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Matthew Doesn't Mean What You Think He Means, and Why It's Significant: A Form Critical Evaluation of Plēroō's relation to Pesher Formulas and its Solution to an Age-Old Problem

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Abstract

This paper will evaluate Matthew 2:13-15 analyzing Matthew's questionable use of Hosea 11:1. Turner has noted that, "Those who think that Matthew saw a prediction of Jesus in Hos. 11:1 must either disparage Matthew's hermeneutic . . . or attribute to Matthew revelatory insight into the *sensus plenior* of Hosea" (Turner, 2008). While the majority of commentators have found Matthew to be practicing typological interpretation, there has been a neglect to analyze the structure of Matthew's particular introductory formula since Stendahl (1968), which have led many to see a pesher employment by Matthew in these formulas. This paper evaluates the form of Matthew's quotations in light of persher forms, ultimately finding that Matthew has inverted the form. This inverted form shows that Matthew was seeking to interpret his current situation in light of the scriptures, and not to interpret scriptures at all. This difference is pivotal to see, since it validates Matthew's use of the Old Testament in πληρόω formulas because he is giving a contemporary significance of how a text affects his current situation, and not reinterpreting meaning into that text from his new situation. This confusion between meaning and significance has proliferated interpretations, and has been a problem that Walter C. Kaiser and E. D. Hirsch have sought to remedy, but has not yet been fruitful for interpretations in Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

Keywords

Cover Page Footnote

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Introduction

This paper seeks to argue two things: (1) Matthew employed the πληρόω introductory formula in a way which was related, yet distinct from the *pesher* method, and (2) that modern interpreters have been too restrictive in their semantical use of πληρόω which demands a literal prophecy with a literal or figurative fulfillment, when this anti-*pesher* method need only serve to mark any correlation between the OT texts and the situation of Jesus. After this general argument has been made, this paper seeks to apply its findings to Matthew 2:13–15, one of the most troublesome passages in intertextual study concerning the πληρόω formula. It is the hope of this study, via *qal wohomer*, that if the reader finds this thesis a satisfactory explanation of one of the heaviest passages in Matthew (those most difficult), it will also prove sufficient to explain the lighter passages (those most clear).

Pesher Method, πληρόω, and the Fulfillment Quotations

The term *pesher*, פשר, appears in the biblical text of Daniel (2:4-5, 7, 9, 16, 24, 25 et al; 5:12) and is associated with Daniel's ability to interpret the divinely revealed dreams of monarchs during the Babylonian period.[1] However, during the intertestamental period, this method seemed to move from interpreting divinely revealed dreams to divinely revealed documents as seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly in the Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab). If the use of the Qumran Community can be considered normative of first century interpretive practices, the method was a systematic "attempt to explain or decipher biblical texts. . . simply comment[ing] on the Bible, verse by verse."[2] However, it must be noted that a "Pesher is a special type of exposition. It refers to exposition of texts that sees them *affirming eschatological fulfillment in the current era*."[3] This holds true for both the Daniel account, as well as 1QpHab. In both instances, an interpreter (Daniel in his work, and the author of 1QpHab, assumed to be the Teacher of Righteousness) sought to interpret divine revelation in light of the current, or

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[1] HALOT, s.v. "פשר"

[2] Michael Owen Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward M. Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, Rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 2005), 79.

[3] Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning, eds., *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 261.(emphasis added)

immediately future, context with eschatological implications. Furthermore, in both the biblical and extra-biblical material, the format is rigidly adhered to. This format consists of a review of the divine revelation (a recounting of the dream or biblical text), an introductory formula containing the the root פשר, followed by the explanation of meaning.

Daniel 2 contains the aforementioned format within the account of the Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image, which foretold of four kingdoms that would follow his own. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which troubled him greatly (2:1). Nebuchadnezzar called for his wisemen and enchanters and demanded that they be able to recount the dream to him so that he could trust their interpretation. This recounting of the revealed dream was critical in the king's eyes (cf. 5–9). After a request for time, and through prayer, Daniel received from God, not only the revelation of the contents of the dream, but also the interpretation resulting in his praise in 14–19, resulting in the praise of v 20–23. Daniel is then brought before King Nebuchadnezzar by Arioch and recounts the divinely revealed dream of 2:27–35. Verse 27 makes clear that Daniel began his speech with a recounting of the revelation when Daniel explains to King Nebuchadnezzar what he saw, "You oh King, saw what will come to pass and behold a great image! This great and splendorous image preeminent stood before you and its appearance was terrifying!"[4] After recounting all the dream's content, Daniel then moved to the interpretation in vv. 37–45. However, at v. 36 Daniel introduced the interpretation via the פשר formula (emphasis added):

<div align="right">דְּנָה חֶלְמָ֑א וּפִשְׁרֵהּ נֵאמַ֥ר קֳדָם־מַלְכָּֽא:[5]</div>

"This is the dream, <u>and its interpretation</u> we will now speak before the king"
<div align="right">(emphasis added).</div>

This same situation is found in Daniel 4, though in this chapter Nebuchadnezzar does not demand Daniel to determine the contents of the dream, but instead readily divulged the dream's content to Daniel (vv. 6-15). Daniel is terrified of the dream's content and interpretation in vv. 16, but he is comforted by Nebuchadnezzar so that he would reveal the content. Daniel then briefly recounted the content of the dream, seen in vv. 17-20. Verse 17 makes clear that this recounting is dealing with what was previously revealed in the dream's content, as v. 17 shows through another verb of seeing חזה: "The tree which you saw, which grew and became strong and whose top reached to the heavens and became visible to the whole earth … " After recounting the dream, Daniel again

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[4] All translations, of Old and New Testament, are the author's unless otherwise noted.

[5] All Hebrew Scripture quotations are from the BHS unless otherwise noted.

gave the interpretation while employing the פשר introductory formula in v. 21 (emphasis added):

דְּנָה פִשְׁרָא מַלְכָּא וּגְזֵרַת עִלָּיָא הִיא דִּי מְטָת עַל־מָרְאִי מַלְכָּא:

This is the interpretation for the King, and a declaration of the Most High it is,
which has reached unto my Lord the King (emphasis added).

