

# Parallelism of Foreshadowing and Fulfillment: Considering Affinity and Dissimilarity in Johannine and Matthean Use of Old Testament Prophecy

Christopher Cone

In earlier research this writer proposed Johannine Parallelism of Foreshadowing and Fulfillment (JPF) as an exegetically viable model for strongly affirming that the NT use of the OT is indeed rooted in and consistent with the literal grammatical historical hermeneutic (LGH).<sup>2</sup> The JPF device is readily observed in John's Gospel in his usage of fulfillment language and the sign metaphor. In his Gospel, JPF shows that John's concept of fulfillment *is more consistently the culmination of foreshadowing than it is the simple occurrence of predicted events*. One proposed advantage of this model over Thomas's Inspired *Sensus Plenior* Application (ISPA) and Cooper's Law of Double Reference (LDR) is a seemingly closer adherence to LGH. But while Thomas's ISPA and Cooper's LDR approaches are broadly applicable in understanding NT use of the OT, JPF was examined only in the Johannine context.

The proposal for JPF acknowledged further need of research to assess whether or not John's device for handling the OT was shared by other NT writers, and especially Matthew, since Matthew makes greater use of the OT in his Gospel than does

---

Christopher Cone, Ph.D., is President and Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Calvary University in Kansas City, Missouri. Chris can be reached at [ccone@calvary.edu](mailto:ccone@calvary.edu).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Cone, "Priority of Old Testament Literalism in New Testament Usage" in *Priority in Biblical Hermeneutics and Theological Method* (Raymore, MO: Exegetica, 2017), 83-106, originally presented to the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics as "Johannine Parallelism of Foreshadowing and Fulfillment: Affirming the New Testament Use of Old Testament Prophecy as Uncompromisingly Literal," September 14, 2017.

John in his. This paper examines whether or not Matthew's utilization of the OT aligns with JPFF, or whether Matthew employs a different hermeneutic device (such as ISPA or LDR). If Matthew's hermeneutic is consistent with John's then we can understand Parallelism of Fulfillment and Foreshadowing (PFF) as not just Johannine, but as a device applied by those whom Jesus taught directly, applied from the earliest NT books to the most recent (spanning the entirety of NT textual history) and thus as a leading hermeneutic principle for Biblical interpretation – a foundational principle of LGH.

The scope of this paper is very narrow. It is not intended to provide a consideration of how other interlocutors have handled Matthew and particular challenges within Matthew's Gospel. Other writers have handled in some detail numerous hermeneutic approaches to Matthew, including *peshet*<sup>3</sup> and other typological considerations<sup>4</sup> but these largely appeal to external factors to derive hermeneutic understanding. Swiss theologian Ulrich Luz, for example, concludes especially from his handling of Matthean fulfillment passages that,

Matthew's Gospel is a Jesus story with double meaning ... . Matthew has introduced a large number of fulfillment quotations in the prologue. ... Matthew's two-level story of Jesus seeks to ... give the community a new perspective based on Jesus.... It can thus

---

<sup>3</sup> The limitations of *peshet* applications to NT interpretation is underscored by George Brooke, and remind us that *peshet* is ultimately not (at least exclusively) a *biblical* hermeneutic model: "Once Qumran biblical interpretation has been set in a broader context, it becomes clearer that there is little that is distinctive about its methodology ... it is ... likely that we should see some Qumran interpretation as a postbiblical phenomenon, needing to be described in non-biblical terminology. [Midrash terminology] encourages one to think of Qumran biblical interpretation in terms of later Jewish exegetical traditions." (George Brooke, "Biblical Interpretation at Qumran" in *The Bible and The Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James Charworth, . [Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2006], 294).

<sup>4</sup> E.g., J. R. Kirk, "Conceptualizing Fulfillment in Matthew," *TynBul* 59, no. 1 (2008): 77-98.

be said that Matthew, like Mark, has not written a biography but a fictional narrative.<sup>5</sup>

Luz's process and conclusion evidence the role of consistency in hermeneutic approach to NT historical narrative.

