

Conceptual blending in Matthew 2:23



Author:
Godwin Mushayabasa¹

Affiliation:
¹Department of Ancient Texts, Text, Context and Reception, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Corresponding author:
Godwin Mushayabasa,
mhuriyashe@gmail.com

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The research presented in this article formed part of an ongoing quest into the possibilities of using conceptual blending to understand the unresolved question of the sources of Matthew's fulfilment quotations (FQs). The way Matthew handled his purported Old Testament (OT) texts in driving home the fulfilment motif in his Gospel, has been noted to depart from the normative use of Scripture in quotations, even of his own time. Further, establishing the source(s) of the quotations is of interest to OT text critical studies, as well as New Testament (NT) hermeneutics. Most of the studies so far on the FQs, have centred around hermeneutics, while the aspect of the use of texts, their transmission and preservation, has been left to a few. This article focused on the textual sources of the Matthew 2:23 quotation and how those sources were brought together to result in the quotation. It sought to investigate the possibility that cognitive linguistic mechanisms of producing the FQs that closely resemble the processes of conceptual blending, can be traced to the FQs. The method used in this research was that of the linguistic theory called conceptual blending. It was employed to trace the thought processes that involved OT texts and those from Matthew's witness context. It was observed that the mechanisms of conceptual blending were behind the process of penning down the quote in Matthew 2:23, even though the author might not have been aware of such cognitive operations. Semiotic and linguistic relations that help explain the quotation, emerged from the study, using conceptual blending as an approach. It was concluded that Matthew's FQs should not be understood in the regular way that modern readers would understand a quotation but as a result of integrating events in the OT and those in Matthew's context of fulfilment. Matthew intended to clearly show the connection between perceived prophecy and its fulfilment, rather than produce quotations in the traditional sense of the word.

Contribution: This study contributes two key findings to the research field. Firstly, it reveals the potential of the conceptual blending theory as a critical scientific tool in resolving the text-critical problems scholars are faced with in the history of the transmission of the biblical text, with particular reference to Matthew 2:23. Secondly, the research contributes towards resolving the long-standing question of the textual sources of Matthew 2:23.

Keywords: Matthew 2:23; fulfilment quotations; conceptual blending; prophecy and fulfilment; textual criticism; cognitive linguistics; Old Testament; New Testament.

Introduction

This study is carried out largely with the interest of Old Testament (OT) text-critical studies in mind, in which the possibility of discovering the probable text behind the quotations in Matthew might shed some light on the nature of the few OT text portions involved in the fulfilment quotations (FQs). At the same time, it seeks to address a long-standing problem in the textual studies of Matthew. In terms of establishing the source texts, Matthew's FQs have posed such a challenge to Matthean scholarship, that some have at some point attributed their origin to the arbitrary and frivolous handling of the Hebrew Scriptures (Hagner 1993:Ivi). Such an assertion may need to be reconsidered in light of the following study.

The FQs in Matthew have a long history of engagement in NT scholarship, which I will not elucidate here, due to space constraints. I have, however, provided some lead into the major debates in an earlier study on Matthew 12:17–19.¹ More pertinent to the current article, is the recent study on Matthew 2:23 by Menken (2001) who sought to trace the source text of the FQ cited there. This quotation, or perhaps reference, reads ὅπως πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται (*hopōs plerōthēi to rethen dia tōn prophetōn hoti Nazōraios*

1. Mushayabasa (2022). For a more detailed treatment of the history of research on this problem, see among others, Blomberg (2007) and Menken (2001).