Further examples are numerous, including Daniel's rebuke, interpretation of Belshazzar, and the dreams in Hebrew as found by the angelic messenger in the last half of the text of Daniel as appearing in BHS. But the above proves sufficient to establish the form of the פשר introductory formula:

Recounting of revelation (dream)	פשר introduction	Interpretation to current or future situation.

Evidence of consistent use of the פשר formula after the time of Daniel is numerous and then further expanded as evinced by the Qumran Community (QC).[6] This development expanded from dealing solely with dreams to now being employed with the interpretation of canonical texts seen in the Pesher Habakkuk. It has been noted that the פשר method employed by Qumran has a manifest disregard for the historical context of the original author and audience. This method sees these texts as speaking particularly to the contemporary community, and in the QC, against the enemies of the Teacher of Righteousness.[7]

The QC's (a sectarian group), use of the OT writings often served as their justification for separation from the mainline Jewish movements, particularly through the ascent of a non-Levitical priesthood.[8] However, their sectarian identity brings about their useful correlation to the Christian community, since the Christians would have been considered sectarian Jews in the years concurrent and

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[6] All abbreviations, unless otherwise noted, observe the standard provided in *The SBL Handbook of Style 2nd Edition*.

[7] Walter Kaiser defines pesher in light of Jack Weir stating that, "The *pesher* method applied OT texts directly to contemporary events of the NT writer apart from any consideration of their original historical setting, often modifying those OT texts in the process to fit the new theological and historical needs of the community… " (*The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001], 9).

[8] Ḥanan Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State*, Kindle Edition., Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), Kindle Locations 288–89.

immediately subsequent to the time of Christ.[9] Shani Tzoref explains how the "Qumran *pesharim* are generally considered classic exemplars of 'sectarian' writings, featuring distinctive terminology, socio-political alignments, and theological beliefs that characterize the Qumran community."[10] Tzoref further explains:

> A significant component of the Qumran community's self-perception is the belief that its members have been given privileged access to divinely revealed knowledge, concerning both halakha and transcendental existential realities. The progressive attainment of revelation concerning God's plan served simultaneously as cause, effect, and aim of their way of life. Among the community's eschatological beliefs was the idea that history would culminate with perfect knowledge of the Law and God's mysteries. Chief among the secrets that are revealed over time, is the divine system of proper calendrical calculation and of reward and punishment.[11]

The QC had separated itself because it believed that it was uniquely faithful to the Law of Moses, and therefore the true remnant that would inherit the blessing of God upon the Lord's return, and the eschaton ushered in with the advent of the Messiah. The QC believed that this time would result in the ruin of their enemies, and all those who refused to join them, as evidenced in 1QPHab. Like Christianity, the QC considered themselves as the ones faithful to the revealed OT Scriptures concerning the end times. They too awaited ultimate fulfillment in a messiah (or two, in the case of the QC as evidenced in D).[12] The QC also thought that the OT justified their theological understanding for their current place in society. As the QC searched the Scriptures, they found justification for their beliefs, interpreting their OT Scriptures as a direct prophecy for their current situation. This is evidenced in the following examples from William H. Brownlee

> (1:1) [THE ORACLE WHICH THE PROPHET HABAKKUK RECEIVED BY REVELATION. How long, O LORD], do I implore, and

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[9] James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 2nd ed., Kindle Edition. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2010), Kindle Locations 1370–71.

[10] Shani Tzoref, "Pesher and Periodization," *DSD* 18.2 (2011): 130.

[11] Tzoref, "Pesher and Periodization," 132.

[12] VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Kindle Locations 1601–04.

[Thou] not/ [hear? Crying out to Thee, "Violence!" and Thou not save? Its prophetic meaning concerns the ex]pectation of the generation of/[… that are com]ing upon them / […They make] outcry against/ …[13]

In Column 1, lines 1–5, Brownlee translates the document, and the text where there is a quote of Habakkuk 1:1, in which the divine revelation can be seen in the text that remains "do I implore, and… not". The פשר is seen where Brownlee has chosen to translate the term as "Its prophetic meaning concerns." Following the פשר verb is the writer's interpretation of the text. The *pesherist* then moves on to verse 3 in Column 1, lines 5–6 where Brownlee translates the text as:

"(1:3a) [Why dost Thou make me see trouble and lo]ok upon [tra]vail?/ Its prophetic meaning . . . God [looked] upon oppression and treachery."[14]

Again, here is a quotation of the first portion of Hab 1:3, followed by the פשר introductory formula, and its interpretation. This method can be seen throughout 1QpHab, as attested by Brownlee, and Wise, Abegg, and Cook (cf. n. 2). These texts alone are sufficient to establish the normative use of the פשר formula. Though the mode of revelation has developed in the QC from dreams to texts, the form of the פשר in *1QpHab* is identical to those in Daniel; it begins with a recounting of the revelation with the term פשר, it is then followed by the application to the current contextual situation; in Daniel's case, to Nebuchadnezzar, and in QC's case, to the community. It is at exactly this point in which Matthew's πληρόω formula cannot stand up to the definition of a *pesher*,[15] and thus why this theory must be rejected as a plausible explanation for Matthew's use of the OT in the πληρόω passages.

When Matthew employs his πληρόω formula, he does not seek to explain a revelation which will be cited and indicated with the introductory formula. פשר is an introductory formula for an *interpretation* of a revelation (whether vision or text), while πληρόω serves as an introductory formula for a revelatory *citation* (emphases mine). פשר explains revelation in light of current situations, while πληρόω seeks to explain current situations in light of revelation. This simple, yet

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[13] William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, Monograph Series - SBL 24 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 37.

[14] Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, 39.

[15] The use of Matthew's name in this paper refers to the text in the final form and understands Matthew as the author of the text in the final form. This paper does not engage with the debate of authorship as it is beyond the purview of this paper.

overlooked delineation is key to understanding an author's intention, whether the *pesherists* (Daniel and QC), or the Gospel writer. The *pesherists* always seek to explain previous revelation considering their current context, while Matthew (the author) seeks to explain his current context in light of previous revelation. It was never Matthew's goal to explain every text which he cited, but instead to explain his current situation (the Jesus event) through the eyes of Scripture.