Method, and not merely content (unless the method is derived exclusively from the content) determines interpretive outcomes. Consequently, the focus here is on looking *only* at the internal data itself from Matthew and from the sources he directly references in order to examine whether the PFF device is as exegetically evident in Matthew as it is in John's writing. This article provides a textual evaluation and argument, with a view to determining the relevance of PFF to the Matthean text, either distinguishing Matthew's writing from John's, or highlighting the similarity between the two. In so doing, this is a needed test of PFF as an integral component of LGH.

### Three Models

It is historically evident that LGH is the monolithic hermeneutic and primary methodological aspect of *sine qua non* for traditional dispensational thought. In the vast majority of Scriptures, this approach is easily applied and understood. Still, there are some contexts offering a degree of complexity that necessitates a more precise definition of what LGH actually is and how it functions. The NT use of the OT is one such demanding area—particularly in those passages that claim fulfillment through NT events of OT prophecies or events. Regarding some of these instances, it has been argued that NT writers do not restrict their interpretive usage to faithful application of the principle of single meaning. Some of those assertions have admittedly departed from LGH altogether,<sup>6</sup> while Robert Thomas's ISPA and David Cooper's LDR are two explanatory devices proposed within LGH framework and have been well received within traditional dispensational thought.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 14, 16, and 61.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix to "Priority of Old Testament Literalism in New Testament Usage" for more discussion and examples.

These two models suggest that seemingly non-literal interpretations of OT prophecy by NT authors do in fact fit within the framework of literal grammatical historical understanding.

Although Thomas recognizes that in many instances the NT writer employs LGH and goes no further, there are instances in which Thomas perceives the divine application of double meaning. Thomas describes the subtleties of his ISPA understanding as follows:

Does not the NT's assigning of an application based on a second meaning to an OT passage violate that principle? That the passage has two meanings is obvious, but only one of those meanings derives from a grammatical-historical interpretation of the OT itself. The other comes from a grammatical-historical analysis of the NT passage that cites it. The authority for the second meaning of the OT passage is not the OT; it is the NT. The OT produces only the literal meaning. The *sensus plenior* meaning emerges only after an ISPA of the OT wording to a new situation. The NT writers could assign such new meanings authoritatively because of the inspiration of what they wrote.<sup>7</sup>

In Thomas's view, in these instances the biblical writers introduce new meanings to the OT, not based on OT exegesis, but based on new revelation provided in the NT text. Thus there is a single meaning of the OT text, and then an additional meaning of the OT text that is revealed through the NT counterpart.

Offering another approach to the apparently additional or different meanings inferred from NT handling of the OT, David Cooper's LDR is "the principle of associating similar or related ideas which are usually separated from one another by long periods of time, and which are blended into a single picture like the blending of pictures by a stereopticon."<sup>8</sup> Cooper sees LDR

---

<sup>7</sup> Robert L. Thomas, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament," in *The Masters Seminary Journal*, 13, no.1 (Spring 2002): 80.

<sup>8</sup> David L. Cooper and Burl Haynie, "The Fifth Law: The Law of Double Reference" in *Rules of Interpretation: Articles from Biblical*

epitomized in Psalm 16:8-11, as he notes that in these verses David was not speaking of his own experiences, but was rather speaking prophetically of the Messiah. In this context, according to LDR, David is moving from personal to prophetic (hence the double reference).

While both of these methods provide advantages in explaining difficult nuances within LGH, neither explanation is particularly satisfying to this writer. ISPA requires a divinely allowable double meaning in order to address hermeneutic challenges. It demands carefully targeted and divinely allowed violation of normative and longstanding hermeneutic principles in order to provide a set of new principles for NT interpretation. It would seem simpler and more consistent if the text did not vary from the long-tested principle of single meaning. The question here is whether there is a simpler and more consistent approach – and ultimately whether that approach is biblical or not. ISPA has advantages, but adds complexity, perhaps unnecessarily.

LDR also provides explanatory value, but likewise adds complexity. Whereas ISPA retains a high degree of objectivity in interpretation, LDR infuses the process with subjectivity – particularly in determining when the text is referring to the near versus the far reference.

Psalm 16:8-11 illustrates the challenge: if at some point the antecedent is different, there is no signifier in the immediate context, so accuracy in this type of interpretation cannot be certain until Peter's later commentary, recorded in Acts 2:25-31, roughly one thousand years later. This kind of uncertainty does not fit the biblical hermeneutic precedent of the earlier three thousand years. Again, it seems that Biblical simplicity demands a different approach.

