, have appeared. The later volumes, and especially the second editions, exhibit very marked improvement both in ability in expounding the text, and in orthodox views and feelings. In the Preface to the Commentary on the Colossians, 1848, the author writes: "It is the spirit of God which quickens the church; and it is the old, simple truth of the Gospel, which makes the church free, and one and invincible. On this rock, on which the church is placed, will the waves and foam of the spirits who affect another gospel than that of Nazareth, break and disappear." "The stock remains the

same as that which the Reformation drew from the divine germ of the Gospel. All life which does not proceed from this stock, is the life of destruction, the more feverish, as now, the more it is nourished only from without; and only the more dangerous, when placed, as now, under the power of the restless spirit of the times. Experience has sufficiently proclaimed, and it exists in us, that we are to grow up in conformity with the Scriptures, to that unity of Gospel faith, which, with all the variety of individual views, takes not away the unity of the spirit, and stands and remains on the foundation, which is God's living Son, his Light and Life, his Work and Spirit in his Word, which endures forever, while the fashion of this world passeth away."

The following passages will present, perhaps, a favorable specimen of the author's mode of exposition, though his views are still more conservative and sober now than they were six years ago, when the second edition of the Commentary on Matthew was published. We have omitted some comments and references as not interesting or important to the English reader.—TR.]

CHAP. II. v. 1. *Γεννηθῆντος*. The star is conceived as appearing contemporarily with the birth, v. 7. How long it was after the birth before the Magi came, appears approximately from v. 16, according to which, with all Herod's cruelty, and with his aim to make sure work, we may place the arrival of the Magi, with the most probability, somewhat over a year after the birth. *Δέ* is metabatic, serving to introduce another narrative. "Bethlehem Judah," to distinguish it from Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun. Josh. 19: 15. Our Bethlehem (Ephratah, Gen. 35: 16, 19) lay in the tribe of Judah, comp. Judges 17: 9, 19: 1, 1 Sam. 17: 12, six miles south of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> *ἐν ἡμέραις*, בְּיָמַי Gen. 26: 1, 2, 2 Sam. 21: 1; "of Herod," Herod the Great, son of Antipater, received in the year 714 U. C., from the Senate the kingly dignity, through Antony, by whom, not long before, he had been made tetrarch; but he did not attain actual possession of his kingdom till 717, after the capture of Jerusalem by himself and Sosius. He died in 750.<sup>2</sup> Magi, מַגִּי, formed among the Persians and Medes, a much respected priestly class; they employed themselves especially with the mysteries of nature, astrology

<sup>1</sup> Reland Pal. p. 642, Rosenmüller Bibl. Handb. II. 1. p. 122, Robinson Researches II. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Wieseler Chronol. Synop. 1843, p. 50. On the whole Herod family, Wolf Curæ, p. 60, Jahn's Archæologie II. 1, 563, Schlosser Geschich. d. Fam. Herod. Leip. 1818, Winer Realwört. 1847, I. p. 481.

and medicine.<sup>1</sup> There was also among the Babylonians, Jer. 39: 2, at the time of the Chaldean dynasty, such an order, at the head of which was Daniel, Dan. 2: 48. The name Magian, was then in general transferred to all without distinction of country, commonly wandering orientals, who had dedicated themselves to those sciences.<sup>2</sup> ἀπὸ ἀνατ. belong to μάγοι, Magians from the East, i. e. oriental Magians. By this connection, the position of the words is the most natural; the article of ἀπὸ, etc., is not required, since μάγοι is without the article. The indefinite phrase "eastern countries," is to be left indefinite.<sup>3</sup> It has been conjectured that the Magi came from Arabia, Persia, Parthia, Babylonia, Egypt. But neither from the entirely indefinite expression, "from the East," nor in the kind of gifts, v. 11, have we anything but an approximately sure datum. Wholly groundless is the attempt to determine the number of the Magi, from the three fold gifts, and on account of Ps. 72: 10, Is. 49: 7, 60: 3, 10, to regard the Magi as kings. Are we to view them as heathen, as most, since the time of the Fathers, have supposed, or Jews? In favor of the first supposition, is the inquiry, "Where is he who is born king of the Jews;" and how consonant also was the Messianic idea that the heathen appeared to pay homage to a Jewish king? Is. 60: 3 seq. The expectation of the Jews, also, of the universal dominion of their Messiah might have been then sufficiently extended in the oriental countries,<sup>4</sup> to lead actual heathen astrologers to the Jewish capital, with the intention of making the inquiry.<sup>5</sup> "Jerusalem." In the capital they expected the most reliable information.