The idea of *sensus plenior* has been a blight on the field of hermeneutics for centuries, and to this day it continues to proliferate the field. It is clear that the *pesherists* of Qumran found a meaning that they felt was inspired and was outside of the purview of Habakkuk's original audience. The only way that such a view could be rationally explained is by the notion of a *sensus plenior*, a secondary and therefore multiple meaning, in which Habakkuk's utterance had a clear meaning for the QC as well as his original audience. This same principle has, in like manner, been applied to Matthew's use of the OT for various reasons as shown below. Though an attractive solution to understanding how one text can mean one thing to the original audience, and another meaning that is spiritualized or intended by the Spiritual author in the dual authorship theorem for a reader's contemporary context, this is an unsophisticated approach induced by poor definitions of terms. Ronald Nash shows that the law of contradiction requires that a person intends one meaning when he speaks an utterance:

> Underlying this argument is the inescapable distinction between B and non-B, both in language, thought, and being. Contrary meanings may not (if one is to speak or write intelligibly) be attributed to the same word at the same time and in the same sense. Since any refutation of the law of noncontradiction would have to be expressed in intelligible language and since significant speech presupposes the law, it is in principle impossible to use language to deny the law of noncontradiction. In order for a word to mean something (B), it must not mean something else (non-B). Obviously, any given word can have more than one meaning. As long as the possible meanings of a word are limited in number, we can always avoid the ambiguity by assigning a different set of symbols to each meaning.[16]

This being the case, then the Bible has a historical meaning, spoken in time, to a particular audience, according to each author's intention.

The question remains, why or how anyone outside of the author's original audience should seek to study the Bible for anything more than history? It is this

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[16] Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Kindle. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), Kindle Location 197.

element of scriptural intention which Walter C. Kaiser has sought to answer through his discussions distinguishing between meaning and significance, Kaiser laments that, "nowhere in the total curriculum of theological studies has the student been more deserted and left to his own devices than in bridging the yawning chasm between understanding the content of Scripture as it was given in the past and proclaiming it with such relevance in the present as to produce faith, life, and bona fide works."[17] In his work, *Towards an Exegetical Theology*, Kaiser seeks to develop a method which would assist preachers in "developing such extensions of its [biblical exegesis] methodology that the interpreter can move safely and confidently from the original meaning of the Biblical author to the contemporaneous significances of that text for modern listeners."[18] Kaiser then summarizes E. D. Hirsch:

> It is not the meaning of the text which changes, but its significance to the author. This distinction is too often ignored. *Meaning* is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent. Significance, on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable.[19]

With these definitions established, Kaiser then asserts how this distinction influences biblical interpretation and proclamation calling significance "a secondary and subjective determination."[20]

    As others have lamented (see below), Matthew's employment of Hosea 11:1 does not seem to accord whatsoever with a meaning which can be ascertained from Hosea's context by use of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation. This leaves authors with a few options: to reject Matthew's use of the text as implying meaning and instead seeking to draw some typologically analogous representation, which has led to various interpretations, or resolve oneself to some form of NT priority view which ultimately leads to *sensus*

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[17] Kaiser Jr., Walter C.. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching,* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 149-152.

[18] Kaiser, *Toward,* Kindle Locations 211-212.

[19] E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, Kindle. (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1967), 8.

[20] Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, Kindle Edition, 440–42.

plenior. Both of these methods have revolved around a semantic restriction on the lexical uses of the term πληρόω, which was not necessary and ultimately proved unhelpful in ending this debate. If πληρόω is found to be a term which denotes a fulfillment of a literal prophecy, then this implies that the Hosea text was a prophecy. However, Hosea's text does not seem to substantiate this. If the term is used in the sense of 'filling full,' then a NT priority view is almost required, leading to Marcionite view of the OT.[21] Turner notes this same predicament:

> There are essentially two approaches to Matthew's use of Hos. 11:1. Some scholars believe that Matthew, perhaps mistakenly, saw in the passage a prediction of Jesus's sojourn in Egypt and departure from there. But most would agree that in its original context, Hos. 11:1 is not a prediction of the future but a reference to the exodus, God's past redemptive act of bringing the nation of Israel out of Egypt.
>
> Those who think that Matthew saw a prediction of Jesus in Hos. 11:1 must either disparage Matthew's hermeneutic (Barclay 1975: 1.35–36; Boring 1995: 153–54; Luz 1989: 146n24; T. Robinson 1928: 9) or attribute to Matthew revelatory insight into the *sensus plenior* of Hosea (Fee and Stuart 1993: 185; H. Fowler 1968: 1.83). Neither of these views is satisfactory. The first attributes error to Matthew, and the second attributes inscrutable hermeneutics to the Holy Spirit.[22]

However, if Matthew is not employing a *pesher* formula, requiring an interpretive meaning on divine revelation, but is instead utilizing πληρόω as an anti-*pesher* which moves from the contemporary situation to his knowledge of divine revelation, then many problems of intertextuality inherent in Matthew's Gospel can be resolved. In fact, it would seem that if Matthew was seeking to find the significance of the Hosea passage and others like it for his contemporary predicament instead of the meaning for the original audience of Hosea, the standard glosses of πληρόω are deficient for his task. Nash, Kaiser, and Hirsch unanimously agree, through the law of non-contradiction, that a single meaning of a text is necessary. If their logic is followed, then one must first understand the sequence of signs which Matthew employed before one can understand how his method developed.

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[21] For a discussion on this cf. John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (New York: Abingdon, 1967), 58–109.

[22] David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 90.