A third model is observed in John's Gospel, and has been referred to by this writer as Johannine Parallelism of Foreshadowing and Fulfillment (JPFF). JPFF is asserted to more strongly affirm that the NT use of the OT is rooted in and consistent with LGH. In essence, the device is observed in John's usage of *fulfillment* language and *sign* metaphor. Rather than

fulfillment in the ISPA sense (with meaning added later) or in the LDR sense (with clarity of meaning added later), John's concept of fulfillment *is more consistently the culmination of foreshadowing than it is the simple occurrence of predicted events*. While sharing advantages of ISPA and LDR, JPPF also addresses the most significant difficulties shared by ISPA and LDR (complexity and inconsistency) and in so doing may provide a stronger affirmation that the NT use of the OT is fully compatible with the literal grammatical historical hermeneutic.

### **Summarizing Johannine Parallelism of Foreshadowing and Fulfillment**

While some of John's references to fulfillment are connected to predictive prophecy,<sup>9</sup> the references John cites as fulfilled are most often not overtly predictive.<sup>10</sup> They typically contain no internal signifiers of being directly predictive. In their application to Jesus it is evident that they were foreshadowing or illustrative of something that would take place in Jesus' context. In light of these fulfillments of non-predictive prophecy, it is evident that John is using fulfillment (πληρώω) and completion (τελειωθῆναι) as closely synonymous.<sup>11</sup> He doesn't indicate any changed or augmented meaning of the OT referent, but rather John assigns purpose to the OT passage. Psalm 69:21 was not complete until something similar or identical happened to Jesus.

Exodus 12:46 illustrates similarly: the Passover lamb was to have no broken bones. The requirement was not accompanied by any prediction, yet, the Scripture was not complete until the Messiah died as the Passover Lamb with no broken bones, as recorded in John 19:36. This was not the happening of a predicted event, rather it was the fulfillment of a sign. The recipients of the OT passage were able to obey the prescription, though they might not have fully understood why. John connects the event of Jesus' death with the prescription, thus showing that this aspect of Jesus' death was anticipated and in God's plan all along.

---

<sup>9</sup> John 12:38, referencing Isaiah 53:1.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., John 13:18, 15:25, 19:24, referencing Psalm 41:9, 35:15, 69:4, and 22:18.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., John 19:28, referencing Psalm 69:21.

Normative LGH is applied in both the OT and NT contexts, and there is no evolution of the hermeneutic from Moses to John.

Additionally, John utilizes the term σημεῖον seventeen times, as narrative markers, not as ends in themselves, but as devices employed to foster belief. “Even though the signs were actual happenings that are communicated via single meaning, they were illustrative—manifestations—of the glory of the Messiah. This is a vital principle in the JPPF model for understanding NT use of the OT: *there was no metaphor involved in the communication of these events, yet the events themselves were metaphor designed to invoke a response.*”<sup>12</sup> These literal events served as metaphor, illustrating the divinity and identity of the Messiah. They demonstrated a scriptural, Messianic expectation and fulfillment, and a parallelism between the miracles, signs, and truths embodied in Christ.

*He* is the antecedent that the events were designed to unveil. The miracles were events that literally happened and were communicated literally, but they were illustrative of something much greater: *Him*. And it is with this concept of the *parallelism of foreshadowing and fulfillment* in mind that we can understand John’s use of the OT in a fulfillment context. ... Sometimes John identifies fulfillment as a happening of a predicted event. Sometimes he presents fulfillment as the culmination of a foreshadowing. Sometimes that foreshadowing is specifically quoted from the OT, other times it is more general and not tied to a particular passage. But in every Johannine fulfillment context, there is no hermeneutic adjustment of OT meaning for the NT usage, nor is there any hint of a shift from plain and single meaning.<sup>13</sup>

The parallelism evident in John’s writing between the anticipated metaphor and the literal realization underscore the advantage of JPPF over ISPA and LDR. Where ISPA and LDR are assuming changes in meaning and trying to justify those with LGH, JPPF acknowledges a set and unchanged meaning with

---

<sup>12</sup> Cone, *Priority*, 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

augmented *usage*. Whereas *meaning* is within the purview of hermeneutics, *usage* belongs to the realm of the aesthetic. JPPF is faithful to LGH, while pointing the reader to God's broader aesthetic<sup>14</sup> purposes.

