

The Myth of Dual Prophetic Fulfillment Pt5

Case studies:
The Birth of a Narrative

**Reapplying Tanakh texts
to fit a new story...**



Doesn't make the story true



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The Myth of Dual Prophetic Fulfillment

Pt 5 Case Studies

The Birth of a Narrative

Why This Teaching Exists and Why It Matters

For many Christians, as this writer once was, reading Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures, (erroneously called the Old testament) comes with an assumption that is rarely questioned: The Tanakh is ultimately about Jesus.

Because of that assumption, many passages are read as predictions, symbols, or hidden references pointing forward to New Testament events. Historical narratives become foreshadowing. Poems become prophecies. Laments become predictions. Even simple ordinary details can be interpreted as clues pointing to Jesus or events in the Christian New Testament. Over time this approach has become so common that many, if not most, assume it is simply the way Scripture is meant to be read.

In previous chapters of the multipart teaching, we have seen the many different prophetic interpretive methods that have been employed, starting with the oral stories that became written texts that became known as the New Testament. From typologies, proof texts, to peshet and the Gentile use and concept of Jewish midrash. We've seen how Greek Christians such as Ignatius with his Hellenistic background influenced early thought. Hellenistic textual intrusion to the medieval Christianity's literal sense, allegory, moral and anagogical four senses. We have looked at the Alexandrian and the Antiochene school of prophetic interpretations and the Western Fathers, we've seen the Reformers, post Reformers and eventually down into the days of Darby and Scofield. We've seen the evolution of these methods to arrive at the culmination of what became then in the mid 20th century as Dual Prophetic Fulfillment theology.

We take these methods now to the next level of prophetic interpretation and produce a case study to show the web of deceit that may have also existed and very early on, giving modern day interpreters the release of radical interpretation that produces Dual Prophetic fulfillment theology.

THE WEB APPEARS: HOW THE WRITERS OF THE BOOK OF MATTHEW AS THE EXAMPLE, CONSTRUCTS A PROPHECY PLOT

We began the draft of this part of the teaching with examining some of the most used texts from the Hebrew Scriptures that we saw were being used in dual fulfillment. But instead, we decided that we would go in a somewhat different direction.

Instead of just examining and refuting some of the most often used dual fulfillment texts, we made the decision to find a web of texts all being used and coordinating together, forming what looks to be a scheme or a plot designed to create in the mind of the New Testament readers a false narrative about a man of whom Christianity believes to be not just a Messiah, but The Messiah. In this teaching we will use case studies from the book of Matthew and how the writers of Matthew reused, repurposed and reapplied passages from the Hebrew Scriptures to the infancy stories of Jesus.

Most Christians never notice how strange the book of Matthew's opening chapters really are. They read them every December, they hear them preached from pulpits, they see them acted out in Christmas plays — and it all feels natural, familiar, sacred. But when you slow down and look at what book of Matthew is actually doing, the picture changes. It begins to look less like a historical report and more like a **constructed narrative**, a carefully woven tapestry of Tanakh verses pulled from unrelated places and stitched together to create the illusion of prophecy fulfillment.

This is not an insult. This is not an attack. This is **textual reality**, documented by scholars across the spectrum — Jewish, Christian, secular.

Raymond E. Brown, one of the most respected Catholic scholars of the 20th century, wrote in *The Birth of the Messiah* that Matthew's infancy narrative is "midrashic," meaning it is a **theological retelling**, not a historical biography. Geza Vermes, the Jewish historian who spent his life studying Second Temple Judaism, wrote in *The Nativity: History and Legend* that Matthew's birth story "cannot be regarded as historical." Bart Ehrman, a controversial yet leading textual critic, explains that early Christian communities often **created** stories "to show that Jesus fulfilled Scripture." "**Created**," being the word to ponder upon.

None of these scholars are hostile to Christianity. They are simply honest about the text. And when you examine Matthew's use of the Tanakh, the pattern becomes unmistakable. Whoever wrote Matthew does not begin with history and then look for prophecy. Matthew begins with prophecy and then **builds a history around it**.

The writers of the book of Matthew take passages from Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Numbers, and even Exodus — passages written centuries apart, addressing completely different crises — and weaves them together into a single story about Jesus' early years. This is the **infancy prophecy web**. And once you see it, you cannot unsee it.

A virgin birth. A Bethlehem birth. A star. Magi. A massacre. A flight to Egypt. A return to Nazareth. None of these Hebrew passages that we will examine were originally connected. None of them were speaking about the same event. None of them were predicting a future Messiah born centuries later. And in this teaching we are not even touching the scheme in Matthew's genealogy section, along with Luke's, which in all reality could also be weaved into this scheme!

But the writers of the book of Matthew **interloops** them — creating a seamless narrative that appears prophetic. This is the **infancy prophecy web**. It is the birth of a narrative revealed. And now that the web is becoming visible, we can begin dismantling it — strand by strand — by restoring each passage to its own context, its own history, its own meaning, and its own voice.

(1) ISAIAH 7:14 IN CONTEXT: AHAZ, WAR, AND THE MISUSE OF *ALMAH*

If you want to understand how the New Testament repurposes the Tanakh, you must begin with Isaiah 7:14 — because this single verse becomes the **launch point** for the entire Christian infancy narrative. It is the verse Christians quote more than any other when defending the virgin birth. It is the verse Matthew uses to open his prophecy chain. And it is the verse that has been pulled furthest away from its original meaning. But when you return Isaiah 7:14 to its own historical moment, its own political crisis, and its own audience, the Christian interpretation collapses instantly. To see this clearly, we must step into the world of King Ahaz.

The Crisis of Ahaz — When two northern kingdoms attacked Judah

Isaiah 7 is not about Rome. It is not about Bethlehem. It is not about Jesus. It is not about a future Messiah. It is about **war**. Specifically, the War of the 8th century BCE when Israel and Syria attacked the Jews.

Two kingdoms — Aram (Syria) and Ephraim (Northern Israel) — formed an alliance to force Judah into joining their rebellion against Assyria. When King Ahaz refused, they marched south to attack Jerusalem. Ahaz panicked. He feared the dynasty of David would fall. He feared Jerusalem would be destroyed. He feared Yahweh had abandoned Judah.

Into this crisis walks the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah tells Ahaz not to fear. Yahweh will protect Judah. The alliance will fail. Jerusalem will stand. And to prove it, Isaiah offers Ahaz a **sign**. Not a prophecy for the distant future. Not a prediction of a Messiah centuries later. But a **political sign** for Ahaz's own lifetime.