Word Study on πληρόω

A brief word study on πληρόω will yield the heart of the problem of interpretation. L&N define the term as "to cause to happen, with the implication of fulfilling some purpose—'to cause to happen, to make happen, to fulfill.'"[23] There is causality inherent in the term, such that the action depicted in the narrative is given as a cause for the completion of the OT revelation. Most NT scholars seek to define the term by means of BDAG, historically taking the fourth option by Bauer which is "to bring to a designed end, *fulfill* a prophecy, an obligation, a promise."[24] When this happens the emphasis has predominantly fallen on Matthew using the term to denote the fulfilling of a prophecy or a promise of the OT. However, many scholars have instead sought to define the term via BDAG's first option, "to make full, *fill (full).*"[25] This also has problems leading to speculation on how these actions filled the OT texts with meaning. To utilize the first option of BDAG (to make full or fill) would seem to imply that the OT texts were lacking some substance that only the NT can provide. This has been rejected since it would lead to a NT priority position, such as explained by Richard B. Hays.[26]

Another option is available, and that is to allow all of the options in BDAG to be given equal opportunity for employment. Though it would not be unheard of to find an author using one word in distinct ways, this is typically frowned upon in exegetical theory. However, the case can be made that this is warranted since this formula is not always employed the same way. Some

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[23] L&N, s.v. "πληρόω"

[24] BDAG, s.v. "πληρόω"

[25] BDAG, s.v. "πληρόω"

[26] Richard B. Hays notes that the "four Gospel writers approach Scripture as a unified whole, but their reading of it is not undifferentiated. Each of the Evangelists seems to operate with a de facto canon within the canon, giving more attention to some parts of Scripture than to others. At one level, this involves a particularly intense focus on certain books: above all the Pentateuch, Isaiah, and the Psalms." (*Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017], 362).

instances are linked with the ἵνα clause, some with ὅτι, and others without a conjunction. Since the syntax is not unanimous, it raises the question whether these logical conjunctions, or their absence, can assist in resolving the dilemma of, *which definition* of πληρόω is being employed.[27] Due to its semantic range and syntactical differentiation, evaluating a particular instance on its own merits before determining which gloss seems appropriate. A more comprehensive study of the influence of syntactical variation on the semantic range would be worthy of future research. The other glosses/senses offered by BDAG include:

> [2] to complete a period of time, *fill (up), complete;* . . . [3] to bring to completion that which was already begun, *complete, finish;* [4] to bring to a designed end, *fulfill* a prophecy, an obligation, a promise, a law, a request, a purpose, a desire, a hope, a duty, a fate, a destiny, etc. . . . [or] a prayer; . . . [5] to bring to completion an activity in which one has been involved from its beginning, *complete, finish;* . . . [or 6] *complete* a number.[28]

If the semantic range of πληρόω is widened, then it becomes apparent that Matthew's use of the term need not be seen as fulfilling a prophecy which has already been fulfilled. It must also not be seen as making a declarative statement into a prophecy outside of its plain sense, as some who are influenced by the strictures of modernity have been accused of doing. Likewise, the restoration of the semantic range of the term will prove effective to remove the NT priority view inherent in the 'filling full' sense that is the popular alternative.

The argument so far has shown that Matthew is clearly not employing a *pesher* formula, since he has inverted the rigid formula, starting with contemporary events in his own time, and seeking to interpret his situation in the Christ event in light of the divine revelation of OT Scriptures. Since Matthew takes his starting point from contemporary events, outside of the canonical text, then it must be found that Matthew is dealing with the significance which these OT texts had for him as an eyewitness and the author, and his readership. As Kaiser and Hirsch affirm, this is quite a subjective task, and he would have had the freedom to describe the "relationship between that [text's] meaning…" to himself and his audience by "indeed anything imaginable."[29] With this

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[27] This would be a fruitful study for further research, however, due to the constraints of the task at hand, this work proceeds under the assumption that a semantic restriction of the term to only one use, at the exclusions of others, is unwarranted.

[28] BDAG, s.v. "πληρόω"

[29] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation, 8.*

understanding, these findings are applied to Matt 2:13–15 to analyze the significance that Matthew has found for the Hosea passage for his current context.

Translation of NT Passage

Below is an original translation of the NT passage under consideration from the critical text of the NA[28]. Parsing information is found in the attached appendix, unless otherwise noted, the glosses are derived from the L&N:

> [1]But when they had left, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and be there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him." Then rising, he took the child, and his mother, by night; and he went to Egypt. And he was there until the end of Herod, with the result that it might fulfill that which was spoken by the Lord through the Prophet, the saying, "From Egypt I called my Son." (Matt 2:13–15)

Exegetical Analysis

NT Exegesis

The exegetical sections of this paper offer a more analytical *discourse analysis* through a clausal breakdown, where clauses are marked for discourse functions. Following this is a brief discussion of the mainline narrative of the discourse through the presence of independent clauses prefaces a review of the author's pragmatically highlighted statements through verbal aspect. For a discussion on verbal aspect as prominence markers, one should consult Runge, Porter, Fanning, and Campbell.[30] With these elements noted, a discussion of pertinent syntax markers surrounding the πληρόω passage itself follows, since that is the main concern. Particularly, the presence of conjunctions and adverbs,

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[30] For a thorough discussion on verbal aspect within New Testament Greek see Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 (New York: Lang, 2003); Stanley E. Porter, "In Defence of Verbal Aspect," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. D. A. Carson and Stanley E. Porter (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1993), 26–45; Buist M. Fanning, "Approaches to Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek: Issues in Definition and Method," in *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistic* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1993), 46–62; Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, Oxford Theological Monographs (New York: Clarendon Press, 1990); Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

and how they are employed, may assist in determining if Matthew's use of
πληρόω allows for any variation in the lexical options πληρόω. However, if there
is no syntactical variation within the πληρόω clauses, one would should limit the
syntactical range of the term as others have done before.