### Testing the Device in Matthean Usage

While John's parallelism of foreshadowing and fulfillment (PFF) is evident in his Gospel, his writing style is distinct enough from the Synoptics and other NT books that one might not be surprised if the PFF device was uniquely Johannine. However, if the device is employed by other writers, then perhaps it ought to be recognized as a fundamental aspect of Biblical LGH handling of prophetic material. To examine whether or not PFF has broader usage than simply Johannine, it is helpful to examine especially the NT books that heavily utilize the OT, particularly with respect to fulfillment. Ninety-two times the lemmas πληρώω<sup>15</sup> and ἀναπληρώω<sup>16</sup> appear in the Greek New Testament.<sup>17</sup> The NT books can be ranked based on the number of times the terms are employed in each book:

- 17 – Matthew
- 16 – Acts
- 15 – John
- 9 – Luke
- 6 – Romans
- 4 – Ephesians
- 5 – Philippians
- 4 – Colossians
- 4 – 2 Corinthians
- 2 – Mark

---

<sup>14</sup> The term *aesthetic* in this context is intended to describe God's broad doxological purpose as an expression of His glory, revealed in Scripture as an overarching plan directing all of history.

<sup>15</sup> Eighty-six instances.

<sup>16</sup> Six instances.

<sup>17</sup> There are other closely related words used in the NT, including πληροφωρέω, and ἐκπληρώω, but these are not considered here because neither are used by Matthew.

- 2 – Revelation
- 2 – Galatians
- 1 – 1 Thessalonians
- 1 – 2 Thessalonians
- 1 – 2 Timothy
- 1 – James
- 1 – 1 John
- 1 – 2 John

It is worth noting that more than half of all NT instances of πληρώ are found in three books: Matthew, Acts, and John. As the inaugural NT book,<sup>18</sup> and the book in which the most instances occur, Matthew sets a transparent standard for the NT use of the term, so we begin with an assessment of the seventeen instances in Matthew to evaluate whether or not he utilizes PFF, in order to help us determine the validity of PFF as a fundamental LGH device.

In Matthew there are sixteen instances of πληρώ, and one instance of ἀναπληρώ, and three different types of usages of the terms.<sup>19</sup> Type 1 is the general use of the term, not directly related to prophecy, but still relevant because it shows that fulfillment can be broader than simply the happening of a predicted event. Type 2 is fulfillment of prophetic material that was originally given with internal signifiers of prediction. Type 3 is fulfillment of prophetic material that was originally given without internal signifiers of prediction.

---

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 1, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing 1890), bk. III, chap. 24. Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> There is also one instance of ἀποδίδωμι in 5:33 (translated “fulfilled” in the NASB), which is not discussed here as the word is not directly connected to πληρώ/ ἀναπληρώ.

### ***Four Type 1 Instances (Not Directly Related to Prophecy)***

There are four of the general non-prophetic Type 1 instances in Matthew. The first is in 3:15: “But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him.” This is not a prophecy reference, but is still significant in that it shows that the semantic range of the term extends beyond simple happenings of predicted events. The term here has the sense of *completing* or *filling up*. Matthew 5:17 records Jesus’ admonition: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” The contrast here between *abolish* (καταλύω) and *fulfill* shows further range of πληρώω. Whereas καταλύω is to completely invalidate, πληρώω in this context indicates complete validation. In 13:48 is recorded Jesus’ analogy of the kingdom of the heavens as a dragnet, with πληρώω used in its most basic sense of *being filled*. The final Type 1 reference in Matthew is in 23:32, Jesus’ indictment of the scribes and Pharisees that they should “fill up, then, the measure *of the guilt* of your fathers.” This reference uses πληρώω in the sense of *completion*. These four references provide an internal indicator of the semantic range of πληρώω in Matthew as being broader than simple predictive fulfillment. This is important as we consider the other two types of usage in Matthew.