This is documented by:

- **Joseph Blenkinsopp, Anchor Bible Commentary Vol. 19** (*In our library*)
- **Benjamin Sommer (Jewish Theological Seminary)**
- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **James Kugel (How to Read the Bible)**
- **Jewish Publication Society (JPS) Tanakh notes**

All agree: Isaiah 7:14 is about **Ahaz and a sign given**, not about a baby Jesus born of a virgin

The Child in Isaiah 7:14 — Born in Ahaz’s Time

Isaiah says: “Behold, the *almah* shall conceive and bear a son...”

Christians translate *almah* as “virgin.” But Hebrew scholars across the board — Jewish and Christian — agree that *almah* does **not** mean virgin.

It means:

- young woman
- maiden
- marriageable girl

The Hebrew word for virgin is *betulah*, and Isaiah does not use it. When read from the Hebrew Scriptures, the young woman in the context of the text looks to already be pregnant when the prophecy is given, she could not have been a virgin at that point.

This is documented by:

- **Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon** (In our library)
- **HALOT (Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament)** (In our library)
Anchor Bible Commentary, Vol. 19. (*In our library*)
- **Robert Alter**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**

Isaiah is not predicting a miraculous birth. He is describing a **normal pregnancy**. And the child is not Jesus. The child is born in Ahaz’s own time.

Isaiah even tells Ahaz what will happen **before the child grows up**:

- the two enemy kings will fall
- their lands will be deserted
- Judah will be delivered

This is exactly what happened historically.

Documented by:

- **Assyrian records**
- **Archaeological evidence**
- **Jewish historical scholarship**
- **Modern historians of the Ancient Near East**

Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled **within a few years** of being spoken. It has nothing to do with Jesus.

How Matthew Repurposes Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 1:23 *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” KJV*

The writers of Matthew takes this political prophecy — spoken to Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14, fulfilled in the 8th century BCE — and repurposes it as a prediction of Jesus’ birth. The Matthew writers do this by quoting the **Septuagint**, the Greek translation of the Tanakh, which mistranslated *almah* as *parthenos* (“virgin”). Matthew then builds an entire doctrine — the virgin birth — on a mistranslation.

This is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **Dale Allison (The New Moses)**

The book of Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Those who wrote Matthew are **constructing** prophecy. He begins his infancy narrative with a verse that has nothing to do with Jesus, nothing to do with Rome, nothing to do with Bethlehem, and nothing to do with a virgin birth. He takes a sign for Ahaz and turns it into a supernatural prediction for Jesus. This is the first strand in the prophecy web.

Why Isaiah 7:14 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Isaiah 7:14 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It was spoken to Ahaz**, not to future generations.
2. **It addressed a specific war**, not a future Messiah.
3. **It promised deliverance within a few years**, not centuries later.
4. **It used *almah*, not *betulah*** — meaning a normal young woman, not a virgin.
5. **It was fulfilled in Ahaz’s lifetime**, documented Scripturally and historically.
6. **It has no messianic content.**
7. **It is part of a larger narrative** (Isaiah 7–8) that has nothing to do with Jesus.

When you restore Isaiah 7:14 to its own context, Matthew’s use of it collapses completely. And once the first strand collapses, the entire prophecy chain begins to unravel.

The Web Tightens

Those who wrote Matthew has now:

- taken a political prophecy
- mistranslated a Hebrew word
- repurposed a historical event
- and used it to launch a theological narrative

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Isaiah 7:14 is the first strand in the web — and now we move to the second.

(2) MICAH 5:2 IN CONTEXT: ASSYRIA, BETHLEHEM, AND THE DAVIDIC HOPE

If Isaiah 7:14 is the spark that ignites Matthew's prophecy chain, then Micah 5:2 is the verse that gives the chain its **geographical anchor**. Without Micah 5:2, Jesus could have been born anywhere — Nazareth, Capernaum, Jerusalem — and the story would have continued without friction. But Matthew needs Bethlehem. He needs it desperately. Because Bethlehem is the birthplace of David, and Micah 5:2 speaks of a ruler from David's line who will restore Israel.

But once again, when you return Micah 5:2 to its own historical moment, its own crisis, and its own audience, the Christian interpretation collapses. Micah is not predicting a virgin birth. Micah is not predicting a Roman-era Messiah. Micah is not predicting a Bethlehem birth centuries later. Micah is speaking to a nation under **Assyrian threat**, not Roman occupation. And this matters — because context is everything.

Micah's World: The Assyrian Crisis

Micah prophesied in the 8th century BCE, during the rise of the Assyrian Empire — the most brutal military machine of its time. Assyria had already destroyed the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim/Israel) and was threatening Judah. The people were terrified. The monarchy was unstable. The land was ravaged. The prophets were warning of judgment. Micah's message is not about a distant future Messiah. It is about **survival**.

He speaks of:

- corrupt leaders
- unjust judges
- false prophets

- exploitation of the poor
- looming destruction
- and the hope of restoration

Micah 5 is part of this restoration hope — a promise that Yahweh will raise up a ruler from David’s line who will deliver Judah from Assyria.

This is documented by:

- **Thomas McComisky-JPS commentary-the Minor Prophets Vol. 2** (In our library)
- **Hans Walter Wolff-Micah Commentary-Ausburg Publication** (In our library)
- **Mark S. Smith (The Early History of God)**
- **James Kugel (How to Read the Bible)**
- **Jewish historical scholarship on the Assyrian period**

Micah is not speaking about Jesus. He is speaking about **Judah’s immediate future**.

Bethlehem in Micah 5:2 — The Davidic Symbol

Micah says:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah... from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel...”

Bethlehem is not chosen because of a future virgin birth. Bethlehem is chosen because it is the birthplace of **David**. Micah is invoking the memory of David — the shepherd king who united Israel, defeated enemies, and established a dynasty. In a time of crisis, Micah points to David’s origins as a symbol of hope. This is not messianic prediction. This is **Davidic nostalgia**.

Documented by:

- **Hans Walter Wolff**
- **Thomas McComisky**
- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**

Micah is saying: “Just as Yahweh raised up David from Bethlehem, He will raise up another ruler to deliver us from Assyria.”

This is a **national prophecy**, not a messianic one.

Micah's Prophecy Fulfilled — Long Before Jesus

Scholars identify several possible fulfillments:

1. Hezekiah

A righteous king who resisted Assyria and restored Judah's faith.

2. Josiah

A reformer who revived the covenant and restored worship.

3. Zerubbabel

A Davidic descendant who led the return from Babylonian exile.

None of these figures were born in Bethlehem. But Micah's prophecy is **symbolic**, not literal. It is about the **Davidic line**, not the town itself.