VERSE 2. Γάγ gives the reason of the question. "His star," the star pointing out his birth. We are to conceive of an extraordinary star, not before seen by them, at whose appearing, they conclude from astrological rules, the birth of a new Jewish king. From the word ἀστὴρ, not ἄστρον, and unquestionably from v. 9, it appears that a constellation is not meant. This is contrary to the opinion of many,<sup>6</sup> who refer to a very near conjunction of Jupiter

<sup>1</sup> Herod. I. 132, Diog. Laert. I, 1-9, Aelian, V. H. 2, 17, Porphy. de Abst. an. 4, 16, Cic. de Div. 1, 41, Plin. N. H. 24, 29, 30, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Wetstein in loc., Winer II. p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Mt. 8: 11, 24: 27, Luke 13: 29, Rev. 21: 13.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. Vesp. 4, Tac. H. 5, 13, Joseph. B. J. 6, 5, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Cass. Dio. Hist. R. 45, 1, Suet. Oct. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Kepler de J. Ch. vero anno natalitio, Franc. 1606, Münster Stern d. Weisen Copenh. 1827, Ideler Handb. d. Chronol. II. 399, Paulus, Neander, Leben J. 29 Olshausen doubtful, Krabbe Vorlesun. 96, Wieseler Chronol. Synop. 62, Ebrard Krit. d. Evang. Gesch. p. 248.

and Saturn in the constellation Pisces, which occurred U. C. 747; with which still, Ebrard, defining *ἀσθή* more exactly, sees in the star of the Magi, not that constellation itself, but the *new* star of the first magnitude, which Kepler saw in 1604 at the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, but which disappeared in 1605, while Wieseler has recourse to a comet observed in China in A. D. 750. The Jew Abarbanel<sup>1</sup> concluded from a similar conjunction in 1463, that the birth of the Messiah was near, and indicates the constellation Pisces as significant for the Jews. But v. 9 points only to a *remarkable* star, to one going and standing in a wonderful manner; so it is clear that neither a comet, nor a planet, nor a meteor is meant. The church fathers conceive it to be an angel.<sup>2</sup> The splendor of the star is wondrously painted by Ignatius ad Eph. 19. It was a general belief of antiquity that the appearance of stars denoted great changes, and particularly the birth of important men.<sup>3</sup> The Jews especially believed in a star of the Messiah.<sup>4</sup>—*ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*. Some translate, “in the rising.”<sup>5</sup> But on account of v. 9, where the antithesis of *ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*, and *οὐ ἦν τὸ παιδίον* obviously bring out the *local* difference; and on account of *ἀπὸ ἀνατ.* in v. 1, the translation “in the East” is to be preferred, which also well agrees with the *καὶ ἤλθουμεν* following—*προσκυνεῖς*, by casting one’s self down with the face on the ground, before one, reverence and subjection were denoted. Gen. 19:1, 42:6, 18:2, 48:12, Herod. I. 134, Nep. Con. 3. Curt. 5, 2. 6, 6.

VERSE 3. Herod trembled as he feared the overthrow of his throne; the inhabitants were troubled as they expected the cruelty of their tyrant, revolutions and political horrors, it then being the belief that very sad times would precede the Messianic kingdom.<sup>6</sup> *Ἱεροσόλυμα* fem. form. Comp. 3, 5, Jos. de Bell. J. 1, 5, 7, 18, c. Ap. I. 1047.

VERSE 4. *Πάντας*—*λαοῦ* is not considered by Fritzsche after Grotius<sup>7</sup> as a meeting of the Sanhedrim, but as an extraordinary convention of *all* the chief priests and scribes, in order to investigate the thing more exactly. But the words themselves admit the meaning *Sanhe-*

<sup>1</sup> Maajne haschuah, Amst. 1547.

<sup>2</sup> “A divine and angelic power, appearing in the emblem of a star.” Theophyl.

<sup>3</sup> Wetstein in loc., Baur Symbol. u. Mythol. II. 308.

<sup>4</sup> Bertholdt Christol. Jud. p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Ebrard, Wieseler, etc. Comp. Stob. Ecl. Phys. 1, 20, Luke 1: 78.

<sup>6</sup> The dolores Messiae, Sanhedr. f. 98. 2. Shabb. 118, 1. Lightfoot Hor. ad Marc. 13, 19. Schöttgen Hor. II. 512, Bertholdt Christ. Jud. p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> “An assembly of learned men, extra ordinem, convened by the king.”