### ***Ten Type 2 Instances (Fulfillment w/ Prediction Signifiers)***

There are ten Type 2 instances referencing specific prophecy with internal signifiers of prediction. The first, in Matthew 1:22-23 refers to Isaiah 7:14:

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”

Isaiah 7:10-16 describes the Lord giving Ahaz a sign (Heb תִּשָּׁבֵעַ, Grk LXX σημεῖον) that before a child would grow old

enough to choose good over evil, the kings of Damascus and Samaria, who were oppressing Judah, would be defeated (7:16). There appears a literal happening of that predicted event in 8:3-4, with two substantial differences. First, the propheticess is not a virgin *per se*, as Isaiah approached her and she conceived. The Hebrew term עַלְמָה does not require virginity, having a semantic range that can include a maiden or a newly married woman. The second difference is between the name predicted (עֲמָנוּ אֵל) and the name that was actually given (מִהָרָה שְׁלֵל חֶשֶׁב בָּז).

Because the *sign* terminology was employed, we may understand that the sign itself was figurative (much like John's use of σημεῖον in Rev 12:1). It is worth noting that the 7:14 prediction speaks of what *she* would call the boy, whereas the immediate context apparent fulfillment speaks of what God told Isaiah to call the boy. With these two considerations, we could certainly understand 8:3-4 as a literal happening of a predicted event. If that be the case, then Matthew's usage would not reflect the happening of a predicted event, but rather an instance of PFF. If so, Matthew is using the event as a *foreshadowing*<sup>20</sup> of a later deliverance that would come by the birth of a boy who would be born of a virgin (in the most restrictive sense). Notice that Matthew does not include the refusing evil, choosing good, or the specific deliverance from the two kings in his reference. It seems clear (especially in light of those omissions) that Matthew is observing the virgin birth of Christ and the aspect that God is with us, as a fulfillment in the sense of completing the purpose for the original sign.

In 2:23 we encounter another instance of fulfillment language: "and [Jesus] came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene." This passage is a bit less clear, as there is no specific OT prophecy that includes the term Ναζωραῖος (in the LXX). However, the term could simply be a

---

<sup>20</sup> The term *foreshadowing* is used to reflect the divine author's intent beforehand that the OT passages referenced by the NT author would serve as illustrative of later NT events. These instances go beyond allusion in their specificity.

near-transliteration of the Hebrew נֶצֶר (translated *branch*), which was attributed to the coming Messiah by several of the prophets.<sup>21</sup> Matthew notes that Jesus' specific hometown was specifically chosen for the purpose (ὄπωϋς) of fulfilling what the prophets said. If Matthew intends to communicate a prediction and happening, then he must be referencing extra-biblical prophecy, as the TaNaKh records no such prediction. But a simpler and more likely explanation, in this writer's estimation, would be that he is simply employing PFF – that Jesus' hometown was an aesthetic affirmation of His identity. He was the prophesied *Nazar*, and it would be aesthetically fitting for him to come from *Nazareth* (the hometown of Joseph and Mary, both in the line of Jesse).<sup>22</sup> Peter's comment in Acts 10:38 seems to support the idea that Matthew was presenting a foreshadowing and fulfillment, as Peter alludes to Isaiah 11:1-2 (Jesus as the branch) and calls him "Jesus of Nazareth." It is notable that in all of Peter's recorded preaching and teaching, the only time he ever referred to Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth," he does so in this immediate context of Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit – both concepts (Jesus as branch, and as anointed with the Spirit) are mentioned together in Isaiah 11:1-2. Peter connects Jesus' hometown with Isaiah 11:1-2—just like Matthew seems to do.

Whereas 2:23 celebrated Jesus' connection to Nazareth, 4:13-16 describes his northern ministry as fulfilling Isaiah 9:1-2:

and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—"The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a Light dawned."

Isaiah 9:1-7 provides a glimpse of the future Messianic hope, not just for the southern region of Judah, but also for the northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and beyond to Galilee. This would

---

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Isaiah 4:2, 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12.