Micah 5:2 was not originally a messianic prophecy. In Micah's own day it was a message of hope during the Assyrian crisis, pointing back to Bethlehem as the symbolic birthplace of David, a poetic way of saying, "Yahweh will raise up another Davidic ruler."

Later Jewish tradition sometimes applies Micah 5:2 to the final Messiah of which has yet to come even in our day, but not because he will be born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is used as a *symbol* of the Davidic line — the place where David came from, not the place where the final Messiah must come from.

So even in Jewish messianic expectation, Micah 5:2 is symbolic, not literal. It points to David's dynasty, not to a future Bethlehem birth.

This is documented by:

- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Jewish historical scholarship**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Micah 5:2 is not about a literal Bethlehem birth. It is about Yahweh's promise to preserve the Davidic dynasty.

How Matthew Repurposes Micah 5:2

Matthew 2:3-6 *“When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” KJV*

Matthew takes Micah’s symbolic prophecy — spoken during the Assyrian crisis — and repurposes it as a literal prediction of Jesus’ birth.

He does this by:

1. **Forcing Jesus into Bethlehem** Even though Jesus is known historically as “Jesus of Nazareth.”
2. **Inventing a census** Luke creates a census that forces Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem — a census that historians agree **never happened** the way Luke describes.
3. **Ignoring Micah’s context** Micah is speaking about Assyria, not Rome.
4. **Turning Davidic symbolism into literal geography** Micah’s Bethlehem is symbolic, not predictive.

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes Micah’s Davidic hope and turns it into a literal prediction of Jesus’ birthplace. Another strand in the web.

Why Micah 5:2 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Micah 5:2 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It addressed the Assyrian crisis**, not Roman occupation.
2. **It invoked Davidic symbolism**, not literal geography.
3. **It was fulfilled in Judah’s history**, long before Jesus.
4. **It has no messianic content** only in later in Jewish tradition of the final Messiah.
5. **It is part of a larger narrative** about national restoration.
6. **It is not predictive in form**, but poetic and symbolic.
7. **It cannot be detached from Micah’s historical moment.**

When you restore Micah 5:2 to its own context, Matthew's use of it collapses completely. And once the second strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Tightens Again

Matthew has now:

- taken a symbolic Davidic prophecy
- literalized it
- repurposed it
- and used it to construct a geographical anchor for Jesus' birth

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Micah 5:2 is the second strand in the web — and now we move to the third.

(3) NUMBERS 24:17 IN CONTEXT: BALAAM, ISRAEL'S RISE, AND THE STAR THAT WASN'T

If Micah 5:2 gives Matthew a birthplace, Numbers 24:17 gives him a **cosmic sign**: the famous “Star of Bethlehem.” But once again, when you return this verse to its own historical setting, its own literary genre, and its own meaning, the Christian interpretation collapses instantly.

Numbers 24:17 is not astronomy. It is not a prediction of a literal star. It is not about Gentile astrologers crossing deserts. It is not about a supernatural light hovering over a house in Bethlehem. It is about **Israel's rise to power** in the days of King David. And every major Jewish and academic commentary agrees.

Balaam's Oracle — A Poetic Prophecy of Israel's Future Strength

Numbers 24 is part of the Balaam Scriptural narrative cycle: a series of poetic passages spoken by Balaam, a non-Israelite prophet hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse Israel. But instead of cursing Israel, Balaam blesses them. He speaks of Israel's future triumph over its enemies, its rise to power, and its destiny as a nation.

In one of these passages, Balaam says: **Numbers 24:17** “*A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel...*” This is **poetry**, imaginative, not astronomy. It is **symbolic**, not literal. It is **national**, not messianic. The “star” symbolizes **royal power**. The “scepter” symbolizes **kingly authority**.

This is documented by:

- **Jacob Milgrom JPS Numbers Torah Commentary** (In our library)
- **Michael Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel)**
- **Nahum Sarna (Understanding Genesis; Exploring Exodus)** (In our library)
- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**

Every major scholar agrees: Numbers 24:17 is about **Israel's rise**, not Jesus' birth.

The Historical Fulfillment — David, Not Jesus

Balaam's oracle was fulfilled in the days of **King David**, who:

- defeated Moab
- conquered Edom
- expanded Israel's borders
- established Israel as a regional power
- carried the "scepter" of royal authority

This is documented in:

- **2 Samuel 8**
- **1 Kings 11**
- **Jewish historical scholarship**
- **Archaeological evidence of Davidic expansion**

The "star" of Jacob is **David**, not Jesus. This is not controversial. It is the consensus of Jewish interpretation for over 2,000 years.

How Matthew Repurposes Numbers 24:17

Matthew 2:1-2 *"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his **star** in the east, and are come to worship him... .. 2:4-7 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the **star** appeared..... 2:9-11 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the **star**, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the **star**, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and*

worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” KJV

Matthew takes Balaam’s symbolic oracle, fulfilled in David and repurposes it as a literal prediction of Jesus’ birth.

He does this by:

1. **Turning a metaphor into astronomy** A poetic “star” becomes a literal star in the sky.
2. **Inventing a supernatural phenomenon** The star moves, stops, and hovers over a house — behavior no star has ever exhibited.
3. **Introducing Gentile astrologers** The Magi appear only in Matthew, not in Luke, not in history, not in Jewish tradition.
4. **Creating a cosmic sign to match a repurposed prophecy** The star exists only because Matthew needs Numbers 24:17 to be “fulfilled.”

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes a poetic symbol of Davidic power and turns it into a literal astronomical event. Another strand in the web.

The Magi — A Literary tool, Not Historical Figures

The Magi are not historical. They appear nowhere in:

- Josephus
- Tacitus
- Suetonius
- Dio Cassius
- Roman records
- Jewish sources
- Archaeology

They exist only in Matthew — because Matthew needs them to “follow the star” and fulfill Balaam’s oracle.

This is documented by:

- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Paula Fredriksen**
- **Bart Ehrman**

The Magi are a literary tool used to enhance the story, not historical witnesses.

Why Numbers 24:17 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Numbers 24:17 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It is poetry**, not prediction.
2. **It is symbolic**, not literal.
3. **It was fulfilled in David**, not Jesus.
4. **It addresses Israel's national rise**, not a future Messiah.
5. **It has no final messianic content** in the context or in Jewish tradition.
6. **It cannot be detached from Balaam's oracles.**
7. **It is part of Israel's early dominion**, not Roman-era Judea.

When you restore Numbers 24:17 to its own context, Matthew's use of it collapses completely. And once the third strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Tightens Yet Again

Matthew has now:

- taken a poetic symbol
- literalized it
- repurposed it
- and used it to construct a cosmic sign for Jesus' birth

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Numbers 24:17 is the third strand in the web — and now we move to the fourth.