*drim*, since this is denoted even without the third class of assessors, who with them are called the *πρεσβύτεροι*.<sup>1</sup> Besides, it was in the highest degree in accordance with the importance of the matter and the interests of the king, to lay the question before the Sanhedrim, so as to obtain an official solution of the same as a basis for further proceedings. Hence I prefer the common explanation "a full session of the Sanhedrim" so that all the chief priests and elders, who belonged to the Sanhedrim, are meant<sup>2</sup> — *ἀρχιερείς* included partly the actual, directing high-priest,<sup>3</sup> partly those priests who had before filled that office, (for then, through the arbitrary caprice of the Romans, this honor was often changed, Jos. Antt. 15, 8) and probably also the leaders of the twenty-four classes of the priests, 1 Chron. 24: 6, 2 Chron. 36: 14, Jos. Antt. 28, 8, 8. — *γραμματεῖς*, מִיִּזְבֵּיט, in Luke, *συναγοί* and *σοφοδιδάσκαλοι*, were the teachers and interpreters of the divine law, who as counsellors in religious and civil relations, mostly belonging to the sect of the Pharisees, and partly to the Sanhedrim, were highly esteemed.<sup>4</sup> — *γυνῶται* not in the future sense, of a certain future represented as present, Bernh. Syntax p. 371, but purely present. The inquiry was: "Where is the Messiah born?" The Sanhedrim were to say what they knew on the birth place of the Messiah. In this general form the question is to be left, in which Herod reserved wholly to himself, the question whether the birth had already happened, or was still to take place.

Verses 6. In Micah 5: 1, which passage is here freely quoted, and not according to the Sept., the sense is, "Though Bethlehem is too unimportant to be reckoned among the principal cities, still a governor of Judah shall proceed from thence." In Matthew, this thought, with a little variation, is reversed: "Bethlehem is surely an important place, since," etc. Hence it is unnecessary with Grotius and others, to take the passage in Micah interrogatively, "Art thou, then, Bethlehem, too small," etc.?<sup>5</sup> — *γῆ* only in derived sense *city*, then, and

<sup>1</sup> Comp. 20: 18, 26: 3; on the contrary in 27: 1, the *γραμματεῖς* are not named. See also Acts 15: 15, 24: 1.

<sup>2</sup> On the *סנהדרין* consisting of 71 members, the highest politico-religious court of the Jews after the exile, see Buxt. Lex. Talm., p. 1514, Selden de Synedriis, Reland Antt. Sac. 2, 7. Hartm. Verbind. d. A. T. 173, Winer Realw. II, 551.

<sup>3</sup> *Ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς*, כֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל, Lev. 15: 10. Winer, I. 502.

<sup>4</sup> Reland Antt. Sac. 3, 9, 17, Lightfoot Hor. in loc. and at Mt. 23: 4. Suicer Thesaur. on *γραμματ.*, Winer II. 426.

<sup>5</sup> [The quotation made by the Sanhedrim is not verbally accurate. The great object, however, for which it is cited is perfectly clear, namely, that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. This point only was important. Great freedom

properly the district in which the city lies. — *ἐξελεύσεται*, according to *Mat. nascetur*, thus, *קצף*, Gen. 17: 6.<sup>1</sup> — *ποιμανεῖ*, comp. the Homeric *ποιμένες λαῶν*.<sup>2</sup> Finally, this passage, which in *Micah* refers to a great king of David's family, is also explained in the Rabbins of the birth of the Messiah. Schöttg. and Wets.

VERSE 7. *Λύθρα* inconsistent enough, since secrecy could only awaken suspicion, but to work privily is natural for a bad man! The inquiry for the time of the appearance of the star has its ground in this, that the suspicious Herod already thought of the possibility of not again seeing the Magi, and that then he should still have a *datum* for further proceedings against the fated child, comp. v. 16. — *τοῦ φαινόμενον ἀστέρος*. "Not the beginning, but the continuance is denoted." Grotius. Herod asks: "How long since the star appeared?" How long it has been visible, namely in the East, v. 9. So the Part. is to be construed as in the Present tense, not in the sense of the Aor. or Imperf.

VERSE 8. *Προσθίντες* and immediately after *ἔλθόν*; these and like participles are not to be explained as Hebraistic pleonasm, but they serve, in all languages, especially the ancient, to impart, by a peculiar circumstantiality a vividness to the commencement of sentences and the by-clauses.<sup>3</sup>

VERSE 9. "After they had heard the king, they departed. A simple description of their artless deportment. — "And behold the star," etc. They travelled by night, according to the well known oriental custom. Bengel on *ἰδοῦ*, "*toto itinere non viderant stellam.*" Winer, 318. — *προῆγεν*. In the opinion of some, the star did not again appear till the Magi reached Bethlehem, and they translate the verb in the Plup., *had preceded*. But *προῆγεν* is Imperf., and is never used in the sense of the Plup., and the entire theory proceeds only from the effort to diminish what is remarkable; and it is contrary to the character of the narration. The common explanation only

---

in the matter of quotation from the Old Test. is everywhere obvious in the New Test. " *בְּיָמֵינוּ* in *Mic. 5: 1*, is pr. the families into which each tribe was divided, the heads of which were called *בְּיָמֵינוּ* *Zech. 12: 5, 6*; and *Mat.* by meton. puts *ἡγεμόνες* *chiefs* of families for the families themselves, as also for the cities in which they dwelt. Robinson's New Testament Lex.—Tr. ]

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Heb. 7: 5, Lib. Enoch, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Examples from the classics in Raphel, Kypke, Alberti, Wetstein and Elsner. So *ἡγεμόνων* of a governor, 2 Sam. 5: 2, Jer. 23: 2 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Kühner Gr. II. § 666, A. 2, School Gr. Eng. Tr. p. 472. On this use of *προσθίνεις*, see Gerd. Beitr. p. 103.

corresponds to the words and the connection: "The star went before them on their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and remained standing over the place (house) where the child was."