<sup>22</sup> Luke 1:26, 2:4, 4:16.

be a comprehensive hope that wouldn't touch just one area, but would impact Judah, Israel, and the Gentiles. The prediction signifiers show no immediate-context happening, and the passage speaks of a Messianic hope centered on the child who would be Prince of Peace.<sup>23</sup> Because there is no changed or augmented meaning, and there is no intermediate or near-term happening that fit the prediction, this seems clearly a Messianic prediction fulfilled in Jesus. In this instance, the fulfillment is simply prediction/happening. Neither ISPA, LDR, or PFF is in view here.

Matthew 8:17 has a more apparent prediction/happening parallel from Isaiah 53:4.<sup>24</sup> In Matthew 8:14-16 we encounter Jesus healing Peter's mother in law, casting out demons, and healing the sick. Matthew says that, "*This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."*"

Again, in 12:15-16, Jesus was healing those who were following him, and telling them not to make him known. Matthew uses the ἵνα purpose clause in 12:17 to show the purpose of the healing and the warning (against making him known) was to fulfill Isaiah 42:1-4:

*This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. "He will not quarrel, nor cry out; Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. "A battered reed He will not break off, And a smoldering wick He will not put out, Until He leads justice to victory. "And in His name the Gentiles will hope."*

The healing was made possible by his identity and empowerment by the Father through the Spirit (12:18), and it appears that the warning not to make him known at that point may have been related his not asserting himself until "he established justice in the earth." Like 8:17, this appears to be a

---

<sup>23</sup> Isaiah 9:6.

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 53:3 in the LXX.

prediction/happening parallel. Like John, who employs both PFF and prediction/happening in his Gospel, Matthew shows that he also understands the difference between the two aspects of fulfillment, and recognizes that fulfillment is a broader concept than simply the happening of predicted events.

In 13:14 we encounter the lone instance of ἀναπληρώω in Matthew:

In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.’

Here Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10, which seems to characterize the response to Isaiah’s ministry, in light of the near-term judgment and remnant of 6:11-13. There are two apparent possibilities here regarding how Jesus was employing the Isaiah 6 prophecy. Either Jesus is employing PFF (as the predictions had already had representative occurrences in Isaiah’s lifetime), or Jesus is using ἀναπληρώω as “again fulfilled” which might imply an instance of LDR.

Cooper and Fruchtenbaum are careful to distinguish LDR from double fulfillment,<sup>25</sup> so that understanding of ἀναπληρώω as “again fulfilled” would not be particularly compatible with LDR. If the reader is to understand ἀναπληρώω in that way, then it seems double fulfillment (not LDR) is in view. Even if that were the case, a double fulfillment in this kind of context would not need to be seen as non-literal, if the term ἀναπληρώω suggested a second literal occurrence of a predicted event. However, this kind of reading seems untenable, as none of the

---

<sup>25</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah* (Ariel Ministries, 2003), 4-5.

other NT usages of ἀναπληρώω allow for an again fulfillment.<sup>26</sup> It is more likely that Matthew 13:14 is an instance of PFF, with the earlier Israelite response to Isaiah being a foreshadowing of response to Messianic parabolic teaching. If this be so, it provides evidence that Jesus distinguished between the two major types of fulfillment (prediction/happening and PFF), and that he recognizes the legitimacy of both.<sup>27</sup>

In 13:34 we see a shift in Jesus' ministry. Prior to his rejection on the part of the leaders, he taught openly and plainly, but post-rejection he used the literary device of parable—not for the purpose of making things clearer, but for making them more difficult to understand:

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.”

This is a quotation of Psalm 78:2, written by Asaph, who is clearly speaking of himself as the parabolic speaker. He adds a first person plural reference to “our fathers,”<sup>28</sup> and refers to Yahweh in the third person.<sup>29</sup> While Asaph says he “will open his mouth,”<sup>30</sup> and he does so in the following verses, telling the parable or the story of God's faithfulness to Israel. While there is prediction language, there is also a happening of the predicted event in the immediate context. Yet, still, Matthew uses this statement as a foreshadowing of Jesus' own parabolic communication, and characterizes Asaph's statement as fulfilled or completed in Jesus' speech. This instance illustrates that not only does Matthew distinguish between prediction/happening and PFF, but he also can combine the two – he can use a

---

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:16; 16:17, Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:30; and 1 Thess 2:16 all use ἀναπληρώω to refer to basic filling or completion.