(4) HOSEA 11:1 IN CONTEXT: THE EXODUS, ISRAEL AS YAHWEH'S SON, AND THE MISUSE OF HISTORY

If Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2 give Matthew a miraculous birth and a Bethlehem location, Hosea 11:1 gives him the **next movement** in the story — the flight to Egypt. But once again, when you return Hosea 11:1 to its own historical moment, its own audience, and its own meaning, the Christian interpretation collapses instantly.

Hosea 11:1 is not prophecy. It is not prediction. It is not messianic. It is not about Jesus. It is about **Israel's past**, not Jesus' future. And every major Jewish and academic commentary agrees.

Hosea's World: A Nation in Decline

Hosea prophesied in the 8th century BCE, during the final decades of the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim/Israel). The nation was collapsing under:

- political corruption
- idolatry
- foreign alliances
- social injustice
- Assyrian pressure

Hosea's message is not about a future Messiah. It is about **Israel's unfaithfulness** and Yahweh's enduring love. Hosea 11 is one of the most tender chapters in the entire Tanakh. It is Yahweh speaking as a **father** to His **son**, Israel.

This is documented by:

- **Thomas McComisky-Hosea-The Minor Prophets-Vol. 1** (In our library)
- **Hans Walter Wolff-Hosea-Hermeneia series** (In our library)
- **Nahum Sarna (Exploring Exodus)** (In our library)
- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**

Hosea 11 is about **Israel**, not Jesus.

“Out of Egypt I Called My Son” — A Historical Reminder

Hosea 11:1 says: “*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*” This is not prophecy. It is **past tense**. Hosea is reminding Israel of the Exodus — the moment Yahweh brought His people out of slavery and made them His covenant nation. The “son” is **Israel**, not Jesus.

This is documented by:

- **Thomas McComisky-Hosea-The Minor Prophets-Vol. 1** (In our library)
- **Hans Walter Wolff-Hosea-Hermeneia series** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Hosea is not predicting a future event. He is **rebuking Israel** for forgetting their past deliverance.

The Exodus — Israel’s Foundational Identity

The Exodus is the central event of Israel’s identity. It is the moment Yahweh:

- redeemed Israel
- adopted Israel as His son
- formed the covenant
- established the nation
- revealed His power

This is documented by:

- **Nahum Sarna (Exploring Exodus)** (In our library)
- **Michael Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel)**
- **Jewish historical scholarship**

Hosea 11:1 is part of this identity. It is a reminder of Yahweh’s love and Israel’s rebellion. It has nothing to do with Jesus.

How Matthew Repurposes Hosea 11:1

Matthew 2:15 “*And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, **Out of Egypt have I called my son.***”

Matthew takes Hosea’s historical reminder — spoken in past tense — and repurposes it as a prophecy of Jesus’ childhood.

He does this by:

1. **Ignoring the past tense** Hosea is recounting history, not predicting the future.
2. **Replacing Israel with Jesus** The “son” becomes Jesus instead of Israel. (Replacement theology)
3. **Inventing a flight to Egypt** There is no historical evidence that Jesus ever went to Egypt.
4. **Creating a narrative to match a repurposed verse** The flight exists only because Matthew needs Hosea 11:1 to be “fulfilled.”

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes Israel’s foundational identity and transfers it to Jesus. Another strand in the web.

The Flight to Egypt — A Literary tool, Not History

There is no historical evidence that Jesus ever went to Egypt. None!

Not in:

- Josephus
- Tacitus
- Suetonius
- Dio Cassius
- Roman records
- Jewish sources
- Archaeology

The flight to and from Egypt exists only in Matthew — because Matthew needs it to “fulfill” Hosea 11:1.

This is documented by:

- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Paula Fredriksen**
- **Bart Ehrman**

The flight is a **mythical literary tool**, not a historical event as far as the research shows.

Why Hosea 11:1 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Hosea 11:1 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It is past tense**, not future tense.
2. **It recounts the Exodus**, not a future event.
3. **It identifies Israel as Yahweh's son**, not Jesus.
4. **It is part of a rebuke**, not a prediction.
5. **It has no messianic content** in the context or in Jewish tradition.
6. **It cannot be detached from Hosea's historical moment**.
7. **It is not predictive in form**, but is being reflective of the past and poetic.

When you restore Hosea 11:1 to its own context, Matthew's use of it collapses completely. And once the fourth strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Tightens Again

Matthew has now:

- taken Israel's identity
- transferred it to Jesus
- invented a journey
- and used it to construct a movement in Jesus' childhood

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Hosea 11:1 is the fourth strand in the web — and now we move to the fifth.

(5) JEREMIAH 31:15 IN CONTEXT: RACHEL, EXILE, AND THE MASSACRE THAT NEVER HAPPENED

If Hosea 11:1 gives Matthew a reason to send Jesus to Egypt, Jeremiah 31:15 gives him a reason to create one of the most dramatic and disturbing scenes in the entire New Testament — the massacre of the infants in Bethlehem. This event is so emotionally powerful, so shocking, so tragic, that it has become one of the most memorable parts of the Christian Christmas story.

But when you return Jeremiah 31:15 to its own historical moment, its own audience, and its own meaning, the Christian interpretation collapses instantly. Jeremiah 31:15 is not about dead babies. It is not about Bethlehem. It is not about Herod. It is not about Jesus. It is about **exile**, not infanticide. And every major Jewish and academic commentary agrees.

Jeremiah's World: The Babylonian Exile

Jeremiah prophesied in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE, during the most catastrophic period in Israel's history — the Babylonian conquest. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Temple was burned. The people were taken captive. Families were torn apart. Children were marched away in chains.

Jeremiah's message is not about a future Messiah. It is about **national trauma**. Jeremiah 31 is part of a larger section known as the "Book of Consolation" (Jeremiah 30–33), in which Yahweh promises to restore Israel after the exile.

This is documented by:

- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Jack R. Lundbom-Jeremiah-Anchor Bible Commentary Vol. 21B** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Jeremiah 31 is about **hope**, not tragedy.

Rachel Weeping — A Symbol of National Loss

Jeremiah 31:15 says: *"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel weeping for her children..."* Rachel, the matriarch of Israel, is used as a **symbol** of national grief. She represents the tribes descended from her, who suffered greatly during the Babylonian exile.

The "children" are **exiles**, not infant corpses as is visualized in the NT narrative. The Babylonian exile was not a mass killing. Rachel's children were taken away, not murdered. Jeremiah promises their return — which only makes sense if they were alive.