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klethesetai).² Menken's conclusion, which generally agrees with those of a number of other scholars, is that in Matthew 2:23, Matthew quotes the text from Judges 13:5, 7 (Menken 2001:458–461).³ Menken traces the word Ναζωραῖος [*Nazōraios*], referring to Jesus' citizenship, to the Judges 13 and 16 texts, which, however, in the OT Greek of Judges, only appears as ναζιραῖος / ναζιραῖον [*naziraios / naziraion*], referring to a nazirite, the ritual status of Samson.⁴ Menken notes that the difference between these two proper nouns is not very significant, being only in the form of one vowel letter. The initial part of the quotation is taken as is, being the conjunction, ὅτι that also appears in Judges 13:5. Further, according to Menken (2001:464–465), the verb in the quotation, κληθήσεται [*klethesetai*], could have been derived from the passive verb ἔσται [*estai*], with further reference to the καλεῖν [*kalein*] in Isaiah 7:14. Therefore, besides ὅτι, none of the other words in the quotation occur in the texts of Judges 13:5, 7 or Isaiah 7:14 in the precise manner they are quoted in Matthew 2:23. Yet Menken (2001:468) still maintains that Matthew 2:23 'is a real quotation after all'. The focus in the present article is to investigate possible cognitive mechanisms by which such a quotation came about in the first place, and perhaps why scholars such as Menken might dare to see it as a real quotation from the OT. In doing so, I am putting forward the thesis that the mechanisms for producing the FQs that closely resemble the processes of conceptual blending, can be traced in the texts that have come to be known as the FQs in Matthew. It should be noted here that notions of at least a combination of several OT scenes or texts in the Matthew 2:23 quotation have been proposed before, for example by Chamblin (2010:237–238), although neither a process nor mechanism by which such scenes might have been married, were suggested.

Methodology

Conceptual blending has already been employed to probe possible cognitive mechanisms by which Matthew came up with the quotation in Matthew 12:17–19 (Mushayabasa 2022). In that article, I discuss the general applicability of conceptual blending as a cognitive operation involved in how the FQ came about. In the present study, I explore some of the basic aspects of conceptual blending elucidated further on, while looking at another FQ from Matthew, specifically Matthew 2:23.

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1998:135–139), conceptual blending should be such that there is a mental construct of additional spaces with emergent structure, not directly available from the input domains. As this emergent construct unfolds, inferences, emotions, and event integrations are realised, which cannot reside in any of the

input spaces, but are constructed dynamically in a new mental space. As far as the two input spaces are concerned, there must be correspondence among a good number of elements (Fauconnier & Turner 2003:58).⁵

The conceptual blend involved in the quote

The essence of conceptual blending is that the mental operations involved should result in forming a partial match between two mental input places, with the result that a selected set of elements from each of these spaces are projected into a new mental space, normally called the blend, which has dynamically developed an emergent construct (Fauconnier & Turner 2003:57–58). In other words, the resultant blend has form and composition that do not exist in its precise form in any of the contributing mental spaces (Fauconnier & Turner 1998:143).

In such a construct, there is normally a generic space, an overarching mental space that is generally part of, or categorically covering two or more input spaces. In the particular case of Matthew's quotation in 2:23, the generic space would be that of the messianic expectation and his coming, or simply the birth of a saviour provided by God, as shown in Figure 1.⁶ There would then be at least two mental spaces with some of their elements corresponding. Such mental spaces will act as input spaces in the blend. The input space, which can be traced to Judges 13, will here and elsewhere be denoted as the prophetic space (PS). Specifically, this input space can be traced to Judges 13:5, 7 and 16:17 which narrates the birth of a saviour figure in Israel (Menken 2001:457). On the other hand, the witness space (WS) of Matthew refers to the birth events of another saving figure from Israel, Jesus. From an initial consideration, the pragmatic significances, and references in these two accounts are quite disparate. From an orthodox reading of the Judges texts mentioned above, no one wants to immediately conclude that the account of Samson could be understood as a prophecy of something that happens in Matthew's account. Yet there are a number of correlations that one can deduce in terms of semiotic and lexical-semantic relations between them, enabling parallel connections between the Judges' PS and Matthew's WS. In this study, I will take the perspective that Matthew took the quotation text of Matthew 2:23 from an MT-like text, or from a Greek OT text, rather than from any other source such as a collection of *testimonia* (Menken 2001:452; see also Albl 1999:179–190), or from the Q source.

It is evident that there are strong correlations between the text of the announcement of Samson's birth in Judges 13:1–7

2.This article uses the Greek text, font, and diacritics in the Greek New Testament by Holmes (2011–2013).

3.See, for example Sanders (1965:170), Goulder (1974), Bruner (2004:77), and Boring (1995:147). See also the arguments in Chamblin (2010:238).