Discourse Analysis vv. 13-15	
Discourse Functions	**Clausal Break Down**
Temporal Marker	13 But when they had left,
Character Introduction	behold an angel of the Lord appeared
Locative Marker	in a dream
Discourse Introduction	to Joseph saying,
Imperative Series	"Rise,
Imperative with DO	take the child
Dual DO	and his mother
Imp. w/ Spec. Loc.	and flee to Egypt,
Mark.	and be there until I
Durative Temporal	tell you.
Mark.	For Herod is about to search for the child
Basis for Action	to destroy him."
Elaboration	14 Then rising
Participial Manner	he took the child
Assertion	and his mother
Dual Direct Object	by night;
Temporal Marker	and he went to Egypt.
Assertion with Loc.	15 And he was there until the end of Herod,
Mark.	with the result that it might fulfill that which was
Assertion with Time	spoken by the Lord
Mark.	through the Prophet,
Result Clause***	the saying, "From Egypt I called my
Agency	Son."
Specific- OT Citation	

  The mainline of the narrative (shown through employment of the
independent clauses outside of direct speech) briefly shows that an Angel of the
Lord appeared to Joseph because Herod was searching for the child. This caused
Joseph to take the child, and his mother (in a dual direct object relationship) away
until Herod died. Through verbal aspect observation, one can see that the author
was drawing particular attention to the fact that the angel appeared, and that
Joseph was to flee to Egypt and remain there. The next verb highlighted is
Joseph's obedience in remaining, "he was there" until Herod met his end. All
other verbs in the discourse are either off mainline *aorists* or they are *participial*
forms.

The most difficult tension to resolve is the presence of the ἵνα clause in v. 15. There are four main options for interpreting ἵνα clauses given by Daniel B. Wallace; adverbially they can be interpreted as *cause or result.* If the ἵνα clause is interpreted substantively, they can be either *content markers* or *ep-exegetical*.[31] The question becomes whether the emphasis is on the outcome of the action, or the intention of the action. The limitation on Joseph and the family's journey, noted through the employment of the *temporal deictic* clause ἕως ἂν εἴπω σοι, seems to imply that a result of return was expected, and that the journey was not the intended purpose. Wesley G. Olmstead disagrees, noting briefly that it is a *purpose clause*, "or less likely a result clause." Olmstead does not justify this interpretation, instead pointing back to his discussion on 1:22, where he notes that grammarians disagree concerning this issue.[32] Instead, this paper agrees with Grant R. Osborne regarding the ἵνα clause as a *result clause* due to contextual emphasis on the return mentioned by the angel.[33] With a resultant ἵνα clause, πληρωθῇ as an *aorist subjunctive* could be understood within BDAG third sense of the word, which is "to bring to completion that which was already begun, *complete, finish*" (emphasis his).[34] This sense is often neglected by commentators. However, the interpreter must ask in what sense could this complete that which was begun in the prophet's statement? Therefore, before a conclusive interpretation on the NT passage can be reached, one must examine the Hosea text quoted below.

OT Exegesis

Hosea, a book of prophecy, shows God causing Hosea to take a wife of questionable character, telling him "Go, take for yourself a wife of fornication, and father children of fornications, because the land has greatly fornicated from after the LORD" (Hos 1:2). As the living metaphor plays out, whereby Hosea acts in place of God, Hosea loves a whore who pursues other lovers (2:4–9) and has to

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[31] Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar*, Kindle. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), Kindle Location 301–2.

[32] Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew 1-14: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 32.

[33] Grant R. Osborne, states regarding this passage that "it seems to fit better with their return from Egypt ("out of") than with their move there." (*Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 99.)

[34] BDAG, s.v. "πληρόω"

purchase her back (3:1–2). He acts out what will surely take place through the exile and restoration of Israel for their idolatry. Hosea 4–10 makes up an extended series of covenant lawsuits, by which God levels indictments upon Israel. However, with ch. 11, the covenant lawsuit gives way to a salvation oracle. Though God intends to punish Israel for their idolatry at the hands of Assyria, His compassion will grow warm and tender, and he will not execute His burning anger (11:8–9). The first verse is part of God's recounting of His historical deeds of mercy and salvation toward Israel where He recounts the Exodus. Though Michael Rydelnik believes that this points back to the Balaam oracles in Numbers, based off of the Targum, this is unnecessary.[35] The Exodus was frequently used in the prophets, and the corporate solidarity expressed by the alternation between the first-person singular and the plural pronoun which is frequent within the book of Exodus from the very first chapter (cf. Exod 1:8–21). To see a Messianic interpretation whereby Hosea is referring to Numbers is reckless proof-texting based on targumic literature which is known for fanciful exegesis.[36] Instead, this text in Hosea should be read in light of the Pentateuch, in a way which accords with prophetic literature without such questionable references.

The issue of corporate solidarity is clear in all parts of OT literature, seen particularly in Exodus, which is obviously the point of reference in 11:1. The nations' idolatry (11:2) would no doubt lead to the covenant curses found in Deut 28, and is a prominent feature of pre-exilic prophetic literature.[37] The Exodus event in itself is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant expressed in a progressive series of revelations given to Abraham in chs. 12:1–3, 13:14–17, 15:1–20 and 17:1–21. Genesis 15:13–16 reads:

> And he said to Abram "Surely know that as sojourners your seed will be, in a land *that is* not theirs, and they will be slaves there and be afflicted *for* four hundred years. But moreover, the nation which enslaves them I will judge, and afterward I will bring them out with great possessions. And you

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[35] Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum, eds., *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, Kindle. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2019), Kindle Location 107.

[36] Rydelnik and Edwin Blum, *The Moody Handbook,* 107.

[37] Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd Kindle. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), Kindle Location 3799.

> will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. And the
> fourth generation they shall return here, because the iniquity is not
> complete of the Amorites yet."

With the Abrahamic covenant, God walked through the sacrificial animals by
himself, showing that he was taking it upon himself to ensure the deliverance of
the land of Canaan to the sons of Abraham after a time of affliction. Woven
throughout all of these installments of the Abrahamic promise, however, is an
implicit idea that his children would be sovereign over the land which he walked
(particularly 13:14–17 and 15:18 giving the extent of ownership and the
boundaries of the land grant, as well as 17:6–8, denoting the sovereign rule of
those nations by Abrahamic offspring). It would be expected, in Abraham's eyes,
that upon the receipt of the land, his children would be sovereign in their rule over
it, after ridding it of the Canaanites. The Deuteronomic covenant assured this
same sentiment.

