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Abstract: In Matthew 2:15, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 and states that the events recounted are a direct fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy. However, the Hosea passage is a clear reference to the exodus, not to an event which occurred over 1400 years later. Was Matthew playing fast and loose with Hosea's prophecy? Was his statement of fulfillment an abuse of Hosea's context and meaning? Matthew 2:15 is one of the most problematic passages in the Bible with respect to the New Testament use of the Old Testament.

Key Words: prophecy, fulfillment, typology, *midrash*, *peshet*, *sensus plenior*; analogical.

Introduction

The use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers can certainly be problematic and has for centuries been the subject of much debate. A particularly vexing problem and perhaps the best-known example is the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. In 2:15 Matthew quotes the prophet Hosea to demonstrate that the flight of Joseph and Mary to Egypt and their subsequent return after Herod's infanticide was a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. However, it is apparent after even a cursory examination of the text that it is not a prophecy at all, but rather a reference to a past historical event in Israel's history. Since the context of Hosea 11:1 was not looking forward to the coming Messiah, which aspect of the passage required fulfillment? This problem has vexed numerous interpreters of Matthew's Gospel. There is simply no consensus of scholarly opinion as to Matthew's hermeneutical technique. Even a brief examination of the views of various interpreters reveals a quagmire of different attempts to solve this thorny problem. This paper will attempt to examine the issue objectively. It will state the nature of the problem, provide a brief survey of interpretations offered by different writers, examine both texts in their historical and literary contexts, and seek to navigate the confusion. Finally, a solution to the problem will be proposed.

The Problem Stated

Walter Kaiser provides some insight into the scope and complexity of this question. He writes:

There are, however, a number of problems surrounding Matthew's appeal to this passage: (1) Why does he quote Hosea 11:1 when the Holy Family goes *into* Egypt in verse 15? Should he not have waited until verse 20 if he wished to stress their *coming out* of Egypt?; (2) Is Hosea 11:1 a prophecy or in any sense a prediction of this event that overtook Joseph, Mary, and Jesus? Is not Hosea merely referring to a past historical act of God in the Exodus? Perhaps Matthew's hermeneutical method here betrays a use of *pesher*, *sensus plenior*, typology, or some other option than direct prophecy; and (3) What is the significance of Matthew's fulfillment formula, and what is his purpose in quoting this text?¹

Kaiser concludes by asking, "Did Matthew properly use Hosea 11:1 or did he abuse both Hosea's context and meaning?"² It appears on the surface that Matthew's citation of Hosea 11:1 ignores the verse's context, engages in fanciful and arbitrary exegesis, and creates a "new hermeneutic" to justify his Christian presuppositions. If this is indeed true, a veritable "Pandora's Box" of hermeneutical possibilities lies in ambush for the unwary interpreter. E. Earle Ellis writes, "To many Christian readers, to say nothing of Jewish readers, the New Testament's interpretation of the Old appears to be exceedingly arbitrary."³

Matthew 2:15 is perhaps the most notorious example of a New Testament text that cites an Old Testament one "in a way that does not seem consonant with the meaning of the verse in the original context."⁴ The implications of such a hermeneutical methodology are not inconsequential. In fact, they are staggering. In the first place, such a hermeneutic calls into question the entire historical-grammatical method of interpretation as the contextual integrity of the text is apparently compromised. Second, the authority and inspiration of Scripture would appear to be ignored. Matthew wrote that when Jesus' parents left for Egypt to escape the mass infanticide by Herod, this was a fulfillment of Hos. 11:1. How is it possible that Matthew could draw a connection between two events that appear to have nothing in common? This is the crux of the problem.

1. Walter Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001): 47.

2. *Ibid.*

3. E. Earl Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1977): 209.

4. Craig L. Blomberg, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 173.

A Survey of Interpretations of Matt. 2:15

Numerous creative solutions have been proposed to explain Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1. Blomberg writes, "It will come as no surprise that scholarly opinion spans an entire spectrum when it comes to attempts to make sense of this phenomenon."⁵ Following are some of the more common attempts to grapple with this issue.

Predictive Prophecy

This view, advocated by R. C. H. Lenski and J. Barton Payne, posits that Matthew 2:15 is a direct fulfillment of Hosea 11:1. According to this position, Matthew's prophetic formula, "ἵνα πληρωθῆ" (*ina playraothay*, "that it might be fulfilled) (add transliteration and personal translation) sees Hosea's words, "and out of Egypt I called my son," as both futuristic and messianic. Thus, the first phrase in 11:1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him," is explained as a reference to Christ and not to Israel at all.⁶ Israel's sojourn in Egypt is taken as "a divinely intended prophecy of 'my son,' the messiah, who likewise must sojourn in Egypt."⁷

Sensus Plenior

The doctrine of *sensus plenior* teaches that "along with the literal sense intended by the human author, the Holy Spirit may encode a hidden meaning not known or devised at all by the human author."⁸ *Sensus plenior* originated as a Roman Catholic doctrine, but it has been adopted by some evangelicals who have seen it as a way to understand how the Old Testament is used by New Testament writers. The doctrine has received its fullest treatment by Roman Catholic New Testament scholar Raymond Brown, who writes that it "is that additional, deeper meaning intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a Biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation."⁹

According to the *sensus plenior* view, the issue is not so much whether the human author of Scripture understood or comprehended what he was writing. What is important is what God actually intended. Thus, with respect to Hosea 11:1, God intended a deeper or messianic meaning which was more than Hosea, the human author, intended or even understood. This deeper meaning was discovered by Matthew,

5. Ibid., 192.

6. J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962).

7. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943): 78.

8. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, 125.

9. Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary's University, 1955): 92.

writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and communicated in Matthew 2:15. William LaSor, an evangelical scholar who embraces the *sensus plenior* view, is quite clear in his analysis of Hosea 11:1. He writes:

Something like a *fuller meaning*, a *sensus plenior*, is required by many portions of Scripture, possibly by all of Scripture . . . The quest for a *sensus plenior* is part of the process of discovering the fullness of his purpose in his revelation. It is the recognition that at any moment in God's revelatory activity, he has the end in view and he has his people of future generations in mind. When he delivered the Israelites from Egypt, he was delivering all of his people from bondage – in a literal sense, for if Israel had not been delivered from Egypt there would have been no Israel, there would have been no Davidic king, no prophets, no Scriptures, no Messiah, and no redemptive fulfillment. It was therefore true, in this fuller sense, that God did call his Son out of Egypt.¹⁰

Therefore, according to this view, the deeper meaning of Hosea's prophecy was recognized by Matthew as he found fulfillment in Jesus Christ's sojourn in Egypt.

Interpretive Techniques from Judaism

Some interpreters have explained Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 by suggesting that Matthew employed the same hermeneutical techniques that were common in first century Judaism. Harvard professor Krister Stendahl first posited this view in 1954 in his groundbreaking *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*. In it he compared the hermeneutical technique used in Matthew's gospel with that of the Habakkuk commentary from Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls). He concluded that Matthew's formula quotations arose out of a rabbinical school of thought which he labeled *midrash-pesher*. Stendahl writes:

Thus the Matthaean school must be understood as a school for teachers and church leaders, and for this reason the literary work of that school assumes the form of a manual for teaching and administration within the church. As we shall see, the Matthaean type of midrashic interpretation . . . closely approaches what has been called the *midrash pesher* of the Qumran Sect, in which the O.T. texts were not primarily the source of rules, but the prophecy which was shown to be fulfilled.¹¹

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard explain the logic of this hermeneutical approach and how it bypasses the historical-grammatical method:

10. William S. LaSor, "The *Sensus Plenior* and Biblical Interpretation," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William S. LaSor (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978): 274-75.

11. Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use in the Old Testament* (Lund: G. W. K. Gleerup, 1954; Reprint ed., Ramsey, NJ: Sigler Press, 1990): 35 (emphasis original).

A biblical author may have intended a text to have only a single meaning, but a later biblical author may have discovered an additional meaning he saw in that text. In other words, if Matthew was performing a strict historical-grammatical exegesis of the Hosea quote, he could never assert that it spoke of the Messiah. But using a “creative” exegetical method he posited an additional sense.¹²

According to this view, that creative interpretive technique came out of Matthew’s background in Judaism using the techniques derived from some of the Qumran interpreters, such as *midrash* and *peshet*.

Two other interpreters from the latter part of the twentieth century who have adopted Stendahl’s approach are Robert Gundry and Richard Longenecker. Gundry expands upon Stendahl’s work by asserting that “there exists in the synoptic tradition, and pre-eminently in Mt, a large body of allusive quotations in which the language is only colored by the OT.”¹³ He concluded that this free style of quoting the Old Testament in the formula quotations is the norm rather than the exception and that this is clear evidence that the Targumic style was a common feature of the early church’s exegesis. Gundry continues, “Again, it is felt that allusions are not based on any attempt to cite the OT accurately; i.e., the very allusiveness makes for a carelessness in text-form, this being so especially in the high-flown language of apocalyptic.”¹⁴ He argues that Matthew could have hardly been ignorant of the context of Hosea 11:1 when he cited the fulfillment in Matthew 2:15. He explains his rationale for his position:

We are therefore justified in looking for his treatment of the OT text here as well as informal citations. The far greater number of OT allusions in Mt, many of them introduced into the common synoptic tradition, confirms this judgment, as do also the frequently met circumstances in which repetition of the OT phraseology occurs within the OT itself or in the NT outside the gospels, showing a certain fixity of expression. In such cases we are usually safe in seeing conscious allusion to the OT.¹⁵

Longenecker, on-the-other-hand, defines *midrash* as follows:

Midrashic interpretation, in effect, ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself (though psychologically it may have been motivated by other factors) and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed upon hermeneutical rules in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God. It may be briefly characterized by

12. Op. cit., 127.

13. Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975): 2.

14. Ibid., 3.

15. Ibid., 4.

the maxim: “That has relevance to This”; i.e., What is written in Scripture has relevance to our present situation.¹⁶

However, Longenecker contends that Matthew utilizes more of a *peshet* approach in 2:15 in that he interprets the Old Testament passages as being directly concerned with the interpreter and his community. Although he admits that the purpose of rabbinic *midrash* “was often noble, and its practice at times moderate,” he laments “that its *middoth* both allowed and later encouraged imaginative as well as truly creative treatments of the biblical text,” which unfortunately “often went beyond the bounds of what today would be identified as proper.”¹⁷ The term *peshet* simply means “to explain.” However, this approach is an application of the Old Testament without regard for the context of the passage. In favoring this *peshet* approach, Longenecker contends that Matthew in 2:15:

seems to be thinking along the lines of corporate solidarity and rereading his Old Testament from an eschatologically realized and messianic perspective. He has no desire to spell out all the features of the nation’s history, for many would be entirely inappropriate for his purpose. But he is making the point that that which was vital in Israel’s corporate and redemptive experience finds its ultimate and intended focus in the person of Jesus the Messiah.¹⁸

Typological

This view maintains that πληρωω, (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) (provide transliteration and translation) does not necessarily indicate the fulfillment of prophecy, but rather the “completion or consummation” of the event.¹⁹ Thus, the events in the life of Israel as recorded in Hosea 11:1-2 “typified the life of Messiah in Matthew 2:13-15.”²⁰ Leonard Goppelt views typology as “historical facts-persons, actions, events, and institutions” that in some way prefigure theological truth.²¹ He further defines this position, “These things are to be interpreted typologically only if they are considered to be divinely ordained representations or types of future realities that will be even greater and more complete.”²²

16. Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975): 37.