VERSE 10. *Σφόδρα*, on adverbs at the end of a sentence, see Schäfer ad Demos. V. 367, Bornemann Xen. Anab. 2, 6, 9.

VERSE 11. It is not to be said that Matthew knows nothing of the stall, (Luke,) or of the hole, (Apocrypha,) for the Magi did not come till after the birth. "The child with Mary" so naturally come together, that the omitting to mention Joseph is to be attributed to no design. "Treasures." Symbolical applications of particular gifts are arbitrary.<sup>1</sup> It was and is still the custom of the East, not to come before princes without presents. Gen. 43: 11, 1 Sam. 10: 27, 1 K. 10: 2, Aelian V. H. 1. 31.

VERSE 12. *Καὶ* the simple *and*, further narrating. — *ρηματισθέντες*. "An answer having been received," "being admonished by a divine response." The preceding inquiry, where it is not mentioned, is presupposed. Comp. Acts 10: 22. "Thus they had desired, or had asked." The Pass. occurs only in New Test. and Josephus. This direction to the Magi was not designed to secure the safety of the child, vs. 13 sq., but their own.

VERSE 13. *Φαίρεται*. The historic Pres. in lively, vivid narrative<sup>2</sup> — *ἕως ἂν δώσω σοί*, "till I shall have given thee direction." — *τοῦ ἀπολέσαι*. This construction of the Infin., with the Gen. of the article, expresses intention.<sup>3</sup> It is not a Hebraism (ᾤ with the Infin.) but genuine Greek, when that language was flourishing, but still more common in the decline of the Attic.<sup>4</sup>

VERSE 15. *Τὸν υἱὸν μου* is referred in Hos. 11: 1 (cited after the original text, not after the Seventy,) to the Israelitish people, who are called in the Old Test., in the theocratic sense, Son of God, Ex. 4: 22, Jer. 31: 9. The Seventy have *τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ*. The *ἴνα πληρωθῆ* here refers to the carrying down of Jesus to Egypt, and his abode there, which must take place, in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled; [no, *ἴνα* here means, not *in order that*, but *so that*. The event took place, so that there was a fulfilment. This is commonly

<sup>1</sup> "They had brought frankincense and myrrh to him as God."— Chrys. "They had given gold to him as king, frankincense as God, myrrh as to him about to taste of death."— Theoph.

<sup>2</sup> John 1: 29, 44, 9: 13, Acts 10: 10, Matthiae § 504, 1, Kühner II. p. 63, School Gr. p. 337, Winer 309, Zumpt Latin Gr. p. 431.

<sup>3</sup> Fritzsche in loco and Excur. II. Winer p. 376.

<sup>4</sup> Matthiae p. 1257, Bernh. Synt. 367.



regarded as an accommodation of language to our Lord, which was originally applied to the Israelites. — TR.]

VERSE 16. Ἀπὸ διετούς sc. παιδός, "of two years," so the Syr. and Arab.; also Beza correctly, *a bimulus*. Others suppose διετούς to be Gen. neut., *a bimatu*. This is entirely contrary to the usus loquendi, for in all the parallel passages from the Heb. and Seventy, a masculine is to be supposed from the context, Numb. 1: 8, 20: 45, Esr. 8: 8, 1 Chron. 27: 23, 2 Chron. 31: 16. The males of two years and younger, Herod, according to this narrative, caused to be murdered, in order to accomplish his design the more unerringly. He had ascertained from the Magi, that according to the time of the appearing of the star, the child must be in his second year. "In all its districts:" single houses and hamlets outside of Bethlehem, which yet belonged to its territory. — ἐνεπαίχθη, Calvin correctly: "Matthew speaks according to the feeling and opinion of Herod."