4.To avoid ambiguity, I will use the term OT Greek in this article to represent what others may understand as the Septuagint.

5.A typical example they give, is one where two boats sailed on the same course on different days, and probably for different purposes. When the second boat was on this course, the two were regarded as having been in a race (Fauconnier & Turner 1998:133–187).

6.There were several kinds of 'messianic expectations' in the period in which Matthew penned his Gospel, as also reflected in the Qumran Scrolls. However, for our current study, I will confine the research to the train of thought that develops in Matthew's own account.

and that found in Matthew 1–2: the announcement of the coming child by an angel, the message of the birth of a son to deliver or save Israel, the holiness of the male child to be born, and the miraculous nature of the births, all stand in parallel. There is also selective projection in which some elements do not necessarily link across the two mental spaces conceptually, and therefore are not properly blending. For example, the announcement of the miraculous birth was made to the woman in Judges 13, whereas it was made to the man in Matthew's record.

Other corresponding elements involve the homophones 'nazirite', as found in the PS and 'Nazarene', as found in the WS. While in Judges, the boy grew up as a nazirite (raised according to certain Israelite cultic practices), in Matthew's witness context, the boy grew up as a Nazarene (a citizen or resident of Nazareth). Further, the word *nazirite* was translated on more than one occasion in the OT Greek corpus as 'holy', which can be used as a pun to connect Samson to Jesus, the 'holy Child' (Menken 2001:459, 461). While there is no real similarity in meaning between being a nazirite of the 10th century BC, and a Nazarene of the 1st AD in Palestine, an aspect of the meaning of nazirite in Judges can be linked

to Jesus. Further, the phonological nature of these titles made it possible for Matthew to trace a relation between them. In the end, a simple blend could be achieved where nazirite was understood to parallel Nazarene. It appears therefore that Matthew, noticing the close connections mentioned here, connected elements that belonged to his WS with those that belonged to the PS (former prophets) and could therefore establish an occasion of prophecy and fulfilment (Figure 1 and Figure 2). It is this recognition of a prophecy and fulfilment that approximates a conceptual blend, which is henceforth referred to as the blended space of Matthew 2:23. While the Matthew 2:23 quote is not in itself the blend, it reveals or is a result of the prophecy and fulfilment blend that Matthew conceived.

Critical analysis of the Matthew 2:23 blend

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1998:144), there are three main operations that have been identified in the process of conceptual blending: composition, completion, and elaboration. In addition, there seems also to be a fourth one, which is the compression or integration of events. One