17. *Ibid.*, 38.

18. *Ibid.*, 145.

19. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001): 52.

20. Tracy L. Howard, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15: An Alternative Solution,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (1986): 320.

21. Leonard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Reprint ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982): 17.

22. *Ibid.*, 18.

The typological view has received considerable and varied scholarly support. For example, a recent Roman Catholic commentary by Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri describes Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1. They write, "Matthew views it typologically as pointing forward to this occasion when God rescues his beloved Jesus from the tyrant Herod and later brings him out of Egypt."²³ An older evangelical commentator, Alfred Plummer concludes that ". . . the history of the nation is often regarded as a typical anticipation of the life of the Messiah."²⁴ In like fashion, William Hendriksen writes, "When Matthew quotes Hos. 11:1 and applies it to Christ, it is evident that he regards Israel as a type of the Messiah."²⁵ Robert Mounce also sees a typological interpretation here writing that the typology ". . . allows Matthew to find in Hosea's words a prediction that the Christ child will be called out of Egypt."²⁶ Other scholarly support for the typological position include H. N. Ridderbos, John Broadus, David Turner (class lecture), R. V. G. Tasker, H. A. W. Meyer, Francis W. Beare, William Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Hubbard. Of the dozens of works consulted for this paper, the typological position by far garnered the most support.

Analogical Correspondence

In a 1986 *Bibliotheca Sacra* article, Tracy Howard formulated a view which he labels "Analogical Correspondence." This view argues that the New Testament writers "looked back and drew correspondences or analogies with events described in the Old Testament."²⁷ In his description of this view, Howard cites K. J. Woolcombe's definition of typology, which he argues "reflects the concept of historical correspondence rather than that of prefiguration."²⁸ This view clearly is a refinement of the typological view, but Howard sees his view as superior in that the "typological connection is retrospective rather than prospective. Furthermore this approach considerably reduces the element of subjectivity that the traditional prefiguration view of typology introduces."²⁹

According to Howard's view, an analogical correspondence or connection is envisioned with both Israel's past and future. In the past there is a correspondence between Israel's history and Messiah's history. With respect to the past element of

23. Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew in Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* in *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* ed. Peter S. Williamson and Martin Healy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 56.

24. Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (Reprint ed., Minneapolis: James Family Christian Publisher, 1978): 17.

25. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* in *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973): 178.

26. Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991): 17.

27. Op. cit., 320.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 320-321.

this view, Howard writes: “This Exodus analogy contains a reference both to the nation’s past and to its future. Matthew’s primary connection with the nation’s past was geographical. He showed that even as the nation was taken into Egypt and brought out, so also the Messiah was taken into Egypt and brought out.”³⁰ With respect to the future element of this view, Howard argues the possibility that Matthew was looking beyond Hos. 11:1 to the context of the entire chapter and that verses 10 and 11 were also included in his Exodus analogy. Thus, according to Howard, “Hosea 11:1 is quoted by Matthew as a touchstone for other events in the chapter.”³¹ So when Matthew quotes Hos. 11:1, his focus is not on just that isolated verse, but rather the entire context of the passage. Howard understands Hosea 11:10-11 as describing “an eschatological exodus from Egypt.”³² He continues:

The exodus would be a starting over for the nation. This would occur at the inauguration of the “age to come.” Hence if Matthew had in mind all of Hosea 11 and was attempting to present parallels between the life of the nation and the life of Jesus, it is plausible that Matthew saw Messiah as the One who will lead this new exodus for Israel and hence inaugurate the new age. In light of this, one might suggest not only a parallel between Herod and Pharaoh, but also a parallel between Jesus and Moses.³³

A second area of analogical correspondence that Howard sees is in the “son” pattern that Matthew is emphasizing when he quotes Hosea 11:1. He argues that it is evident that Matthew intended to emphasize the concept of sonship by rendering the Masoretic text literally and using *τον υιον μου* (*ton huion mou*, “My Son”) instead of the LXX reading *τα τεκνα αυτου* (*ta tekna autou*, “His children”). Howard refers to where God called the nation Israel His son (Exod 4:22-23). However, instead of worshiping God after their release by Pharaoh out of Egypt, Israel sinned by committing idolatry. Howard concludes:

Matthew then viewed Jesus as the *obedient* son Israel, who after the first Exodus miserably failed to keep the covenant. All that Israel should have done, Jesus did by exhibiting obedience instead of disobedience. Consequently after Jesus’ exodus from Egypt and His baptism by John, God could say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17) . . . As Matthew drew these correspondences he saw Jesus as the One who *actualizes* and *completes* all that God intended for the nation.³⁴

30. Ibid., 321.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 321-322.

34. Ibid., 322.

The Old and New Testament Contexts

Before analyzing the merits and fallacies of the various ways of interpreting Matt. 2:15, it is necessary first to investigate the context of both Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15.