   Deut 7:17–19;22 shows that the land was gifted solely to Israel, and that
they were responsible for driving out all opposition through their obedience to
God.

> "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I. How can I
> dispossess them?' you shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember
> what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials
> that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the
> outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So will
> the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid… The
> LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little."

In case there was any question on the sovereignty of Israel, Moses again assures
the people in v. 24 of the same chapter, "And he will give their kings into your
hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven. No one shall be
able to stand against you until you have destroyed them." However, this land
grant was contingent. The law of Deuteronomy was given as a Suzerain treaty, by
which a powerful king granted a vassal state protection through their commitment
to covenant obligations. These covenant obligations were stated in the Mosaic
Law, and they were ratified by a series of blessings and curses found in Deut
28:15; 36–37:

> But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to
> do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then
> all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you… "The LORD will

bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone. And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you away.

It was these words which the prophecy of Hosea, as covenant prosecutor, was referring to as he delivered his lawsuit against the people in Hos 4–11. With Hosea 11:1, the prophet set the grounds for the lawsuit, showing the heinousness of Israel's behavior. They were promised so much as the child who was loved by God, and delivered from terrible subjugation by their lover, yet they turned to the *Baals* and idols, forgetting the one who healed them.

Matthew's Use of the OT

With the OT text sufficiently explained, one must ask why and how Matthew employed this text. Ulrich Luz notes some of the problems with Matthew's use of Hos 11:

> *Verse 15** (= Hos 11:1*) follows the Hebrew text and speaks in the singular of "my son"; the wording of the LXX would not be suitable for Matthew. However, the main problem lies not in the quotation's wording but in its position: it speaks of calling the son *out of* Egypt; that does not fit the immediate context. Does the quotation refer to Jesus' entire sojourn in Egypt, and does it interpret it as a new exodus from Egypt? If so, it is awkwardly placed. Or is Matthew only interested in the geographic term "Egypt"? Speaking against that possibility, however, is the redactional introduction that shows that the expression "my son" was also important for Matthew.[38]

All of these issues which Luz notes are explained in various ways by commentators, however, most major commentators find some type of typological allusion being made between Christ and the nation of Israel through the Exodus event.

Donald A. Hagner believes that "The premature quotation serves as the signal of the theological import of the presence of the holy family in Egypt by its

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[38] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, vol. 1 of *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 118.

explicit reference to the exodus."[39] Osborne believes that "Matthew sees a typological correspondence between Israel's exodus experience and Jesus' sojourn in Egypt. Though not a direct messianic passage, this still constitutes fulfillment because Jesus as Messiah is corporately identified with Israel throughout its history (cf. the king and high priest, corporately identified with the nation at their time of office) and so fulfills its experiences."[40] Osborne also notes that a reference to Balaam's oracle has been found by others. Osborne, like Raymond E. Brown, believes that the passage is placed here, "Not so much" to describe "a journey from Egypt as it is a journey to Nazareth, and Matthew wishes to place the reference to the exodus before the reference to the exile in 2:17–18. Moreover, the emphasis here is not so much on the "*out of* Egypt" as it is on Jesus' reliving the exodus experience as a whole."[41]

Craig L. Blomberg explicitly disagrees with those who find Matthew to be exhibiting a form of *midrash* or *pesher*, and states that:

> Better than either of these approaches is that which recognizes the exegesis as typological (and even more specifically that of analogical correspondence). Matthew sees striking parallels in the patterns of God's activities in history in ways he cannot attribute to coincidence. Just as God brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt to inaugurate his original covenant with them, so again God is bringing the Messiah, who fulfills the hopes of Israel, out of Egypt as he is about to inaugurate his new covenant.[42]

This view is found ultimately deficient in the below text, since Blomberg accuses Matthew of performing exegesis, which would denote the ascertaining of meaning, and is philosophically inconsistent via the law of non-contradiction as noted above.

Turner does better than Blomberg by noting that Matthew is dealing with significance from the Hosea text, and not performing exegesis, or seeking to give

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[39] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1 - 13*, vol. 33a of *WBC* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 36.

[40] Osborne, *Matthew*, 99.

[41] Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, 98–99, cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 200.

[42] Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22 of *NAC* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 67.

a new meaning when he states, "Matthew's second fulfillment formula quotation… alludes to the new significance of the event described in Hos. 11:1… No doubt this concept of sonship is the reason Matthew was attracted to Hos. 11:1 in the first place. The initial words of Hos. 11:1, though not cited by Matthew, are also crucial for the sonship theme. The verse, as a whole, affirms that God loved Israel and called him/it from Egypt when he/it was a child."[43] Turner believes that the themes of divine love (though not quoted in the text), divine sonship, and the exodus are critical to Matthew. "What was true of Israel on a metaphorical level is more profoundly true of Jesus the Messiah… In Hos 11:1 the exodus provides a historical pattern of God's loving preservation of his son Israel from Pharaoh's wrath. From a Christian perspective, this past event is recapitulated by God's loving preservation of his Son, Jesus, from Herod's wrath."[44] Turner finds justification for this in the passages where not only the nations are described as the son of God, but also are the Davidic kings (2 Sam 7:14–15; Pss 2:6–7, 12; 72:1; 89:26–37).[45]

W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison are also persuaded by the typological interpretation of the Matthew text state that, "The evangelist was, we are strongly inclined to think, perfectly aware that 'Out of Egypt, etc.' was originally spoken of Israel. He was not naïvely oblivious of the switch in referents when he applied Hos 11:1 to Jesus, not to the people. We think this in part because, in the second place, Christian tradition before Matthew had portrayed Jesus as repeating or recapitulating certain experiences of Israel." [46] Charles Quarles briefly states in his exegetical handbook that, "In its orig. context the statement described the Exodus. Matthew's adaptation indicates that Jesus's departure from Egypt signals the new Exodus" thus signaling his own inclination towards a typological understanding.[47] Rydelnik, though heavily influenced by the LXX of the Balaam oracle for his interpretation, believes that "The second OT citation in Mt 2 is generally understood to be 'a classic example of pure typology' or 'typical fulfillment.'"[48]

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[43] Turner, *Matthew*, 90.