This is documented by:

- **Anchor Bible Commentary**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **James Kugel (How to Read the Bible)**
- **Modern historical scholarship**

Rachel is symbolically weeping because her children have been **carried off to Babylon**, not murdered in Bethlehem.

The Very Next Verse — The Promise of Return

Christians rarely quote the next verse, but it is essential: “Your children shall return from the land of the enemy.” Jeremiah 31:16 is a promise of **restoration**, not destruction. Rachel’s tears are not permanent. Her children are not dead. They are coming home. Jeremiah 31:15 is part of a **hopeful prophecy**, not a tragic one.

How Matthew Repurposes Jeremiah 31:15

Matthew 2:7-8 *“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”*

The book of Matthew takes Jeremiah’s symbolic lament — spoken during the Babylonian exile — and repurposes it as a literal prediction of a massacre in Bethlehem.

It does this by:

1. **Ignoring the context** Jeremiah is speaking about exile, not infanticide.
2. **Ignoring the next verse** Jeremiah promises return, not death.
3. **Inventing a massacre** There is no historical evidence that Herod ever killed babies in Bethlehem.
4. **Creating a tragedy to match a repurposed verse** The massacre exists only because Matthew needs Jeremiah 31:15 to be “fulfilled” as a massacre.

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes a poetic symbol of exile and turns it into a literal massacre. Another strand in the web.

The Massacre of the Infants — A Story Without Evidence

The massacre of the infants in Bethlehem is one of the most famous stories in Christianity — but it has **no historical support**. None!

Not in:

- **Josephus**
- **Tacitus**
- **Suetonius**
- **Dio Cassius**
- **Roman records**
- **Jewish sources**
- **Archaeology**

Josephus, who records Herod's brutality in detail — including the execution of his own sons — never mentions a massacre of infants. This silence is deafening.

It is documented by:

- **Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews**
- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Paula Fredriksen**
- **Bart Ehrman**

The massacre is a **literary creation**, not a historical event. It exists only in Matthew — because Matthew needs it to “fulfill” Jeremiah 31:15.

Why Jeremiah 31:15 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Jeremiah 31:15 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It is symbolic**, not literal.
2. **It addresses the Babylonian exile**, not Roman-era Judea.
3. **It speaks of children taken away**, not killed.
4. **It promises their return**, not their death.
5. **It has no messianic content** in Jewish tradition.
6. **It cannot be detached from Jeremiah's historical moment.**
7. **It is part of a hopeful prophecy**, not a tragic one.

When you restore Jeremiah 31:15 to its own context, Matthew's use of it collapses completely. And once the fifth strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Tightens Yet Again

The writers of Matthew has now:

- taken a symbol of exile
- turned it into a literal massacre

- invented a tragedy
- and used it to construct a dramatic moment in Jesus' childhood

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Jeremiah 31:15 is the fifth strand in the web — and now we move to the sixth.

(6) ISAIAH 11:1 IN CONTEXT: THE BRANCH, THE DYNASTY, AND THE NAZARENE THAT NEVER WAS

If Jeremiah 31:15 gives Matthew a tragedy, Isaiah 11:1 gives him a **destination** — Nazareth. This is the final movement in Matthew's infancy narrative. After the birth, the star, the Magi, the massacre, and the flight to Egypt, Matthew needs Jesus to end up in Nazareth. Why? Because Jesus was known historically as "Jesus of Nazareth." Even the earliest Christian sources agree on this.

But the writers of Matthew have a problem. There is **no prophecy** anywhere in the Tanakh that says the Messiah will come from Nazareth. None! No not one!

Not in Isaiah. Not in Jeremiah. Not in Micah. Not in Hosea. Not in any prophet. Not in any writing. Nazareth is never mentioned in the Tanakh at all. So Matthew must create a prophecy. And he does — by reaching for Isaiah 11:1.

Isaiah's World: The Fall and Future of David's Dynasty

Isaiah 11 is part of a larger section (Isaiah 7–12) dealing with the political turmoil of the 8th century BCE. The Davidic dynasty is under threat. Assyria is rising. Judah is unstable. The monarchy is corrupt. The people are fearful.

Isaiah speaks of a future time when Yahweh will restore the Davidic line — not by creating a new town, not by predicting a future Messiah born centuries later, but by promising that the dynasty will not be destroyed.

Isaiah 11:1 says: "*A shoot (netzer) shall come forth from the stump of Jesse...*" This is a **dynasty imagery**, not geography. The "stump" is the Davidic dynasty, cut down by Assyria. The "shoot or the branch" is a future Davidic king who will restore justice.

This is documented by:

- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Joseph Belenkinsopp-Anchor Bible Commentary Vol.19** (In our library)
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 1** (In our library)

- **Benjamin Sommer (Jewish Theological Seminary)**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Isaiah 11:1 is about **David's dynasty**, not Nazareth.

The Hebrew Word *Netzer* — A Symbol, Not a Place

The Hebrew word *netzer* means:

- branch
- shoot
- sprout

It is a **botanical term**, not a geographical term. It has nothing to do with Nazareth. It has nothing to do with Galilee. It has nothing to do with Jesus.

This is documented by:

- **Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon** (In our library)
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary** (In our library)
- **HALOT (Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament)** (In our library)
- **Anchor Bible Commentary on Isaiah** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**

There is no linguistic connection between *netzer* and “Nazareth.” None! Anyone who claims there is, is trying to force the term to mean something that it just does not. Just because it sounds or kind of looks like Nazareth is about all they can claim. But they do so in vain due to their theological misunderstandings and dogmatic beliefs with nothing to support their claim.

Nazareth — A Town That Barely Existed

Nazareth was a tiny, obscure village in the 1st century CE. It was so small and insignificant that:

- it is never mentioned in the Tanakh
- it is never mentioned in the Talmud
- it is never mentioned in Josephus
- it is never mentioned in Roman records
- it is never mentioned in any ancient Jewish text

This is documented by:

- **James Strange (archaeologist)**
- **Richard Horsley (historian)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**

Nazareth was not a prophetic town. It was not a messianic town. It was not a symbolic town. It was a **small agricultural village** with no prophetic significance.

How Matthew Repurposes Isaiah 11:1

Matthew 2:23 *“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”*

Matthew takes Isaiah’s dynasty imagery, spoken during the Assyrian crisis and repurposes it as a prophecy of Jesus living in Nazareth.

He does this by:

1. **Inventing a prophecy** Matthew 2:23 says: “He shall be called a Nazarene,” even though no such prophecy exists.
2. **Creating a linguistic connection** He links *netzer* (branch) to “Nazarene,” even though the words are unrelated.
3. **Ignoring Isaiah’s context** Isaiah is speaking about the Davidic dynasty, not geography.
4. **Using a metaphor as a literal prediction** Isaiah’s “branch” becomes Matthew’s “Nazarene.”