VERSE 18. Jer. 31: 15, here freely cited according to the Seventy, treats of the carrying away of the Jews to Babylon, whose calamity, their ancestor, Rachel, laments. According to the typical explanation of Matthew, the lament of Rachel, represented by the prophet, is transferred to the murder of the children of Bethlehem, whose children are *hers*, since she was Jacob's wife, and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, Gen. 35: 18; and this typical significance of Rachel's sorrow was so much the more present to Matthew, as Rachel lay buried near Bethlehem, Gen. 35: 19. Some think that Matthew has conceived of Rachel as the representative of Bethlehem, or of the Bethlehem mothers. But why, according to the typical explanation of the prophetic words, should not Rachel herself appear as wailing over the slaughter of those children? Now, Ramah, where, according to the prophet, the lamentation is heard, is viewed by Matthew as the type of Bethlehem. After the old expositors, Kuinoel arbitrarily explains: "The place is not indicated where the lamentation arose, but that to which it extended, so that it signifies, 'that it was heard far and wide.'" Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, six Roman miles north of Jerusalem, the border fortress of the kingdom of Israel towards Judah, not far from Gibeah.<sup>1</sup> Here were the exiles held in custody. Jer. 40: 1 — θρήνος etc., three similar conceptions are placed together, to strengthen the common fundamental idea. See examples in Wets. The old canon, that the Part. stands for the finite tenses, is false.<sup>2</sup> A simple, easy connection

<sup>1</sup> Reland Pal. 959, Winer Realw. II. 300, Robinson II. 315-17.

<sup>2</sup> Winer Gr. p. 395, Döderlein ad Soph. Oed. Col. 598, Fritz. Dis. II. ad 2 Cor. p. 43, ad Rom. I. p. 281, Herm. ad Viger. 776.

of the Part. with the finite verb is possible with *ἠκούσθη* or with *εἰς ἤθελα*, so that *καὶ* would be also, "Rachel weeping — was also inaccessible to comfort."<sup>1</sup> The first I prefer as the most natural and most agreeable to the pathetic style, so that "Rachel weeping," follows in apposition; for the writer, moved by the gravity of the succeeding sentiments, turns from a Part. to a finite verb.<sup>2</sup>

VERSE 20. *Τεθνήμασι* — *ζητούντες* is to be understood merely of Herod. The Pl. very often occurs where a generic idea is expressed, and then denotes the object, not in respect to the number, but the category to which it belongs.<sup>3</sup> This construction is often, specially in the tragedians, emphatic.<sup>4</sup> Some explain the word of Herod and his counsellors, but against v. 19; others, of a pluralis excellen., in the highest degree inconsistent with the declaration of an angel in regard to a deceased tyrant; still others, because the words are borrowed from Ex. 4: 19. But the similarity is either accidental, or designedly chosen for the sake of the historical parallel. — *ζητῶν τῆν ψυχὴν* "to seek after the life."<sup>5</sup> Herod died of a loathsome disease, in the 37th year of his reign, and in the 70th of his age.<sup>6</sup> The tyrant died in despair.

VERSE 20. Augustus, after the death of Herod, divided his kingdom among his four sons, as follows: Archelaus had Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; Antipas, Galilee and Peraea; Philip, Batanea, Trachonitis and Auranitis. The last two were named tetrarchs. Archelaus had the title of ethnarch, which he would have exchanged for the regal title, if he had been found worthy of it, Jos. Antt. 17, 11, 4. On account of his cruelty, he was banished, after nine years, by Augustus, to Vienne in Gaul, Jos. Ant. 17, 13, 2, B. J. 2, 73, and died there — *βασιλεύειν* is here used in a general sense, "to govern."<sup>7</sup> — *ἐπεβήθη*, for Archelaus was like his father in a suspicious temper and cruelty, Jos. Antt. 17, 11, 2 — *ἰκτὶ ἀκάλθεσιν* a well known case of attraction, according to which adverbs of rest are connected with verbs expressing direction towards an object.<sup>8</sup> "Parts of Galilee,"

<sup>1</sup> On the difference between *καὶ εἰς* and *οὐδέ*, see Hartung Partikell. I. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Kühner ad Xen. Mem. 2, 1, 30, Robbins's ed. p. 270, Kühn. Gr. II. 376.

<sup>3</sup> Winer Gr. p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Herm. ad Viger. p. 739.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Rom. 11: 3. The Part. Pres., as often, is here used substantively, Rom. 4: 4, Gal. 1: 23, Eph. 4: 28.

<sup>6</sup> Jos. B. J. 1. 33, 1, 5, Euseb. II. E. 1, 6, 8, Jos. Antt. 17, 8, 1, 17, 9, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Pape's Lex. I. 365.

<sup>8</sup> John 7: 35, 8: 21, 11: 8, 18: 3, Seventy, Dent. 1: 37, 2 Sam. 17: 18. So *εἰς* is connected with verbs expressing direction, aim, Dent. 1: 37, 1 Sam. 2: 14.

i. e. to Galilee. The voluptuous Antipas was known to be milder than Archelaus.

VERSE 28. Ἐλθὼν to Galilee—εἰς πόλιν. εἰς belongs not to ἔλθων, but to κερύσσει with which it stands; κερύσσει involves the fact of the preceding motion connected with the settlement, and so that this fact was predominant in the mind of the writer.<sup>1</sup> Nazareth was in Lower Galilee, in the tribe of Zebulon, on a hill, Luke 4: 20, with pleasant environs.<sup>2</sup>—ὄμιλος not ecclastic, but in order that<sup>3</sup>—διὰ τῶν προφ. not the Pl. of category, according to which Isaiah only would be meant, but the prophets in general.—ὄτι not the recitative, which only introduces the words of another, Kühn. II. p. 478, but that, since no express declaration is quoted.