The Context of Hosea 11:1

Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II through and after the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.) and contemporaneous with the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah (Hos. 1:1). His ministry was roughly forty years in duration. Interestingly, Hosea's writings were the only ones preserved by a prophet in the Northern Kingdom. Under Jeroboam II the nation experienced economic prosperity and military prominence, but it was also a period of moral and spiritual decline as the Israelites attributed their blessings to Baal instead of Yahweh. Going back to the days of Joshua, the spiritual life of the Israelites had been corrupted by the influence of the corrupt Canaanite religions surrounding them. Thus, the prophecy of Hosea is replete with the denunciation of the worship of Baal and warnings of the consequences of failure to keep the covenant. Yet, despite his scathing prophecies to a wicked nation, Hosea also spoke of the restoration and blessings that follow repentance. Unger writes:

With the brokenness and passion of Jeremiah, Hosea had a sensitivity of heart that made him the apostle of love in the OT. Although the theme of judgment for apostasy runs through the book, it is interwoven by the golden strand of mercy and love. And Hosea's exposure of sin and impending judgment is not the fiery denunciations of Amos, but a mournful, solemn elegy that breathes the deep love of the Lord for His sinning people.³⁵

Hosea's prophecy is comprised of several cycles which describe Israel's sin, her impending judgment as a result, and the ultimate restoration of the nation following her repentance and return to observance of the covenant. The primary symbolism in the prophecy of Hosea is found in the imagery of Hosea's marriage to a harlot named Gomer. Her unfaithfulness to Hosea provides the central image of the book and symbolizes Israel's faithlessness towards Yahweh. Even the children produced from this hapless union were given names that symbolized God's displeasure with Israel. After Gomer's unfaithfulness, she was to be brought home to Hosea to await her restoration to full favor. R. K. Harrison describes her return, "This was a clear picture of wayward Israel in its relationship with God and showed the unending faithfulness of the Almighty."³⁶

35. Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Handbook*, rev. by Gary N. Larson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984): 305.

36. R. K. Harrison, "Hosea," in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* eds. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987): 452.

Chapter 11 is divided into two principal parts, verses 1-4 and 5-11, although as Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman point out “there are links between the parts, and interlocking elements.”³⁷ Fundamentally, it consists of a covenant lawsuit against Israel in which “the human protagonists in both units are Israel (vv 1 and 8) and Ephraim (vv 3, 8-9), while Yahweh, the divine antagonist and respondent, speaks and acts in both first and third persons.”³⁸ Yet, despite this lawsuit imagery, the love of God and His ultimate plan to restore Israel shines through in chapter 11. Some commentators see a threefold division in chapter 11 with verses 1-4 describing God’s love for Israel in spite of her sin, verses 5-7 describing the impending judgment as a result of her sin, and verses 8-11 describing the ultimate restoration of Israel. Regardless of how the chapter is divided, what is clear is how God’s love permeates all relationships, even adulterous ones. James Ward writes:

The love of God is the foundation and fulfillment of Israel’s life. Nowhere in the Bible is this conviction expressed more clearly and memorably than in the eleventh chapter of Hosea. In the seven preceding chapters we have been subjected to a relentless assault upon the whole range of human iniquities—Israel’s, and by extension our own. Now, however, the prophet returns to the themes which dominated the first three chapters of the book, namely the love of God and the covenantal history which is an expression of that love.³⁹

Hosea begins chapter eleven by depicting God’s love for Israel as that of a father for his son. He writes, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hos 11:1)⁴⁰ In describing that tender love, Hosea goes all the way back to the beginning of Israel’s history as a nation to that defining event, the exodus out of Egypt. Frederick Tatford points out the significance of this reference: “The deliverance from Egypt was repeatedly used by the prophets as the outstanding illustration of the exercise of God’s power on behalf of His people.”⁴¹ The view that Hosea is referring to the “son” of verse one as a corporate entity is strengthened by the fact that the LXX renders it “his children” instead of “my son.” That love which God freely gave to Israel is contrasted sharply in the next verse with her rejection of Yahweh: “But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.” (Hos 11:2)

Chapter 11 continues the cyclical pattern of the entire book. First there is the expression of God’s love followed by Israel’s rebellion. Then comes temporal judgment

37. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, “Hosea,” in *The Anchor Bible*, ed. by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980): 575.

38. Ibid.

39. James M. Ward, *Amos, Hosea*, Knox Preaching Guides, ed. John H. Hayes (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981): 86-87.

40. Unless otherwise stated, the *New International Version* will be quoted throughout this study.

41. Frederick A. Tatford, *The Minor Prophets* (Reprint ed., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, Inc., 1982): 132.

which leads to Israel's ultimate restoration as seen in verses 8-11. Understanding this pattern and the context of chapter 11 is important in that it is clear that Hosea 11 is describing the history and future of Israel as a nation, not some individual messiah. It is not, on the face of it, messianic in any way.

The Context of Matthew 2:15

Unlike the Gospels of Luke (1:1-4) and John (20:31), which expressly state a purpose for writing, Matthew's purpose is never directly stated. However, most conservative scholars agree that Matthew's is the most "Jewish" of the four gospels in that it is firmly rooted in the Old Testament. Matthew's purpose for writing apparently was to demonstrate to his predominantly Jewish audience that Jesus indeed was the Messiah-King as prophesied in the Old Testament. He begins by inserting a genealogy not found in the other three gospels, which as Robert Gundry argues, "These materials portray Jesus as fulfilling OT messianic expectations from the very beginning of his life."⁴² It sets forth Jesus' royal lineage from David thus arguing for his messiahship. Matthew also selects events from the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, such as the virgin birth and other miraculous signs, which bolster this contention that Jesus was the long anticipated Messiah-King.

Matthew's second chapter focuses on the infancy narratives as he builds his case for Jesus' messianic identity. He is the only evangelist who describes the visit of the Magi who came to worship the newborn King. He also describes King Herod's maniacal plot to kill the Christ child in a futile attempt to preserve his kingly position. This leads to the question: Why did Matthew include these two widely divergent Gentile reactions to Christ's birth? It is true, as H. N. Ridderbos suggests, that this "formed further proof for Jesus and Mary of the greatness of their child."⁴³ However, it is likely that Matthew includes these polar opposite reactions in order to demonstrate that while there was overwhelming Jewish rejection of the Messiah-King throughout his ministry, Gentiles accepted him even if they did not readily embrace him as followers.

Matthew informs his readers that the Magi did not return to Herod having been warned in a dream, presumably by God, not to do so. Instead, they took another route and returned to their homeland. In like manner, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph ordering him to take his family immediately to Egypt to escape the assassination plans of King Herod. As R. V. G. Tasker writes so eloquently, "The land which had once been a land of oppression is now a haven to which the holy

42. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982): 14.