[44] Turner, *Matthew*, 90–91.

[45] Turner, *Matthew*, 90–91.

[46] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1 of *ICC* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 261–64.

[47] Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, Kindle., EGGNT (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2017), Kindle Locations 1973–74.

[48] Rydelnik and Edwin Blum, *The Moody Handbook,* 106–08.

Kaiser notes that this section is "Biblical typology at its best,"[49] showing how Matthew saw that both Israel and Jesus are titled as the Son of God, both are related through corporate solidarity, and both are emphasizing "not so much the departure point, Egypt, as they are stressing the gracious act of God's preservation in a time of great distress."[50]

Though Blomberg noted that many find issue with the ideas of *pesher* or *midrash,* (and thereby the application of Jewish interpretive methods) his argument, and those who take issue are *non-sequitur*. Blomberg believes that Matthew was performing exegesis urging one to see, "the exegesis as typological."[51] It is at this point which one must contend with Blomberg as he sees Matthew as exegeting a text, this thus denotes the ascertaining of a meaning. It is argued above that Matthew is not seeking to find meaning for the text of Hosea, but as Blomberg notes, Matthew is seeking to find analogies with that text from his current situation in the Christ event. Because Matthew is dealing with significance and not meaning, he is not performing exegesis, but operating at another level in which he is applying a text whose meaning he understood to his own consideration. Since Matthew is not seeking to impart meaning on that text, there is no reason to reject Rabbinic methods. In fact, as is shown below, typology is not only consistent with Rabbinic methods, but is likely the natural result of the relationship between these methods when they are working harmoniously.

The typological element is unanimously recognized by the aforementioned cited authors. However, there is one thing which causes hesitation between the identification of Israel with Christ from Hosea 1 and Matthew 2 which no commentator has addressed. Verse 1 of Hosea 11 cannot be understood apart from v. 2. In fact, Turner recognizes the necessity of expanding the reference of Hosea to include the first clause of the verse, which Matthew does not cite, when he emphasizes that Christ is likewise an object of divine love, as similar to Kaiser when he notes the paternal protection of the Father for the Son during the stay in Egypt. However, this expansion must include not only the entirety of v. 1, but also v. 2, since they are found within the same stanza of Hebrew poetry.[52] This stanza

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[49] Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, 55.

[50] Kaiser, *Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 52–53.

[51] Blomberg, *Matthew*, 67.

[52] Samuel T. S. Goh notes that "scholars theorize that strophic division can be guided by criteria such as coherence of the thought-content, thematic flow, transition markers, and repetition." (*The Basics of Hebrew Poetry: Theory and Practice* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 17.)

is evidenced through a parallel relationship where there is an implicit contrast between God's actions toward His Son Israel, Israel's actions toward God, and a thematic root repetition of קרא, when the text reads:

> When a youth was Israel, then I loved him,
>   and from Egypt, I called (קרא)my son
> I called (קרא) to them, thus they went from their face,
>   To the Baals they sacrificed, and to idols they burned incense.

Here in the text, the one who is called in like manner, כן (thus), turns from God toward idols. Through an observation of Hosea's context, and in light of antecedent revelation, the referent for Hos 11 should be understood as corporate Israel, and then perhaps the referent for Matthew's text should also be corporate Israel. Luz, Davies and Allison, and Hagner note within the aforementioned cited discussions, that the placement of the Hosea reference is difficult to describe. This leads them to resort to a thematic explanation of the citation's placement. However, a review of antecedent theology could explain how Jesus's preservation was going to result in a deliverance for corporate Israel that was similar in type to God's divine actions in the Exodus.

The historical books of the Bible, before Hosea, clearly show that even though Israel was brought out of Egypt, they did not actually realize all of the conditions of the Abrahamic covenant, and they were actually in imminent danger of receiving the Deuteronomic curses (Hos 11:5). Israel was still awaiting the complete sovereignty over the entire land grant which God had promised, which was not found in Hosea's day, seen in the divided monarchy, and their relationships to Egypt and Assyria. As Hos 11 describes, the people had come out of Egypt through God's mighty hand, but they were soon going to be subjugated to a foreign king as a result of their idolatry. Israel, at the time of Christ, was living in a similar predicament, where they had a king (Herod, though a gentile), a temple, and national leadership, and were practicing a form of Judaism but were still living under foreign influence and domination.[53] Though Christ was coming

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[53] Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black note how this foreign oppression happened when ""Antipater, an Idumean who was a skilled political climber, manipulated his way into favor with Hyrcanus II, the Hasmonean high priest who reigned after 67 B.C. Hyrcanus became the tool of a group of wealthy Jews led by Antipater, the father of Herod the Great of New Testament times. The general chaos in Palestine attracted the attention of Rome. Antipater urged Hyrcanus to cooperate with Rome, but Hyrcanus's ambitious brother Aristobulus II began a civil war in order to seize leadership from his brother. Ultimately, the Roman general Pompey invaded Palestine, subdued Aristobulus, and reduced the Jewish territory of Judea to a Roman province. Although Rome established its power over Judea in 63 B.C., the Jews retained a semblance of Hasmonean leadership under Hyrcanus II and his successor Antigonus, whose death in 37 B.C. marked the end

as a type of deliverer for Israel, as a show of God's love for the people, these Israelites would act like the nation had previously done during the days of Hosea, turning away from God, through their rejection of Christ, and thereby earning God's imminent judgement which Christ foretold in Matt 21:23–22:14 and again 24:1–2.[54]

Corporate Israel's situation in Matthew seems to make a clearer typological association, with the Israel of the Hosea text, than Christ does. Perhaps with this text, Matthew is drawing attention to the fact that though Jesus was God in the flesh (made apparent 17 verses before in 1:23) who was tracing the steps of national Israel as their new king (evidenced in 2:2). These people (national Israel, who were brought out of Egypt) would run after God in an equally opposite way (כן in Hosea) from that which God was calling out (קרא in Hosea) to them through the ministry of Christ. God was calling out for the people through sending them His Son in the flesh, who was walking in the steps of the fathers, geographically. The people, in like fashion, would walk in the steps of their fathers spiritually, turning away from God. They turned away from God particularly be turning toward foreigners, which would be evinced through the subsequent events of Matthew's Gospel, climaxed in the crucifixion. A further piece of evidence for this conclusion comes with the *little apocalypse* of Matthew, whereby one sees the cost of rejecting Christ by Israel's leadership, is given in similar terms of the destruction and subjugation prophesied of Israel as judgement for their idolatry in Hos 11.