CHAR. III. v. 1. Ἐν—ἰουδαίᾳ, Ex. 2: 11, 28, Is. 38: 1, a *locus* designation of time, which still always points to a foregoing date, Mark 1: 9, Luke 2: 1; here “in the time while Jesus still remained in Galilee.” Matthew leaps over the history of the youth of Jesus, and goes at once to his forerunner, partly, as he might be ignorant of this early history, partly, since he was concerned only with the leading facts in regard to the Messiah. The vague expression, “in those days,” belongs to the simplicity of unstudied historical writing, as Ex. 2: 11, where, with the same expression, the time is meant in which Moses remained at the Egyptian court; not the time of his childhood, v. 10, but of his manhood. Bengel: “Jesus dwelling at Nazareth; an interval is denoted, not brief, but marked by no greater change.” δέ is metabatic—καρῶν is present historical. “Desert of Judea,” Judges 1: 16, Josh. 5: 61, a tract devoted to pasturage, little built upon or inhabited, beginning at Tekoah and extending to the Dead Sea.<sup>4</sup> The local notice in Luke 8: 2, 3, is more exact, but that of Matthew, with whom the wilderness is not bounded by the valley of the Jordan, is not incorrect.

VERSE 2.<sup>5</sup> Μεταστῆς denotes the change of the moral feelings, which was requisite in order to a participation in the Messianic kingdom. Sanhdr. f. 92, 2. “If the Israelites exercise penitence, then they are liberated by the Redeemer.” In the mouth of John, the conception could only have been that of the Old Testament, expres-

<sup>1</sup> Comp. 4: 13, Acts 7: 4, Kühn. II. p. 317, Wilke New Test. Rhet. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Reland Pal. p. 96, Winer Realw. II. p. 142, Robin. III. 183-200.

<sup>3</sup> [It seems, however, to be ecclastic, and to be equivalent to ἕνα πλῆθος θῆ v. 16, 8: 17.—TR.]

<sup>4</sup> Rob. Pal. II. p. 182, seq. Winer Realw. II. p. 698.

<sup>5</sup> See Ven Rehdén Joh. d. Tausler in s. Leb. u. Wirken, Lübeck, 1838.

ing a deportment according to the moral demands of the law, but not the Christian, according to which, repentance has faith in Christ as its immediate consequence, after which the Holy Spirit received, establishes and completes the new moral life, Acts 2: 38. — ἡ γῆ is near, for John expected that Jesus would establish his kingdom. — ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, the kingdom of the heavens (the Pl. is to be explained from the conception of the seven heavens. 2 Cor. 12: 2,) so named only in Matthew;<sup>1</sup> elsewhere in the N. Test. "kingdom of God," "kingdom of Christ," or absolutely "the kingdom." It is called the Messianic kingdom, not because the words οὐρανῶν express God, but because this kingdom is conceived as descending from heaven and entering the world, Gal. 4: 26. The common idea of the Jews in regard to the Messianic kingdom, was predominantly politico-national, with the fanatical stamp of an universal dominion, to last a thousand years; the Messiah awakes the descendants of Abraham; then follow the reign of a thousand years; the resurrection and condemnation of the heathen; the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the eternal life of the descendants of Abraham on the earth, which is to be transformed, along with the universe. With Christ and the apostles the idea of the Messianic kingdom is not national, but universal, i. e. so that the participation in it is not conceived as depending on a connection with Abraham, but on faith in Christ and the moral state conditioned thereby, without distinction of nations; hence the religious and moral point of view — the idea of an actual theocracy — comes into the foreground, without the idea of the universal dominion, the expectation of the renovation of the world, the resurrection, the judgment and eternal glory, losing their positive significance, truth and worth. These expressions, "kingdom of heaven," etc., never signify else than the Messianic kingdom, even in those passages where they seem to denote the church, the Christian religion, etc. That John the Baptist had embraced the idea of the Messianic kingdom in its moral aspect, and free from Jewish prejudice, without still giving up the political element, 11: 3, is shown in vs. 7 seq.

VERSE 3. It was the Jewish belief, originating from Mat. 3: 1, that a greater prophet would precede the Messiah. Men generally expected Elijah; others, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah.