43. H. N. Ridderbos, *Matthew in Bible Student's Commentary*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987): 38.

family can escape from danger.”⁴⁴ It has been suggested “that Egypt was a natural refuge for the Jews.”⁴⁵ Every city of size had a colony of Jews and it was likely that Joseph and Mary had either friends or relatives to whom they could go for refuge. In addition to that, Plummer argues that it was the obvious place to flee because of its close proximity to Palestine.⁴⁶ Throughout the Old Testament period and into the Inter-Testamental period, Egypt was a popular place for Jews on the run (Joseph, Gen 42-50; Jeroboam, 1 Ki 11:40; Uriaah, Jer 26:21-23; Johanan, Jer 43:7). Many Jews also sought refuge in Egypt during the Maccabean struggle.

No details are given by Matthew regarding their stay in Egypt. The reader is informed that Joseph took his family back to Israel immediately following the death of Herod. John Walvoord writes of the importance of that statement in referring to the false Jewish tradition recorded by Origen. He writes, “Matthew, however, anticipating the charge that Christ picked up magical arts by a long stay in Egypt, specifies that they were there only until the death of Herod, which occurred within three years of his birth.”⁴⁷

Then Matthew writes, “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’” (2:15) In alluding to Hosea 11:1 he uses *ἡνα πληρωθῆ* (*hina playrao*, “that it might be fulfilled”), which is the same grammatical construction used in Matt. 2:15 to describe the virgin birth as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. Turner writes about this introductory formula as denoting “the accomplishment of God’s purpose in his word through the prophetic channel.”⁴⁸ Interestingly enough, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 using the MT (Masoretic Text) rather than the LXX.⁴⁹ France sees this as significant in that it better accommodates Matthew’s theological purpose:

The quotation is in a form which fairly translates the Hebrew text but differs from the LXX in using the simple *kaleo*, “call,” for *metakaleo*, “call to oneself, summon,” and more importantly in that Matthew has not followed LXX in interpreting “my son” as “his [Israel’s] children.” This LXX rendering identifies the intended reference of the Hebrew text, but abandons its wording, and it is that wording which gives Matthew his specific point of entry to this instance of scriptural “fulfillment.”⁵⁰

Thus, Matthew clearly indicates that Christ’s sojourn in Egypt was a fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 however that may be.

44. R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew in The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961): 42.

45. Mounce, 17.

46. Op. cit., 16.

47. John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974): 23.

48. Op. cit., 90.

49. Ibid.

50. Op. cit., 80.

Analysis and Evaluation

As has already been stated, an examination of Hosea 11:1 reveals that the verse is not a prophecy at all and does not require fulfillment. On the other hand, Matthew clearly states that it is a fulfillment of that text. What is clear is that Matthew's comments are not the result of a historical-grammatical understanding of Scripture, nor do they derive from an exegesis of the Old Testament text itself. How, then, was Matthew able to connect Christ's sojourn in Egypt (Matt 2:13-15) with the calling of Israel out of Egypt as described in the book of Exodus? As Howard points out, "Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 would appear to be an example of conclusions at which the modern exegete would have difficulty arriving."⁵¹

It is evident from even a brief survey of the literature on the subject that scholarly opinion runs the gamut and that some attempts to wrestle with the problem can be quite creative. This section will attempt to analyze some of the vast array of solutions that have been proposed by evangelicals and described earlier in this paper, and to arrive at a possible solution that at least minimizes the flaws inherent in each approach. Further, a solution to the problem will be proposed.

Earlier in this paper, five views that have been proposed by evangelical scholars were described. This section will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each view. The predictive prophecy view, which argues that Matthew 2:15 is a direct fulfillment of Hos. 11:1, asserts that Hosea 11:1 actually predicts Christ's sojourn in Egypt as described in Matt. 2:13-15. This interpretation explains Matthew's fulfillment formula *ἵνα πληρωθῆ* (*hina playrao*, "that it might be fulfilled") as indicating a fulfillment of predictive prophecy. Further, קראתני (*kayraytay*) in Hos. 11:1 is translated as a future perfect ("I will have called [My Son]").⁵² Andy Woods writes, "In other words, a one to one correspondence exists in between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15. Therefore, Hosea 11:1 is solely a reference to Jesus and not to Israel at all."⁵³ This view appears to be perfectly plausible at first glance. However, upon further examination, numerous difficulties arise. In the first place, it is obvious from the context that Hosea 11:1 is not a prophecy at all, but a "statement of historical fact."⁵⁴ Hosea was looking back at the exodus experience of Israel from Egypt. Turner writes, "It is that in its original context, Hosea 11:1 is not a prediction of Jesus, but a reminiscence of the exodus."⁵⁵

Second, *πληρωθῆ* (*playrao*, "to fulfill") does not always have to connote the direct fulfillment of prophecy. In fact, one standard Greek-English lexicon

51. Op. cit., 322.

52. Howard, 315.

53. Andy Woods, "The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15" (<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/11/11.pdf>., July 13, 2011), 8.