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **Dale Allison (The New Moses)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes a dynasty metaphor and turns it into a geographical prediction. Another strand in the web.

Why Isaiah 11:1 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

Isaiah 11:1 cannot be reused as a future prophecy because:

1. **It is tied to the Davidic dynasty**, not geographical.
2. **It addresses the Assyrian crisis**, not Roman-era Judea.
3. **It uses a botanical term or metaphor**, not a place name.
4. **It has no connection to Nazareth** linguistically or historically.
5. ***It has no messianic content** in Jewish tradition.
6. **It cannot be detached from Isaiah’s historical moment.**
7. **It is part of a larger narrative** about David’s dynasty, not Jesus’ childhood.

** Isaiah 11:1 was not originally a messianic prophecy. It was a promise that Yahweh would revive David's dynasty during the Assyrian crisis. Later Jewish tradition sometimes applies it to the final Messiah yet to come, not because he will be born in Bethlehem or Nazareth, but because the Messiah must come from the Davidic line.*

When you restore Isaiah 11:1 to its own context, Matthew's use of it collapses completely. And once the sixth strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Tightens Yet Again

Matthew has now:

- taken a dynastic metaphor
- turned it into a geographical prophecy
- invented a connection
- and used it to construct Jesus' final childhood destination

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. And it sets the pattern for everything that follows. Isaiah 11:1 is the sixth strand in the web — and now we move to the seventh.

(7) ISAIAH 60 IN CONTEXT: THE MAGI, GALILEE, AND THE EXPANSION OF THE WEB

Up to this point, Matthew has woven together a prophecy web using Isaiah, Micah, Numbers, Hosea and Jeremiah. But the web is not complete. One more strands must be added that expand the narrative outward, giving it international scope and geographical coherence.

These strands come from:

- **Isaiah 60** — used to justify the Magi bringing gifts

This passage is powerful. It speaks of light, glory, and nations with dramatic imagery.

But this passage has anything to do with Jesus' infancy. It has anything to do with Magi. The passage has nothing to do with Galilee in the 1st century CE. And every major Jewish and academic commentary agrees.

ISAIAH 60 IN CONTEXT: JERUSALEM’S FUTURE GLORY, NOT MAGI IN BETHLEHEM

Isaiah 60 is one of the most triumphant chapters in the Tanakh. It describes a future time when Jerusalem — devastated by exile — will be restored to glory. Nations will come to her light. Kings will bring gifts. Her sons and daughters will return. Her gates will be open continually.

Isaiah 60:3 says: *“Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”*

Christians read this and immediately think of the Magi. But Isaiah is not speaking about Magi. Isaiah is not speaking about Jesus. Isaiah is not speaking about Bethlehem. Isaiah is speaking about **Jerusalem**, not Jesus.

This is documented by:

- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **Joseph Blenkinsopp-Anchor Bible Commentary Vol. 19B (In our library)**
- **Benjamin Sommer (Jewish Theological Seminary)**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Isaiah 60 is about **national restoration**, not a newborn child.

The Gifts — Tribute to Jerusalem, Not Worship of Jesus

Isaiah 60:6 says: *“They shall bring gold and frankincense...”*

Christians read this and immediately think of the Magi’s gifts. But Isaiah is not describing worship. He is describing **homage or tribute** — political and economic gifts brought to Jerusalem by foreign nations.

This is documented by:

- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Michael Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel)**

Isaiah 60 is about:

- Jerusalem’s future glory
- Israel’s restoration
- the return of exiles
- the submission of nations
- Yahweh’s vindication of His people

It has nothing to do with Jesus.

How Matthew Repurposes Isaiah 60:6

Matthew 2:11 *“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”*

Matthew takes Isaiah’s restoration prophecy — spoken after the Babylonian exile — and repurposes it as a prediction of Gentile astrologers visiting Jesus.

He does this by:

1. **Ignoring the context** Isaiah is speaking about Jerusalem, not Bethlehem.
2. **Replacing Jerusalem with Jesus** The nations come to Jesus instead of Jerusalem.
3. **Literalizing symbolic tribute** Isaiah’s political gifts become the Magi’s worship gifts.
4. **Creating a narrative to match a repurposed verse** The Magi exist only because Matthew needs Isaiah 60:6 to be “fulfilled.”

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** prophecy. He takes a national restoration prophecy and turns it into a story about foreign astrologers worshiping Jesus. Another strand in the web.

Why Isaiah 60:6 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

This passage cannot be reused as future prophecy because:

Isaiah 60:6

1. It addresses Jerusalem's future glory.
2. It speaks of national restoration, not Jesus' birth.
3. It describes political tribute, not worship.
4. It identifies Jerusalem, not Bethlehem.
5. It has no messianic content in Jewish tradition.

When you restore these passages to their own context, Matthew's use of them collapses completely. And once the eighth strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Is Nearly Complete

The writers of Matthew has now:

- taken national restoration prophecies
- detached them from their historical moments
- repurposed them
- and used them to construct international recognition and geographical coherence for Jesus' childhood

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. Isaiah 60 is the eighth strand in the web — and now we move to the eighth.

(8) EXODUS AND DEUTERONOMY 18 IN CONTEXT: MOSES, PHARAOH, AND THE TYPOLOGY THAT REPLACES ISRAEL

Up to this point, Matthew has woven together a prophecy web using Isaiah, Micah, Numbers, Hosea and Jeremiah. But the web is still missing one final structural pillar — the **Moses typology**.

Matthew does not merely want Jesus to fulfill isolated prophecies. He wants Jesus to **replay the life of Moses**.

This is the deepest layer of the infancy narrative — the layer that transforms Jesus into a “new Moses,” replacing Israel's foundational story with a Christian reinterpretation. This typology is not subtle. It is not accidental. It is not incidental. It is **deliberate narrative construction**, documented by scholars across the spectrum.

The key texts Matthew repurposes for this typology are:

- **Exodus 1–4** — Moses’ birth, Pharaoh’s decree, and the flight
- **Deuteronomy 18:15–18** — the promise of a future prophet “like Moses”

But once again, when you return these passages to their own historical moments, their own audiences, and their own meanings, the Christian interpretation collapses instantly.

(8a) EXODUS IN CONTEXT: PHARAOH, SLAVERY, AND THE BIRTH OF A NATION

The book of Exodus is not about Jesus. It is not about a future Messiah. It is not about a virgin birth. It is not about a star. It is not about Magi. It is not about Herod. Exodus is about **Israel’s liberation**.