VERSE 4. *Αὐτός*, "but he himself, John, who was speaking," forms a transition from the prediction in respect to the Baptist, to

<sup>1</sup> Targ. Mich. 4, 8, and often in the Rabbins, Wets. p. 256.

the delineation of the historical person. "He had his garment of camel's hair," distinguishing him, and constantly worn by him. — *αἰρέων* is neither to be written *αἰρού*, nor is it a pleonasm. It is appropriate from the position of the narrator, and is without reflexive emphasis. Coarse garments for clothing and for tent-coverings, are still prepared from camel-hair, Winer I. 645. "Leathern," not from a luxurious material, but such as Elijah wore. The dress and food of the Baptist corresponded to his stern character. — *ὄσφιν* the Sing. denotes the part of the body around which he wore the girdle. Several kinds of locusts were eaten, Lev. 11: 22. This is still done in the East, specially by the poorer classes. The wings and bones are removed, the remainder is sprinkled with salt, and either cooked or eaten raw.<sup>1</sup>

VERSE 5. "The country around the Jordan," *בְּאֶרְצוֹת יַרְדֵּן*, Gen: 18: 10, 11, 1 K. 7: 37, the country on both sides of the river, now el-Ghôr.<sup>2</sup> On the custom of symbolical washings among the Jews, Gen. 35: 2, Ex. 19: 10, Num. 19: 7, and other nations, see Wets. in loc., Meiners's History of all Religions, p. 81, etc. John's baptism was not a modified use of the Jewish proselyte baptism. For the latter — the oldest witness in respect to which is in the Gemara Babylon. Jebamoth 46, 2, and about which Philo, Josephus and the older Targumists are wholly silent — was not introduced till after the destruction of Jerusalem. While the temple stood, proselytes were admitted by circumcision and the presentation of an offering, which last was preceded, as every offering was, by a lustration, which the proselyte administered to himself, as a Levitical purification. But, John's baptism is to be viewed in connection, not only with this lustration, but in general with the religious usages of the Jews in respect to washings, and their symbolical meaning. That there was an expectation of a special Messianic baptism, is improbable — *ἕξομολογούμενοι*. Is a summary or a specific confession meant? one or the other, according to the difference of individuals and their relations. The compound verb marks the open and earnest confession, Acts 13: 33.

VERSE 7. "Pharisees," (from *פָּרַד* to separate, the separated), received, besides the law, traditions; taught a doctrine of fate, still without denying the freedom of the will; immortality (and as it respects the pious in other bodies, not a resurrection of the body, and not a transmigration of souls); good and evil angels, and they affect-

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr Reise I. 402, Winer I. 487.

<sup>2</sup> Winer I. 601, Robinson II. 596.

ed a holy life.<sup>1</sup> The Sadducees (from סַדּוּקָי?), acknowledged merely the written law, not the Pentateuch only, but the whole Old Testament, but with the exclusion of traditions, denied the existence of superior spirits, fate, immortality, and held to severe morals; they were in less esteem among the people than the Pharisees, against whom they formed a determined opposition; still they were numerous among the principal men and the rich.<sup>2</sup> — *ἐνί* the moral direction of the aim, L. 23: 48, Winer Gr. p. 485. It has not the meaning of *against*, "that they might oppose his baptism." They came with the design of being baptized, but were offended by the preaching of repentance and of punishment, Luke 7: 30. — *ἐχιδ.* artful, wicked men, Is. 14: 29, 59: 5, Ps. 58: 5. "Wrath to come," the Divine wrath to be poured out when the Messiah comes to judgment, 1 Thess. 1: 10. The Jews appropriated this wrath to the heathen, John to the godless, who repented not. The wrath of God is not the punishment, but the holy feeling of absolute displeasure towards the wicked, from which punishment proceeds as a consequence, Rom. 1: 18, Ephes 2: 3. — *φυγεῖν ἀπό* is a pregnant construction "to flee and thus remove themselves," Is. 48: 20. The Aor. Infin. denotes the action as momentary, Kühn. II. p. 80, exhibiting the point of the outbursting of the wrath, in which also the flight is realized. Meaning: "Can no one have taught you that ye should flee," etc.

VERSE 8. Consequence from the preceding: "With your present character, ye cannot escape punishment; consequently, so conduct as is meet for those who have repented." "To bring forth fruit," a figurative expression, borrowed from a fruit tree, Acts 26: 20.

VERSE 9. *δοξεῖν* is never pleonastic, and can in no place be neglected, Winer Gr. p. 697; "think not that ye may say," etc.; "in yourselves," reflection represented as the language of the inner man, comp. Heb. "he said in his heart," Ps. 4: 5, 10: 6, 14: 1. "Abraham to your father." The Jews believed that the children of Abraham would, as such, share in the salvation of the Messianic kingdom, for Abraham's righteousness would be imputed to them. "God is able," "He may exclude you from salvation, and from these stones lying around the Jordan may raise up others, who shall be Abraham's genuine children," Rom. iv., Gal. iv., John 8: 39, 40.