Since Christ was not a major character in the scene that under consideration, and He gave no actions in the entirety of chs. 1–3:12 to compare with Israel's failures, it seems best to see the reference to Hosea as one which seeks to maintain corporate-national Israel as the referent. If this is the case, then Matthew's citation of Hosea 11 serves to show the great lengths to which God has gone to call His people back to himself, coming himself through the person of God the Son, identifying with Israel's past, only to be spurned in like manner by his love, resulting in their subsequent judgement. In this case, Matthew would be giving a forewarning of Israel's ultimate rejection of Christ's efforts which finds its pinnacle in His passion. Though this interpretation justifies the corporate typological associations found between national Israel and Christ, it does not limit

of the Hasmonean dynasty." *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 21.

[54] Lea and Black note how in Matt. 21 "The king's destruction of their city represents judgment against the Jews in the events of A.D. 70" (*The New Testament*, 520).

itself to that, but emphasizes the ongoing drama between God's pursuit of Israel, and their correspondent equivalent rejection of God's pursuit by turning to foreign powers and gods.

Conclusion

Many have appealed to and argued against the פשר method as a plausible explanation of Matthew's use of OT citations in the πληρόω passages. Those who have fought against the פשר solution, like Kaiser, have done so on theoretical grounds by appeal to the historical-grammatical method of hermeneutics. Though the historical-grammatical method is imperative to proper understanding of biblical texts, one must take great pains to distinguish the difference between meaning and significance that continues to plague exegetes to this day.[55] This paper sought to show that the appeal to historical-grammatical methods, though valiant for their intentions, were unnecessary. A simple form analysis was sufficient to show that the *pesher* form was rigidly standardized and that the πληρόω formula used by Matthew was not consistent with that rigid structure. Instead, it has been shown that Matthew utilized the πληρόω formula in the exact opposite way. Where a פשר formula began with revelation and moved towards the current situation, via direct literal prophecy, (however unconvincing those interpretations may have been in the QC), the πληρόω formula sought to examine the contemporary situation of the author in light of what was known in the Scriptures. It is at this critical juncture where one can see that the biblical author is not seeking to explain the meaning of the OT text through this formula, since he does not start with the text, but rather the biblical author seeks to understand the ongoing significance of this passage for the life of the contemporary community through the πληρόω formula. If the author is dealing with the significance of the passage for his own life, and not the meaning of the OT text, then the tension, which has plagued inter-textual hermeneutics for so long, is thereby resolved. It is this close relationship between the πληρόω and פשר formulas which has caused so

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[55] Walter C. Kaiser states his own reason for writing because, "A gap of crisis proportions exists between the steps generally outlined in most seminary or Biblical training classes in exegesis and the hard realities most pastors face every week as they prepare their sermons. Nowhere in the total curriculum of theological studies has the student been more deserted and left to his own devices than in bridging the yawning chasm between understanding the content of Scripture as it was given in the past and proclaiming it with such relevance in the present as to produce faith, life, and bona fide works." (*Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), Kindle Locations 148–52.)

many scholars to appeal to it so quickly, and yet the very obvious converse nature of the formulaic structures have been glossed over, which results in not allowing for the differences to be examined critically. With this formulaic relationship examined, moving from a prophetic understanding of meaning to a reflective understanding of significance, the next question concerned how this significance was obtained.

The second major premise of this paper is that a semantic re-evaluation of the term πληρόω was necessary. The majority of the debate surrounding the πληρόω passages are due to examining these passages with only two of the definitions found within the major lexicons, resulting in a superficial restricting of the term. It was shown that Matthew's employment of the term was syntactically varied through his various usages of *explanatory conjunctions*, and sometimes through their complete omittance. It was this syntactical variation that allowed for a re-examination of the semantic range for πληρόω within Matthew's own work. With the entire semantic range open to the passage under consideration, it was found that the term was more likely to evidence the third sense of BDAG's lexical options than the two which are normally proposed. No longer is the term simply the objective prophecy fulfillment marker, nor is it the utterly subjective 'filling full' that is so often understood in a NT priority view. The position of this paper fulfilled a mediating position that allows for the passages to be interpreted as showing a contemporary significance of the text for the reading community. This semantic widening of the term also allows for the author to use the same term for prophecy fulfillment, but the passages under consideration did not present this, and a fuller examination of this thesis to the remaining πληρόω passages is an ideal space for further research.

Throughout this paper, it is argued that Matthew did not attempt to develop the meanings of the OT texts in light of his current events, but instead sought to interpret his current events in light of the Scriptures he knew to be authoritative. Matthew wanted to show the significance of the OT text for his day, rather than explain the meaning of this particular text. The difference between meaning and significance has been too easily confused in contemporary literature. Many scholars have ignored this; however, Turner highlights its importance in his evaluation. Some have misunderstood Matthew and interpret him as one who gives the meaning of OT texts, however it is clear that Matthew simply wished to show contemporary significance. This discrepancy has led to fruitless debates and unsubstantiated conclusions. By clearly defining the form of the πληρόω formula as differing from the פשר formula, and showing its implications for significance instead of meaning, this study has resolved the tensions between the two extremes of literal prophecy-fulfillment and the opposite error of where the NT 'filled' the OT text 'full' of meaning. How Matthew came to arrive at the significance of

these texts is ultimately the heart of the issue for further studies. What is most evident in this study is that the πληρόω formula clearly served as an anti-*pesher* formula which explained the contemporary significance of the OT to Matthew's audience, without seeking to speak to that one meaning which could be ascertained within the text of the OT itself.

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