54. Plummer, 17.

55. Op. cit., 90.

of Biblical Greek lists five different nuances that πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) can have. The primary meaning of the word is “to make full, fill.” Other possible meanings that are more likely than “fulfillment of divine predictions or promises” are “of time, fill (up), complete a period of time, reach its end” and “bring someth. to completion, finish someth. already begun.” The definition, “Fulfill by deeds, a prophecy, an obligation, a promise, a desire, a hope, a duty, a fate, a destiny, etc.” is the fourth of five possibilities listed.⁵⁶

Woods maintains that of the five times ινα πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) is used as a fulfillment formula in Matthew’s infancy narratives (1:22; 2:5, 15, 18, 23), in three of those instances “a direct fulfillment of prophecy is not alluded to.”⁵⁷ Therefore, the inclusion of ινα πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) does not automatically force the interpreter to expect a direct fulfillment of prophecy. As always in biblical interpretation, the context is the key. Howard argues that the word carries here the nuance of “to complete” or “to establish” apart from any idea of predictive fulfillment. He writes, “In other words this concept views an event in process which God ultimately brings to completion . . . Thus Matthew viewed Hosea 11:1 as being confirmed or fulfilled by another event that was much like it and that came to pass at a later time.”⁵⁸ Thus there is no reason to assume automatically that πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) must always mean “to fulfill” when there are several other more likely possibilities available.

A third weakness of the predictive prophecy view is the assumption that ytarq must be translated as a future perfect. Although that conclusion is possible linguistically, it is dubious contextually. The verb in the first phrase of Hosea 11:1 is ואהבה (*vahevaha*) undoubtedly a preterit, is always translated as a past event (“I loved him.”). Likewise, continuing the thread, the verbs in verse 2 also are in the past tense referring to Israel’s rejection of God and their determination to follow the worship of Baal. It would make little sense contextually to break that thread by translating “I called my son” as a future perfect (“I will have called [My Son].”).

The *sensus plenior* approach is another view that has an initial appeal which bogs down under closer examination. LaSor cites Hosea 11:1 as well as Isaiah 7:14 as two particularly difficult passages in which cases neither author “had some distant future event in mind.”⁵⁹ The *sensus plenior*, argues LaSor, offers the best solution to interpreting those texts.

56. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1979): 670-71.

57. Op. cit., 9.

58. Op. cit., 315-16.

59. Op. cit., 271.

However, this approach is full of difficulties. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard suggest several weaknesses of this view. First, it cannot be used along with the normal method of interpreting biblical texts, the grammatical-historical method. They write:

Almost by definition, a fuller sense cannot be detected or understood by the traditional historical, grammatical, and critical methods of exegesis. That is, such methods can only distinguish the meaning of the text, not some secret sense embedded in the text that even its author did not intend. If this is true, on what basis might the existence of such a sense even be defended.⁶⁰

This leads to several unsettling questions: Do all Scripture passages have a *sensus plenior*? If not, what is the criteria for determining which passages do?

The second weakness that Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard set forth is that the approach lacks objectivity and offers little benefit to the modern interpreter. They write, “We have no objective criteria to posit the existence of a *sensus*, or to determine where it might exist, or how one might proceed to unravel its significance.”⁶¹ Any approach lacking objective hermeneutical criteria opens the interpreter to wild and fanciful interpretations such as were common during the Patristic Period. Robert L. Thomas criticizes this method: “The practice of doing so has characterized Roman Catholicism for centuries and amounts to an allegorical rather than a literal method of interpretation.”⁶²

A third weakness of this view is offered by Howard who sees it as an obstacle to inspiration. He argues that it “makes the inspired writer a secondary element in the process, while God is viewed as supplying directly to the interpreter many additional meanings not intended in the original context.”⁶³ He further states that this approach closely parallels the process of mechanical dictation.⁶⁴ Bruce Vawter’s analysis on this point is compelling:

If this fuller or deeper meaning was reserved by God to Himself and did not enter into the writer’s purview at all, do we not postulate a Biblical word effected outside the control of the human author’s will and judgment . . . and therefore not produced through a truly *human* instrumentality? If, as in the scholastic definitions, Scripture is the *conscriptio* of God and man, does not the acceptance of a *sensus plenior* deprive this alleged scriptural sense of one of its essential elements, to the extent that logically it cannot be called scriptural at all.⁶⁵

60. Op. cit., 125.

61. Ibid., 138.

62. Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The new Versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002): 361.

63. Op. cit., 316.

64. Ibid.

65. Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972): 115.

Howard enumerates a three-fold criteria for a genuine example of the *sensus plenior* in order to establish “control and ensure objectivity in the interpretation.”⁶⁶ He writes:

First, the *sensus plenior* would have to be given by further revelation in the New Testament. Second, the *sensus plenior* would have to be a sense of which the human author was at least vaguely aware, that is, a messianic tendency. Third, the “fuller sense” would have to be grounded in a historical-grammatical interpretation of the Old Testament text.⁶⁷

These criteria would rule out arbitrary or capricious interpretation or those totally unrelated to the meaning of the Old Testament text. It would also appear to rule out the connection between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15 as an example of *sensus plenior*. Howard also argues that there must be continuity between the texts of the Old and New Testaments. He writes about the Hosea 11:1/Matthew 2:15 pairing: “Yet, even with these criteria, it seems that many instances labeled as *sensus plenior* would better fit under another category.”⁶⁸

Even LaSor, a proponent of this view, admits how tenuous the connection is between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15 (and Isa 7:14 and Matt 1:22-23). He admits that seeing in these passages “a later fulfillment in Christ raises as many problems as it solves . . . In neither case is there any indication that the author had some distant future event in mind, hence it is most difficult to conclude that the authors were speaking of Jesus Christ or even an unnamed Messiah.”⁶⁹ For these reasons, it seems best to reject the use of *sensus plenior* as a valid interpretive option in this case.

The argument initially set forth by Krister Stendahl that Matthew used interpretive techniques from Judaism such as Midrash and Peshar has great appeal. However, this approach is not without its critics. Raymond Brown, the Roman Catholic advocate for *sensus plenior*, argues that Midrash “is not a term that describes well the literary genre of either infancy narratives.”⁷⁰ Midrash is “literature about a literature” which provides commentary about a biblical text.⁷¹ However, in the Gospels this phenomena is apparently absent. Woods notes:

Furthermore, in Midrash, the words of the prophecy are primary and serve as the foundation on which the Midrash interpretation depends. It took as its basis texts that it wished to make more intelligible. However, in Matthew, the words of the prophecy seem to be secondary and only point to Matthew’s words. Matthew added citations to an already existing narrative.