VERSE 10. The deciding moment is already near, after which the unworthy shall be excluded from the kingdom of the Messiah, and

<sup>1</sup> Jahn Archaeol. III. 117, De Wette Archaeol. § 274, Winer, II. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Jahn, II. 203, Winer, II. 252, Grossmann de Philosoph. Sadd. Lips. 1836.

be cast into Gehenna. — *καί* 'also,' 'even.' The verbs in the Pres. tense, *ἐκόντι*. and *βάλλ.* mean "what will happen immediately and certainly," with special definiteness, not the general sense, "accustomed to be hewn down," etc.

VERSE 11. "Still, I am not the one who shall decide in regard to the reception or rejection, but it is the *Messiah*. — *εἰς μὲν*. denotes the *aim* of the baptism, Winer Gr. p. 473. — *ἐν ὕδατι* instrumental. The opposite higher baptism of Jesus "with the Holy Spirit and fire" shows that the points indicated as instrumental are reciprocal, comp. Mark 1: 8, L. 3: 16, and that *εἰς μὲν* is only a more exactly defining by-clause. In Mark and Luke the coming of the Messiah as such is brought out emphatically. The Pres. denotes the near and definite commencing Fut. — *οὐ οὐκ εἰμί* etc. "Compared with the Messiah I am too small to be his most menial slave." To carry, to put on and take off the sandals, was the office of the meanest slaves, among the Jews, Greeks and Romans. — *ἐν πν. ἁγ. κ. πνεύ.* 'with the Holy Spirit,' those among you who shall believe in the Messiah; with the fire of Gehenna, those who reject him. Both ideas are figuratively represented as "to baptize," so far as the two are the opposite aspects of the Messianic lustration, by which believers are sanctified, unbelievers are cast into hell.'

VERSE 12. *Ὁ* is not pleonastic; "he has his fan, appropriate to him, in his hand, ready to use." Comp. Is. 9: 5 in Sept. *ἀλωνα*, *רָחֵי*. an open, circular, smooth place in the field itself, where the grain was trodden out, either by oxen, or a threshing-sledge drawn by oxen. Rob. Pal. III. 143, Winer II. 591. "The floor is purged in order that the grain and chaff may be separated, and each collected for their appropriate destination." In the image, "the floor of the Messiah." does not denote mankind, but the place where he has assembled them, and determines the separation of the judgment, Mat. 25: 31 — 33. The compound *διακαθ.* denotes the purification throughout, from one end to the other. The granaries were mostly dry, subterranean vaults. — *ἀχυρον* not simply chaff in the narrow sense, but the worthless parts of the stalk and ear, which remain after the threshing. "The Messiah will take the worthy — those who repent — into his kingdom, but the unworthy he will give over to the eternal punishment of Gehenna."

VERSE 13. *Τότε*, then, as John was announcing the coming of the Messiah, and was baptizing the people. Jesus would be baptized by John, because he was conscious that it was the will of God, in order to inaugurate him formally and solemnly as the Messiah.

VERSE 14. This passage does not contradict John 1: 33, as the latter asserts that John had not known Jesus as the Messiah, or he needed to have his belief confirmed by the visible proof of the descent of the dove. — *δεικνύων*, more emphatic than the simple verb — *ἐγὼ γαίως*, “If either of us is to be baptized, I have need to be baptized by thee as the most worthy,” Grotius. “And comest thou to me?” a question expressing astonishment, for nothing was said of baptism in the divine announcement, John 1: 33.

VERSE 15. *Ἄρτι, νῦν*, allow it now. — *ἡμῖν*, thee and me. “All righteousness,” everything which it becomes us to do.

VERSE 16. *εὐθὺς* is connected with *ἀνέβη*, “after he was baptized, he went up immediately.” “The heavens were opened,” not a brightening up of the sky, not a storm quickly disappearing, but an actual opening of the heavens, in which the Holy Spirit descends, Ez. 1: 1, John 1: 52, Acts 7: 56, Is. 64: 1. — *αὐτῷ* refers to Jesus and is the Dat. *commodi*, “for Jesus.” — *εἶδε* the subject is not John, but Jesus; *ἐπ’ αὐτόν* is not for *ἐφ’ αὐτόν*, Kühn. § 628, 1. — “as a dove.” Luke 3: 22 says expressly that the dove descended *ἐν σαματικῷ εἶδει*, in a bodily form, which determines the more indefinite expressions of the other evangelists.

VERSE 17. *φωνή* — *λέγουσα*. We are neither to supply *ἐγένετα*, nor does the Part. stand for a finite verb, but we are to translate, “and see there a voice,” etc., Luke 5: 12, 19: 20, Acts 8: 27. *ὁ ἀγγελικός*, the Article does not make the expression emphatic, *dilectissimus*, but it is grammatically required. The Divine voice solemnly proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, *ὁ υἱὸς μου*, which designation of the Messiah from Ps. 2: 7, in the Christian consciousness was not a mere official name, but was at the same time of a metaphysical import, denoting the *genesis* of Jesus in his spiritual nature.