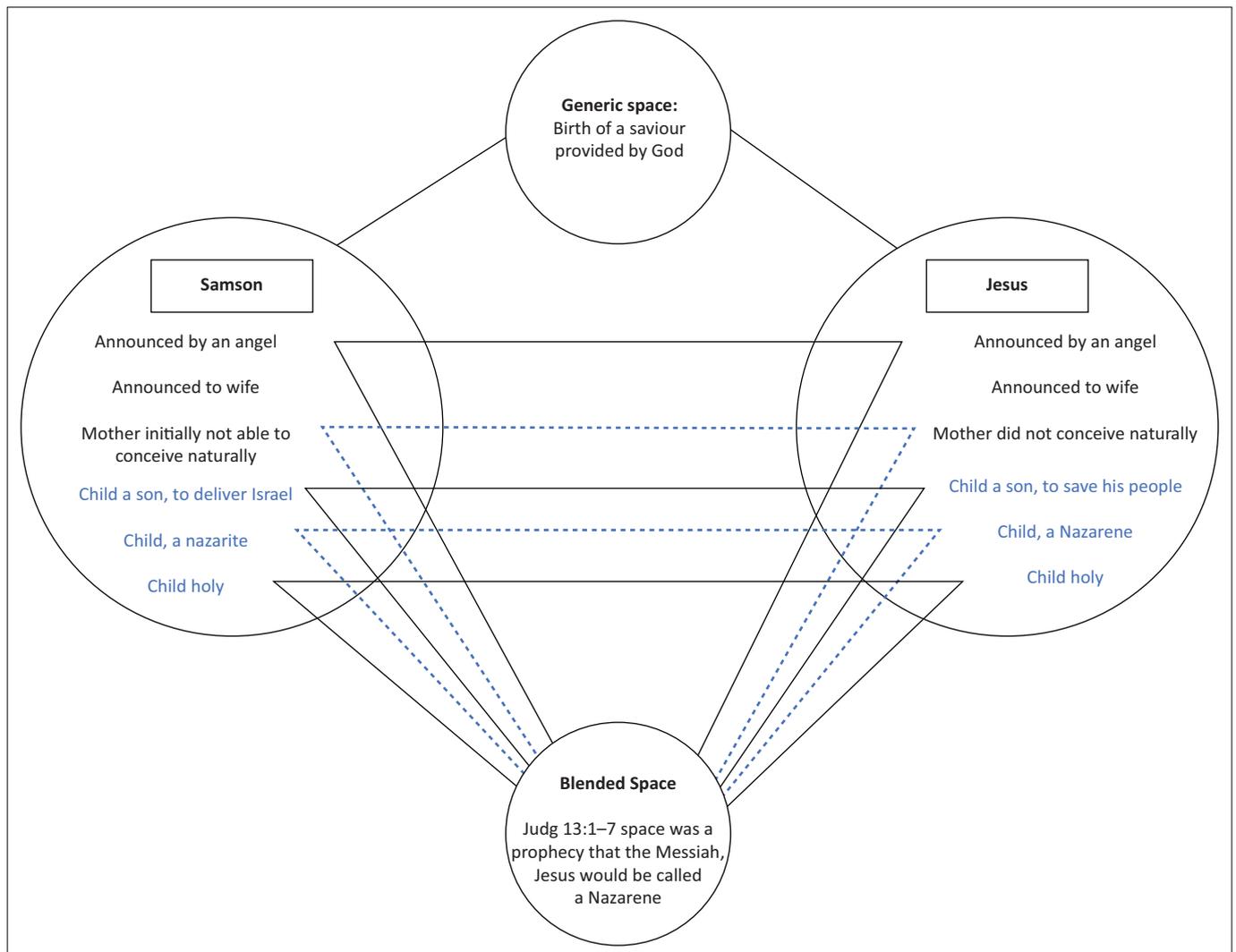


FIGURE 1: Conceptual blending between Judges 13:1–7 and Matthew's witness context of Jesus' birth.

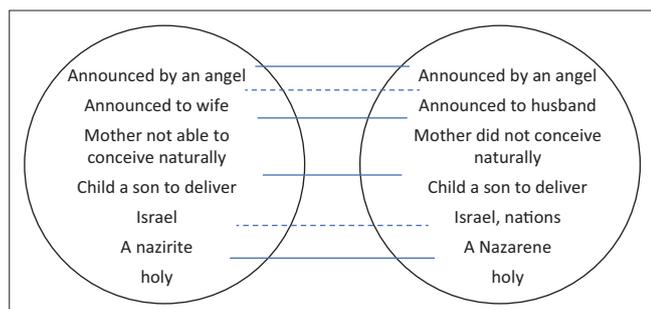


FIGURE 2: Showing cross-space mapping or connections between the prophetic space and the witness space.

should note that although Fauconnier and Turner do not mention this, there is no sharp break or separation between these mental operations. When one starts speaking of composition, one normally already has in mind the other aspects of completion and elaboration. In that regard, these cognitive operations in conceptual blending should not be understood as stages in the blending process that occur in a specific order. Discussion on these processes follows, with particular application to the blend in Matthew 2:23.

Composition

Composition entails the process of matching select elements from the input spaces, placing them into juxtaposition and hence triggering relations that do not exist in the separate input spaces, also called cross-space mapping (Fauconnier & Turner 2003:60). In the blend, supposedly activated by Matthew in Matthew 2:23, the composition can first be detected as a broad metanarrative constituting the messianic teachings and expectations in Matthew's witness space. The expectation of a saviour in Israel's history, realised at one point by the birth of Samson in the Judges 13 passage, is identified as a parallel to the coming of another saviour, the birth and life narrative of Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew's account. Similar to the conditions that led to the rise of Samson, the awaited Messiah in the second temple period, was also expected to bring some kind of salvation to an Israelite nation, that was almost losing its identity due to the loss of its political and some religious independence, to other political powers of the day. But for Matthew and his audience, such expectations had probably become tempered by Jesus' teachings and were therefore resigned towards eschatological salvation. The diagrammatic illustration in Figure 3, briefly demonstrates composition at the metanarrative level.