<sup>27</sup> Compare with Matthew 26:31, 54, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 78:4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Heb פָּתַח־פִּי [Qal imperfect], Grk LXX ἀνοίξω, [future active indicative].

prediction that had already taken place as a foreshadowing of a later event. He doesn't change or augment the meaning, but rather he *utilizes* the OT passage in an aesthetic way to emphasize that Jesus' ministry is prefigured or foreshadowed in OT contexts.

The seventh instance of πληρώ appears in 21:4-5:

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

Here, Matthew paraphrases Zechariah 9:9, which speaks of Messianic hope. Interestingly, Matthew does not include the affirmation that the king would be righteous and would bring salvation. He seems focused only on the lines that were predicted which were happening because of the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples to acquire the colt of a donkey. This seems a prediction/happening. If it were an instance of PFF, it would seem that Matthew would have more comprehensively addressed the aspect of Messiah's righteousness.

The penultimate instance of πληρώ is found in 26:54, with no direct OT referent in the near context:

Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, *which say* that it must happen this way?"

Jesus does offer a prediction in 24:31 that his disciples would fall away from him, and he offers as evidence Zechariah 13:7, expecting a literal occurrence to take place that very night. If Peter did not put his sword away, then perhaps a conflict would have ensued which would have resulted in a short-lived avoidance of the Shepherd being struck down. Jesus did not intend that, nor see that as fitting in light of the OT prediction. But it seems that Jesus has a bigger picture in view, though it is

not clear whether He was thinking of specific aesthetic completion of PFF, or simply Messianic predictions and happenings.

Again, in Matthew 26:56, Jesus makes reference to predictions being fulfilled, noting that “all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets.” In this last reference to fulfillment, Jesus acknowledges a completion without any specific OT referent, whereas he also not specific fulfillment in 26:31. The other instances we have examined so far have been presented by Matthew, the writer. But these last two prophetic interpretations are especially helpful in this discussion, since they are Jesus’ direct words, and not simply Matthew’s commentary (inspiration notwithstanding). In this final completion-symmetry, Jesus seems to distinguish between prediction and happening and the broader PFF. In both the fulfillment instances of 26:54 and 56 Jesus references the Scriptures (γραφαῖ) in the plural, versus the single reference quoted in 36:31.

Of the ten references that include or imply prediction signifiers, five record prediction/happenings (4:14-16, 8:17, 12:15-16, 21:4, 26:54), and five seem to be instances of PFF (1:22-23, 2:23, 13:14, 34, 26:56), though one of those is not specific enough for us to categorize definitively (26:56). None need be seen as ISPA or LDR, as both of those devices perceive change or addition in the NT rendering from the OT introduction, and additional or changed meaning are not apparent in any of these instances.

### ***Four Type 3 Instances (Fulfillment w/o Prediction Signifiers)***

There are three Type 3 instances in Matthew. These reference fulfillment of specific prophecies that were originally given without internal signifiers of prediction. The first is in 2:15 and quotes Hosea 11:1:

He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Hosea 11:1 references Israel's early youthful days, followed by days of idolatry with the Baals. This fits with the simple timeline of Israel's history. This is not an instance of prediction/happening, as there is no prediction in the OT context. Nor does it seem to be either ISPA or LDR, as there is no change in meaning or application of the OT referent *if* the earlier event was simply a foreshadowing or illustration of the future event which would fulfill the purpose of the earlier event. In this case, there are parallels between Israel and Messiah—they were both referenced as sons, and they were both protected and delivered from Egypt. There is an aesthetic symmetry evident here that neither changes the meaning of nor allegorizes the text, but which offers *an application* of the earlier text to complete a broader picture.

Similarly, Matthew 2:17 quotes Jeremiah 31:15—a statement within a near-term judgment context. Matthew observes the prophecy is fulfilled in the genocide of Herod, who was trying to destroy the prophesied Jewish King:

Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she refused to be comforted, Because they were no more.”

In the context of Jeremiah 31:15 Israel was anticipating an imminent judgment (hence the weeping of Rachel), but one that would be followed by restoration and “return from the land of the enemy.”<sup>31</sup> In both situations, there was judgment to the point of near-death (first by God, then by Herod), and there was restoration (first by God, then also by God, in delivering Jesus from the murderous attempt by Herod). This is very much in line with other instances of PFF: the earlier referent is completed by the later antecedent, and the two are connected by more than one parallel.