66. Op. cit., 317.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Op. cit., 271.

70. Op. cit., 561.

71. Ibid., 560.

Thus, Matthew's infancy narratives were not composed for the purpose of making Old Testament citations more intelligible but rather to make Jesus more intelligible.⁷²

It appears highly unlikely that Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15 fits the criteria for utilizing a Midrash approach to interpretation.

In like fashion, the Peshet approach has also been criticized in this context. Lee Campbell states unequivocally, "Clearly, Matthew is not a *peshet* commentary. Such texts are line-by-line analyses of an OT text and Matthew's gospel does not conform to this format. Rather, Matthew applies OT citations to his narrative of the life of Christ."⁷³ Campbell further argues that Peshet "techniques are fundamentally eisegetical" and "hostile to the notion of objective interpretation."⁷⁴

Bray's analysis of this problem is interesting. He appears to understand Matthew's hermeneutic as a combination of techniques. Instead of saying that it must be either this or that as most scholars do, he believes that Matthew was using a typological approach, but one that was enhanced by Peshet exegesis. He writes:

Matthew in particular uses the Old Testament to demonstrate the fulfillment theme, and he goes far beyond anything which could readily be derived from the literal sense of the text . . . Probably the only satisfactory way to understand Matthew's hermeneutic is to recognize that he virtually assimilates the historical experience of Israel as a nation to the life of Jesus – the ultimate in typological fulfillment . . . Naturally, such an interpretation is immeasurably enhanced by a liberal use of *peshet* exegesis, and there is a striking similarity between his handling of the Old Testament text and that found in the Habbakuk commentary from Qumran.⁷⁵

Bray even goes so far as to suggest that the reason why both Matthew and John made liberal use of the Peshet technique was their close proximity to Jesus whose "own method of biblical interpretation was dominated by the *peshet* mode, as applied directly to himself."⁷⁶ The relative absence of Peshet techniques in the gospels of Mark and Luke can be explained by this same theory.

Howard's critique of Stendahl's hypothesis is four pronged. First, he notes that there are differences between the quotations in the Qumran commentary on Habakkuk and Matthew. For example, he points out that the introductory formula found in Matthew's gospel (*ἵνα πληρωθῶ, hina playrao*, "that it might be fulfilled")

72. Op. cit., 16.

73. Lee Campbell, "Matthew's use of the Old Testament: A Preliminary Analysis" in *Xenos Online Journal* (http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue_3/mtmain.htm, 2000): 1.

74. Ibid.

75. Op. cit., 67-68.

76. Ibid., 69.

is absent in the Qumran texts. Second, he gives the reason for the absence of *ἵνα πληρωθῆ* (*hina playrao*, “that it might be fulfilled”) in that Matthew’s use of the Old Testament exhibits “a different character because of the clear connection with the historical intent of the Old Testament context.”⁷⁷ He writes:

The hermeneutical features are quite different from what is found in the Matthean use of the Old Testament. The Qumran community saw itself as being in the “last days” to which all prophecy pointed. As a result of this perspective the Qumran community completely disregarded the original context when exegeting prophetic passages. The community felt that the original intention of the particular citation *was* for the community.⁷⁸

Third, he notes the differences between Matthew’s technique of relating stories about Jesus along with Old Testament citations and the line-by-line Peshet techniques of analysis. He writes that in Matthew 2:15, “Matthew was not giving a midrashic homily on the Hosea text but rather was supporting his record with the Old Testament quotation.”⁷⁹ Finally, Howard argues that serious issues concerning inspiration of Scripture are raised when attempting to compare Matthew’s quotations with the writings of the Qumran community in that “frequently the Qumran community distorted the original intent of the Old Testament passage they were quoting.”⁸⁰ Essentially this means that sometimes the Old Testament writer was misinformed and guilty of communicating error that the community then corrected. Thus, Howard rejects Stendahl’s theory as a template for understanding the formal quotations of Matthew.

The typological fulfillment view has a lot of appeal as evidenced by the large number of scholars who have adopted this approach as an explanation of Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1. This view is criticized by Howard and others who question a prefigurative view of typology arguing that it has questionable implications and assumes a latent meaning in the passage of which the human author was unaware. As already stated in this paper, the Hosea 11:1 text is a statement about the past, not a prediction about the future. On this basis, it is sometimes argued that Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1 is illegitimate, “transferring to the future and to a different and individual ‘son’ what God said about his ‘son’ Israel in the past.”⁸¹ R. T. France contends, “But of course that is the essence of typology, which depends not on predictions but on transferable “models” from the OT story. The exodus, leading as it did to the formation of a new people of God, was a potent symbol even within the OT of the even greater

77. Op. cit., 319.

78. Ibid., 318.

79. Ibid., 319.

80. Ibid.

81. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007): 80.

work of deliverance which God was yet to accomplish.”⁸² France goes so far as to identify Jesus in a new eschatological role as the “new Moses.”⁸³