When Matthew mentions the residence of Jesus in Nazareth, there are at least two problems he had to address in the particular quote he was dealing with: firstly, to assert that even though the realised nature of salvation was not nearly the same as the one generally anticipated by the Jews, Jesus was nevertheless the promised Messiah according to the Jewish Scriptures;⁷

⁷This turns out to be a metanarrative of the whole Gospel of Matthew: the promise did not turn out as expected, but the promise is here and can be argued or proved from Scripture.

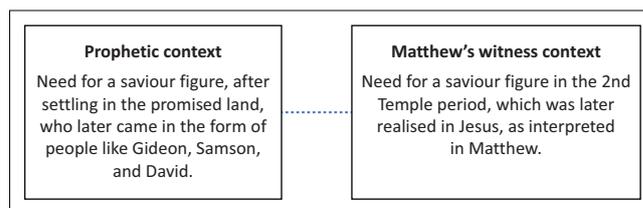


FIGURE 3: Composition at the broader metanarrative level.

and therefore secondly, to explain the residence and citizenship of Jesus in Nazareth according to the same Scriptures, even though such Scriptures did not seem to explicitly mention the aspect of the Messiah's residence in a city called Nazareth (Blomberg 2007:11). In fact, Jesus' Nazarene citizenship would be one of the arguments by some Jews in denying Jesus' authority, since according to Jewish Scriptures, 'no prophet comes out of Galilee' (Jn 7:52). In the face of these circumstances, Matthew felt it necessary to show that the Messiah was in fact prophesied by the prophets, that he would be a resident of Nazareth. In this regard, Matthew sees a prophetic link between Samson in Judges and Jesus in his witness context, by linking the somewhat similar aspects of their provenance such as the announcement by an angel, the nature of conception that took place, the mission of the child to be born, and the ritual status of the child among other things (Figure 2). The elements were in most cases not completely identical but did contain some identical dominant features. The relation between these elements is primarily not metaphorical, or even analogical but to some extent co-relational. This approximates to a conceptual blending structure, that is brought about by a mirror-like relationship, as defined by Fauconnier and Turner (2003:60).

Completion

In completion, the composed construct from the various mental spaces is completed with other necessary structural elements, to produce the perceived or desired frame (Fauconnier & Turner 1998:144). The text in Judges 13 is classified in Jewish understanding, as part of the former prophets. Despite that title in Jewish circles, books like Judges and Samuel scarcely present themselves as belonging to the orthodox prophetic genre, and hence are described as historical books in OT theology (Hill & Walton 2000:169). Being classified as prophetic could at most be attributed to their theological content, which is concerned with Israel's faithfulness to the covenant. Despite that oddity, the composition of relations between Judges 13 and Matthew 2 already points towards a prophecy and fulfilment event. From this perspective, Matthew sees the Judges 13 narrative by means of pattern completion, as a prophecy. Therefore, this would mean that the phrase $\delta\upsilon$ Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται as it reads in Matthew 2:23, derives from the Judges 13 account, even though it may also include words from other prophets that form part of the prophets in the OT, as intimated in the plural noun προφητῶν [prophets] in Matthew 2:23. In this regard, the two mental spaces

considered here, together with the Jewish belief system in the time of Matthew, that the Law and the Prophets spoke about things that would be fulfilled later,⁸ provides the composition of a prophecy and fulfilment blend. The biggest completing element is that the book of Judges can be seen as a prophetic book, and hence that Samson could be viewed as a prophetic prefiguring of the Messiah Jesus. This realisation of prophecy and fulfilment may qualify as, what is known as, the emergent construct. It is a construct that emerges in the blend but is not necessarily copied from the input spaces (Fauconnier & Turner 1998:144).