The final instance is in Matthew 27:9-10, as Matthew attributes a saying to Jeremiah that is reminiscent—but not a

---

<sup>31</sup> Jeremiah 31:17.

quotation of Zechariah 11:12-13; thus Matthew is not misattributing the fulfillment as being foretold by Zechariah:

Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel; and they gave them for the Potter’s Field, as the Lord directed me.”

It is possible that Matthew is referring to an unwritten prophecy of Jeremiah, as he considers this in the context of *that which was spoken* (not written) by Jeremiah. It is also possible that Zechariah was repeating in summary a prophecy spoken by Jeremiah. But because we don’t have the direct referent, it is difficult to assess whether Matthew has in view prediction/happening or PFF.

Of the three non-predictive references, two bear characteristics of PFF,<sup>32</sup> and the remaining one is difficult to categorize.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

Of the seventeen πληρόω/ἀναπληρόω references in Matthew, one is not immediately discernible as either prediction/happening or PFF, four are not directly related to prophecy, five are prediction/happening, and seven are PFF. Because Matthew distinguishes between these approaches (as does Jesus), and because Matthew uses a majority of PFF in his own interpretation, it is apparent that PFF is a foundational and normative hermeneutic device to draw an intended application from a passage without having a direct prediction/happening in the context.

These instances also show that the OT passages are not changed or reinterpreted in Matthean usage, and in many cases the OT referent is complete on its own merit, without any revealed expectation of future employment. Still, the NT utilizes these passages as illustrations, prefigurings, or signs pointing to

---

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 2:15, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 27:9-10.

a future antecedent.<sup>34</sup> Not all OT instances make a future antecedent evident, nonetheless, the later (NT) reference underscores the reality that many OT events were prefiguring things to come.

Just as John's PFF suggests a model whereby we can understand that the OT was written with single meaning in view, that the NT does not adjust or alter that meaning, and that biblical meaning is not subject to change in any context, Matthew's hermeneutic method is identical in its application of two major aspects of LGH. Consequently, John's and Matthew's hermeneutic approach to the foreshadowing of the Messiah and fulfillment of that foreshadowing in Jesus through his signs and other activities provides a significant hermeneutic precedent for biblical interlocutors of today. The parallelism in Johannine and Matthean writing between the metaphorical anticipation and the literal realization goes far beyond the simple prediction and coming to pass of events.

In Matthew 16:4 and Luke 11:29 Jesus identified Jonah as a sign pointing to himself. Notably, both writers use the same terminology (σημεῖον) employed by John. Jonah's water adventures literally happened, and they were communicated in a narrative way that demands normative, literal understanding. Yet, Jesus presented those events as a sign pointing to himself—specifically to his burial and resurrection. The events of Jonah were not in themselves metaphorical, nor were they communicated by the human author with any anticipation of metaphorical interpretation, yet Jesus (with divine author perspective) utilized those events as a metaphor that was fulfilled—or culminated—in him.

Just as a pronoun has an antecedent, foreshadowing has fulfillment. In grammatical analogy, the fulfillment is the antecedent and the foreshadowing is the pronoun. The pronoun has single meaning and only one referent, but the *usage* may not be fully understood by the reader until the antecedent is identified in the text. In short, where ISPA and LDR are wrestling with the

---

<sup>34</sup> Much like Paul implies that marital unity, first observed in Genesis 2, looked forward to the later antecedent in Christ and his relationship with the church (Eph 5:31-32).

potential of changing meanings, PFF argues for a set and unchanged meaning with augmented *usage*. This is the great advantage of PFF over ISPA and LDR. Change in meaning is the subject matter of hermeneutic significance. Change in usage has nothing whatsoever to do with hermeneutics, but is more a question of aesthetics. God's ultimate purpose to glorify himself and demonstrate his own character is an *aesthetic* enterprise, and his *use* of literal happenings as metaphor contributes greatly to that enterprise. John's and Matthew's PFF invites us to resolve the issue of whether there is change in meaning and consider the aesthetic function of OT passages referenced in the NT.