It seems likely that Moses is presented in the Old Testament as a type of Christ. Charles Talbert sees a detailed Mosaic typology in Matthew 1:1–2:23. He charts eight similarities between the tradition about Moses and those about Jesus in Matthew 1-2: (1) Genealogy; (Exod 1:1-5; 6:14-20; cf. Matt 1:2-16); (2) Dream (L.A.B. 9.10, Josephus, *Ant* 2.210-16); cf. Matt 1:21); (3) Birth (Exod 1:15-22); cf. Matt 2:16-18); (4) Infanticide (Josephus, *Ant* 2.205, 234; cf. Matt 2:2-18); (5) Future deliverer/savior (Josephus, *Ant* 2.205, 234; cf. Matt 2:4-6); (6) Expatriation (Exod 2:15; cf. Matt 2:13-14); (7) Command to return (Exod 4:19; cf. Matt 2:19-20); (8) Return to homeland (Exod 4:20; cf. Matt 2:21).⁸⁴ Talbert concludes, “For anyone who knew the Moses legends in antiquity, it would have been impossible to miss the remarkable similarities between them and Matthew’s story of Jesus origins.”⁸⁵ Thus, it is possible to speak of these parallels as teaching a “christological portrait of Jesus as a ‘new Moses.’”⁸⁶ Although the parallel that Matthew is drawing in 2:15 is more directly with the nation of Israel as a collective entity, Blomberg argues that “clearly, a ‘new exodus’ motif is present.”⁸⁷

The “exodus” motif supports the typological view quite well. What is typological is God’s preserving love for Israel as seen over and over again throughout the Old Testament. Both the baby Jesus and Israel were objects of this preserving love and deliverance from an oppressor. Kaiser writes of this:

The fact that Matthew introduced this quote at verse 15 and not after verse 20 or even verse 22 clearly points to the fact the the *Exodus*, or *departure*, of the Holy Family from Egypt is *not* his reason for introducing the quotation at this point. Instead the emphasis falls exactly where it did in the context of Hosea: the preserving love of God for his seed Israel. The Exodus for Hosea was only one of the numerous acts of God’s love while rebellious Israel ran away from Him.⁸⁸

Howard’s analogical correspondence view explains Matthew’s citation of Hosea as retrospective analogical correspondence, rather than a projective type or prophecy about Jesus. He notes the similarities between Israel and Christ, but he also points out that Jesus was an obedient son, unlike Israel. Thus, Christ fulfilled what God had

82. *Ibid.*, 80-81.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, in *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament*, ed. Mikeal C. Parsons and Charles H. Talbert (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 37-38.

85. *Ibid.*, 38.

86. Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Op. cit.*, 51.

intended for Israel had the nation not rejected Him. Howard is to be commended for his attempt to refine the typological view. He rightly understands that typology has in the past often been abused and has lent itself to arbitrary and fanciful interpretations. However, in this instance, it is not necessary. The typological view works quite well. Campbell writes eloquently:

When Hosea records, *Out of Egypt I have called my son*, he is tapping into an exodus motif that was expressed in the original event, reiterated and extended to “the king” of Israel by Balaam (Nu. 24:8); reiterated when Joshua entered Palestine; reiterated when the principle of redemption was applied repeated in OT didactic material; that would be reiterated later when Israel was restored after his impending discipline . . . and again when God would permanently redeem his people. Matthew was simply noting something implicit in Hosea, namely, Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promised redemption of Israel (Hos. 11:1-14:5). Hosea certainly understood that his recollection of the Exodus was anchored in God’s past redemptive history as well as his future promise of final redemption. And, this is exactly what Matthew did by pointing to its manifestation in Christ. Christ returned to Israel from Egypt, as an obedient son and also as God coming again to dwell in the tents of Shem. The resonance with the exodus motif is so remarkable that Matthew could say Christ ‘filled up to overflowing’ the entire theme. If we were contemporaries of Mathew we too could have anticipated a final redemption of Israel and rejoiced when we saw its penultimate fulfillment in the first advent of Christ and hoped in its ultimate fulfillment in his second advent.⁸⁹

It seems better to understand Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1 as an example of typology. This interpretive approach is based upon the recognition of a correspondence between events in both testaments. It rightly sees the principles of the plan of God as having an unchanging character. As Blomberg observes, “The original event need not have been intentionally viewed as forward-looking by the OT author; for believing Jews, merely to discern striking parallels between God’s actions in history, especially in decisive moments of revelation and redemption, could convince them of divinely intended ‘coincidence.’”⁹⁰

It is true that typology has been greatly abused in the past by interpreters, which has led some writers such as Howard to suggest “analogical correspondence” or “correspondence in history.” However, in the final analysis, the dividing line is so fine as to be essentially nonexistent. Analogical correspondence and typology are essentially the same thing. As has already been mentioned, Bray sees Matthew’s hermeneutic as the “ultimate in typological fulfillment” and that such an approach is greatly enhanced by *peshet* exegesis as evidenced by the remarkable similarities between his handling of the Old Testament text and the Qumran Habakkuk

89. Op. cit., 6.

90. Blomberg, “Matthew,” 8.

commentary. Thus, typology provides a workable and more cautious framework for understanding the interrelationship between Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1.

Conclusion

This paper has covered a lot of ground both historically as well as hermeneutically. Part I summarized the major approaches to the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament. This section sketched out this history from the Apostolic Period to the Modern Period.

Part II survey and analyzed different approaches of the New Testament use of the Old Testament as evidenced by the hermeneutical techniques employed by Matthew (2:15) in his citation of Hosea 11:1. It was concluded that Matthew likely employed a typological approach possibly enhanced by the liberal use of *peshet* exegesis. Perhaps the only question remaining is whether this hermeneutical technique should be used by Christian interpreters today. Although the modern interpreter is limited in that he is not inspired by the Holy Spirit as were the writers of sacred Scripture. However, it is still possible by using the historical-grammatical method to see typological correspondence between events in the Old Testament and events in the life of Jesus.

The writer concludes and concurs with the caution given by Campbell:

Without prophetic authority we may have to hold conclusions drawn from such techniques more tentatively than Matthew does. Nonetheless, the use of interpretive methods consonant with those found in scripture substantially strengthens the confidence of modern interpreters who are committed to the kind of careful exegesis that honors the intent of the ultimate author.⁹¹

Because we are not inspired writers in the sense that Matthew and other authors of Scripture were, we must err on the side of caution.

91. Op. cit., 7.