It is the moment Yahweh:

- defeats Pharaoh
- breaks the chains of slavery
- forms Israel as His covenant nation
- reveals His power
- establishes His identity
- gives the Torah
- creates the people who will carry His name

This is documented by:

- **Nahum Sarna (Exploring Exodus)** (In our library)
- **Michael Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel)**
- **Robert Alter (Hebrew Bible Commentary)**
- **JPS Torah Commentary on Exodus by Nahum Sarna** (In our library)
- **William C. Propp-Anchor Bible Commentary Vol. 2** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Exodus is the foundation of Israel’s identity — not a prediction of Jesus.

Pharaoh’s Decree — A National Threat, Not a Messianic Foreshadowing

Exodus 1 describes Pharaoh’s decree to kill Hebrew male infants. This is not a prophecy. It is not a prediction. It is not a typological hint. It is **history** — the oppression of Israel under Egyptian slavery.

This is documented by:

- **Nahum Sarna**

- **Jewish historical scholarship**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Pharaoh's decree is part of Israel's national trauma — not a foreshadowing of Herod.

Moses' Survival — A National Deliverer, Not a Messianic Prototype

Moses survives Pharaoh's decree. He is raised in Egypt. He flees after killing an Egyptian. He returns to liberate Israel. This is not a messianic pattern. It is not a prophecy. It is not a typology. It is **history** — the story of Israel's greatest prophet.

This is documented by:

- **Nahum Sarna**
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

Moses' story is not a prediction of Jesus.

How the writers of Matthew Repurposes Exodus

Matthew 2:20–21 — “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.”

This is a direct narrative replay of **Exodus 4:19**, where YHWH tells Moses, “*Go back to Egypt, for all the men who sought your life are dead.*” Matthew is not citing prophecy here; he is repurposing the Exodus storyline to construct Jesus as a new Moses figure. This narrative shaping is part of Matthew's larger typological project, which includes invoking Deuteronomy 18's promise of a prophet “like Moses” and applying it to Jesus through literary parallels rather than actual prophetic fulfillment.

The book of Matthew chapter two takes Israel's foundational liberation story — spoken in narrative form, not prophetic form — and repurposes it as a template for Jesus' infancy.

It does this by:

1. **Inventing a massacre** Herod's massacre mirrors Pharaoh's decree — but has no historical evidence.
2. **Inventing a flight to Egypt** Jesus' flight mirrors Moses' flight — but has no historical evidence.
3. **Inventing a return from Egypt** Jesus' return mirrors Moses' return — but is based on Hosea 11:1, which is not prophecy.

4. **Creating a typology to match a repurposed narrative** Jesus becomes the “new Moses,” replacing Israel’s foundational story.

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Dale Allison (The New Moses: A Matthean Typology)**
- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** typology. He takes Israel’s liberation story and turns it into Jesus’ childhood. Another strand in the web.

(8b) DEUTERONOMY 18:15–18 IN CONTEXT: THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Deuteronomy 18:15–18 says: “Yahweh your Elohim will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers...”

Christians read this and immediately think of Jesus. But Deuteronomy is not speaking about Jesus. Deuteronomy is not speaking about a future Christian Savior. Deuteronomy is not speaking about a divine incarnation. Deuteronomy is speaking about **Israel’s prophetic office and authority**.

This is documented by:

- **JPS Torah Commentary Deuteronomy** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Michael Fishbane**
- **Modern academic consensus**

The “prophet like Moses” is:

- Joshua
- Samuel
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel
- and every prophet Yahweh raised up for Israel

It is not a prediction of a single future Messiah.

The Prophetic Office and Authority — A Continuing Institution, Not a Future Prediction

Deuteronomy 18 establishes:

- how prophets are recognized
- how prophets speak
- how prophets are judged
- how Yahweh communicates with Israel

It is not a messianic prophecy. It is not a prediction of Jesus. It is not a foreshadowing of a future divine figure.

This is documented by:

- **JPS Deuteronomy Torah Commentary** (In our library)
- **Jewish exegetical tradition**
- **Modern academic consensus**

The “prophet like Moses” is a **category**, not a person.

How Matthew Repurposes Deuteronomy 18

Matthew takes Deuteronomy’s description of Israel’s prophetic office and repurposes it as a prediction of Jesus. The book of Matthew turns Jesus into the new Moses. He is Moses’ greater replacement.

He does this by:

1. **Ignoring the context** Deuteronomy is speaking about Israel’s prophets, not Jesus.
2. **Replacing Israel’s prophetic tradition with Jesus** Jesus becomes the “new Moses,” replacing Israel’s prophets.
3. **Creating a typology to match a repurposed verse** Jesus becomes the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18 — even though Deuteronomy is not predictive.

This repurposing is documented by:

- **Dale Allison**
- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Bart Ehrman**
- **Paula Fredriksen**

Matthew is not discovering prophecy. Matthew is **constructing** typology. He takes Israel’s prophetic office and turns it into a prediction of Jesus. Another strand in the web.

Why Exodus and Deuteronomy 18 Cannot Be Reused Centuries Later

These passages cannot be reused as future prophecy because:

Exodus

1. It is narrative, not prophecy.
2. It addresses Israel's liberation, not Jesus' childhood.
3. It describes Pharaoh's decree, not Herod's.
4. It describes Moses' flight, not Jesus'.
5. It has no final messianic content in Jewish tradition.

Deuteronomy 18

1. It describes Israel's prophetic office.
2. It is not predictive in form.
3. It identifies multiple prophets, not one future and final Messiah.
4. It cannot be detached from Deuteronomy's legal context.
5. It has no connection to Jesus in Jewish tradition.

When you restore these passages to their own context, Matthew's use of them collapses completely. And once the ninth strand collapses, the prophecy chain begins to unravel even further.

The Web Is Now Fully Visible

The book of Matthew and its writers have now:

- taken Israel's foundational liberation story
- taken Israel's prophetic office
- detached them from their historical moments
- repurposed them
- and used them to construct Jesus as a "new Moses"

This is not accidental. This is not incidental. This is **deliberate narrative construction**. Exodus and Deuteronomy 18 are the eighth strand in the web. Let us now turn to historical and archeological lack of evidence.

THE HISTORICAL SILENCE: JOSEPHUS, ROME, AND THE MISSING EVIDENCE

Up to this point, we have examined how the writer of Matthew and or later interpolators constructs a prophecy web by repurposing Tanakh passages. But now we must confront the **historical dimension** — because Matthew's narrative does not merely reinterpret scripture; it also makes **historical claims** that should be visible in the records of the time.

