

JEWISH APOLOGETICS

Jewish Objection: “According to Matthew 2:15, when the little boy Jesus, along with Joseph and Mary, fled to Egypt to escape Herod, this ‘fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son. But Matthew only quoted the second half of the verse in Hosea. What the prophet really said was this: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” This verse has to do with Israel, not Jesus, and it is recounting a historical event, not giving a prophecy. And you claim that Matthew was inspired. Hardly!

Michael Brown’s short response:

When Matthew quoted the second half of Hosea 11:1, he took for granted that his Jewish readers would know the whole verse. (Remember that many of Matthew’s intended readers knew large portions of the Hebrew Scriptures by heart, and quoting just part of a verse was a common Jewish practice of the day.) What he was saying was clear: Just as it happened to Israel, God’s national “son,” so also it happened to Jesus, God’s Messianic Son, and the ideal representative of the nation. Both were called out of Egypt in their childhood.¹

Following this, Brown notes that Matthew, a Jew well-versed in the Hebrew Bible, was writing to fellow Jews, also well-versed in their Scriptures, and the last thing he was trying to do was to pull the wool over the eyes of his readers. If Matthew was using the Old Testament inappropriately, someone would have quickly challenged his reading, and within days—or hours—Matthew would have been exposed and his book of Good News would have been discarded as a religious fraud. The idea that Matthew tried to trick his readers by quoting part of the

¹Michael L. Brown, *New Testament Objections —Volume 4*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 21-4. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in this series).

verse is patently absurd. Brown points out that “Matthew expects all his readers to understand the primacy of Scripture and the centrality of Christ’s mission in Scripture; but *he expects his more sophisticated readers to catch his allusion to Israel’s history as well.*” Brown then lists several parallels between Moses and the Messiah as well as Israel and the Messiah.

In reading through the New Testament, it is important to realize that the New Testament quotes the Old Testament in four different ways: (1) literal prophecy plus literal fulfillment (Matt. 2:5-6; Isa. 7:14). (2) literal plus typical (typology) as per our passage, (3) literal plus application (Matt. 2:17-18), and (4) summation (Matt. 2:23).

When one looks back at the context of Hosea 11:1, it is obvious to anyone (especially Matthew and his readers) that it is not even a prophecy. Hosea is speaking of a literal historical event, which was the Exodus. The background to Hosea 11:1 is Exodus 4:22-23. Israel, as a nation, is the son of God: *Israel is my son, my firstborn*—everyone knows that! When God brought Israel out of Egypt, it is *pictured* by Hosea as God bringing His son out of the land of Egypt. That is the *literal* meaning of Hosea 11:1. It is an historical verse dealing with an historical event, the Exodus—everyone understood this. However, there is a more ideal Son of God, the individual Son of God, the Messianic Son of God, the Messiah Himself. When Jesus as a babe was brought out of the land of Egypt, God was again bring His Son out of Egypt. This is a type and anti-type. The *type* was Israel, the national son coming out of Egypt. The *anti-type* is the Messianic Son of God also coming out of Egypt. This is an example of *literal plus typical*. The Old Testament is filled with hundreds of types that pointed to the Messiah. This has always been recognized in Judaism. The Old Testament provides a wealth of information on the Messiah. Prophecy tells us that He will come before the destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70), and in typology He will fulfill all of the types in the animal sacrifices. Christ not only fulfilled the typology in the animal sacrifices, He was a type of Israel Himself. He came to represent them and all men before God. This is what the Jews longed and looked for above all else: *All the prophets prophesied not but of the days of the Messiah . . . The world was not created but only for the Messiah* (Sanh. 89b, 99a). He came in the Scriptural timeframe, and entered into

our world in a real way and truly became man's representative fulfilling all things in man's stead. We are so blessed to have such a representative—our High Priest.

Hebrews 2:18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

In Him,

Pastor Don