And yet, when we turn to the historians of the era — Jewish, Roman, and Greek — we find something astonishing: **The New Testament's infancy narrative has no historical support. None. Zero. Complete silence.** This silence is not a minor issue. It is not an academic footnote. It is not a small gap. It is a **gaping hole** in the foundation of the Christian story. And every major historian acknowledges it.

JOSEPHUS: THE HISTORIAN WHO SHOULD HAVE RECORDED EVERYTHING

Flavius Josephus is the single most important Jewish historian of the 1st century CE. He wrote:

- *The Jewish War*
- *Antiquities of the Jews*
- *Against Apion*
- *The Life of Josephus*

(All in our library)

He recorded:

- Herod's rise to power
- Herod's political alliances
- Herod's building projects
- Herod's paranoia
- Herod's executions
- Herod's murders
- Herod's family scandals
- Herod's cruelty
- Herod's death
- Herod's succession

Josephus records **every detail** of Herod's brutality — including the execution of his own sons.

But Josephus never mentions:

- a massacre of infants
- a star in the sky
- foreign astrologers visiting Judea
- a virgin birth
- a flight to Egypt
- a return from Egypt
- a Nazarene prophecy
- anything resembling Matthew's infancy narrative

This silence is documented by:

- **Raymond E. Brown (The Birth of the Messiah)**
- **Geza Vermes (The Nativity: History and Legend)**
- **Paula Fredriksen (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)**
- **Bart Ehrman (Jesus Before the Gospels)**
- **John P. Meier (A Marginal Jew)**

Josephus is not hostile to Christianity. He simply records history. And history does not support Matthew's story.

ROMAN HISTORIANS: THE EMPIRE THAT RECORDED EVERYTHING

The Roman Empire kept meticulous records. Roman historians wrote extensively about:

- astronomical events
- political events
- royal births
- omens
- portents
- rebellions
- executions
- unusual phenomena

The following historians wrote about the era:

- **Tacitus**
- **Suetonius**
- **Dio Cassius**
- **Pliny the Elder**
- **Philo of Alexandria** (Jewish philosopher under Roman rule)

None of them mention:

- a supernatural star
- a mass infanticide
- foreign astrologers visiting Judea
- a miraculous birth
- a child fleeing to Egypt
- anything resembling Matthew's infancy narrative

This silence is documented by:

- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Paula Fredriksen**
- **Bart Ehrman**

If a star had appeared in the sky — moving, stopping, hovering — Roman astronomers would have recorded it. If a massacre of infants had occurred — even in a small town — Roman historians would have recorded it. If foreign dignitaries had visited Judea — especially astrologers — Roman records would have noted it. But they did not. Because it did not happen.

JEWISH SOURCES: THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED

Jewish sources from the era include:

- **The Dead Sea Scrolls** (In our library/Robert Eisenman's works)
- **The Mishnah (early oral traditions)**
- **The Talmud (later compilations)**
- **Philo of Alexandria**
- **Josephus** (In our library)

None of them mention:

- a virgin birth
- a star
- Magi
- a massacre
- a flight to Egypt
- a Nazarene prophecy
- anything resembling Matthew's infancy narrative

This silence is documented by:

- **Jewish historical scholarship**
- **Raymond Brown**
- **Geza Vermes**
- **Paula Fredriksen**

The Jewish people remembered:

- the Babylonian exile
- the Assyrian invasions
- the Maccabean revolt
- the Roman occupation
- Herod's brutality
- the destruction of the Temple

But they did not remember Matthew's story of these things. Because it did not happen.

ARCHAEOLOGY: THE SCIENCE THAT CONFIRMS OR DENIES HISTORY

Archaeology has uncovered:

- Herod's palaces
- Herod's fortresses
- Herod's building projects
- Roman administrative centers
- Jewish villages
- burial sites
- inscriptions
- astronomical records
- trade routes
- artifacts from Judea

But archaeology has found:

- no evidence of a massacre
- no evidence of Magi
- no evidence of a star event
- no evidence of a flight to Egypt
- no evidence of a return from Egypt
- no evidence of a Nazarene prophecy
- no evidence of Matthew's infancy narrative

This silence is documented by:

- **James Strange (archaeologist)**
- **Richard Horsley (historian)**
- **John P. Meier**
- **Paula Fredriksen**

Archaeology confirms history. And history does not confirm Matthew.

The Silence Speaks

The silence of:

- Josephus
- Roman historians
- Jewish sources
- archaeology

...is not accidental. It is not incidental. It is not a coincidence. It is **evidence**. Evidence that Matthew's infancy narrative is not historical. Evidence that Matthew's story is constructed. Evidence that Matthew's prophecy web is imaginary, not factual. Might we even call it conspiratorial? Especially if we might speculate on later textual additions through interpolations after the oral stories were already being written down.

While polemical, this is not an attack on Christianity. It is a defense of the Tanakh. It is a defense of historical truth. It is a defense of Yahweh's integrity. Matthew's story is beautiful. It is dramatic. It is powerful. But it is not history nor is it contextually agreeable with the Hebrew Scriptures. It is **theology woven into a new narrative** for a fledgling new religion that eventually became known as Christianity.

Part 5 of this multipart teaching has exposed the prophetic-web inside Matthew's infancy narrative. We restored every passage to its own historical moment, its own audience, and its own covenant context. And once each text was returned to its rightful place, the illusion of "messianic prediction" dissolved. What remains is not prophecy fulfilled, but prophecy repurposed — a literary construction built on misapplied verses. Part 5 closes with one clear truth: the Tanakh speaks for itself, and it does not speak of the Jesus that Matthew or the NT creates. There are literally hundreds of texts from the Tanakh that has been reused and reapplied and we believe possibly deceptively to create the NT narrative. We have only chosen a short few in this Part 5 and we purposely selected the infancy NT texts to show the narrative that we have been given as though they are the continuation of the Hebrew Scriptures as a dual prophecy and sometimes interpreted as the only fulfillment. We did so to demonstrate a seemingly conspiratorial web created either by the oral stories that were then written down after the historical Jesus might have lived, or there were later tampering with the texts to give it the upgraded enhancements needed to give credence to the new upstart religion that became known as Christianity. And today it has grown to be one of, if not the most widely accepted religions of the world.

With the prophecy-web dismantled in the infancy narrative, we now turn to the final task: restoring the Tanakh's voice, its integrity, and its covenant meaning. Part 6, the last in line of this multipart teaching, brings the final restorationist conclusion — the return to Yahweh's own words, unfiltered, unrepurposed, and unclaimed by later theology.

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