Elaboration

Elaboration entails the development of a blend by way of imaginative mental constructs, that are logically possible from the inputs in the blend (Fauconnier & Turner 1998:144). The conceptual blend so far described, suggests that Matthew would have made some sort of linguistic relation between the gentilic noun Nazarene [Ναζωραῖος] and the adjective, nazirite [Ναζύραιος]. These words differ in terms of only one vowel letter (Menken 2001:459). How exactly this relation could have been conceived by Matthew is not clear to us, since a number of possibilities exist. It could be by way of similarity in wording, in which one of the references assimilates the other. Alternatively, it could be that one of the two entities' name references changed over time. Recent research, at least in the NT by O'Neill, suggests that Ναζωραῖος was a town's name while the other, Ναζωραῖος or Ναζωραῖος was a prophetic title (O'Neill 1999:135–136).⁹ According to O'Neill, Matthew was not referring to the town at all in the quote, but to Jesus' prophetic title. The town Ναζωρέτ suggested a messianic title from the Hebrew root נזר [nזr, crown, royal diadem], and that is why Matthew used it in 2:23 (O'Neill 1999:141).

Even though O'Neill (1999:135–141) denies it, the suggestion that Jesus in Matthew 2:23 could be viewed in some sense as a nazirite, is not without just cause if it is true that the goal of a nazirite was to 'offer oneself to God', according to Diamond (1997:17–18), as well as Chamblin (2010:238). In that case, the gentilic Nazarene can be connected to Samson, who was a nazirite of God and hence also to Jesus, who is referred to as 'holy' and one who offered up himself to God (Lk 1:35, Heb 9:14).

Further, the identification of a group of Christians as Nazarenes in the early church possibly has to do with Jesus being in the first place identified as a Nazarene. The term from this perspective refers to religious affiliation rather than citizenship (Ac 24:5; see O'Neill 1999:135). It speaks of the followers of Jesus, as a kind of nazirite sect. Kinzig (2007:468–470) indicates that there is a high possibility that the term Matthew uses here, may have developed a double meaning in its use in the early church period, eventually developing into a homonym.

8. 'Prophecy and fulfilment' seem to be the most common way of arguing and validating the messianic office, that not only Matthew, but most of the NT writers used. See in this regard Von Orelli (1884) and Clements (1983:73).

9. O'Neill (1999:136) further notes that a manuscript variant D* AD reads: 'as it was said through the prophet that He would be called a Nazarene'.

Therefore, Matthew most likely did not have only one semantic reference to the word Nazareth in mind when he penned the quotation. One has to remember that Matthew was writing from the perspective of the time around 70 CE or beyond.¹⁰ From that vantage point, Matthew would have been able to bring into perspective the whole range of meanings that the term Nazarene had been associated with in its diachronic development. Thus, Sanders (1965:169) rightly wondered whether Ναζωραῖος had for Matthew an exclusively geographical reference,¹¹ and thus proposed a second implied reference, in the term Nazareth (Sanders 1965:172). Even so, there should have been a primary semantic reference for the word, that would have initially been in the Gospel writer's mind. The fact that Matthew evokes the term after referring to a locality, a spacial location may give us the confidence that he was, in the first place referring to the gentilic sense of the word. This, in turn, evoked the closely related reference of a nazirite, with a meaning that pointed to the holiness and prophetic, self-offering ministry of Jesus and his followers. Aspects such as phonological similarity, variations in spellings of both words and the fact that Jesus himself could in some sense, be considered of nazirite status in religious terms, could have contributed to the semantic extension of Nazarene towards meanings represented by nazirite (Chamblin 2010:238).

If the reconstruction above is correct, it follows that it is the second religious reference of Nazarene (that is, nazirite), now attached to Nazarene, that helped Matthew to retrace the word Nazarene to the Judges PS, since in that space, the use of the term nazirite and the events could easily be related to the ministry of Jesus by analogy. The blend evoked in Matthew's WS, therefore develops through elaboration, by taking advantage of the uses of the term associated with Nazareth as a city, but also as a religious term.

I have thus far dealt with the blend involving the adjective Nazarene in the quotation, and how it indicates a blending of the WS (Nazarene) and the PS (nazirite). I will now consider how the verb κληθήσεται which is used in the quotation, indicates the conceptual blending of the verb in the WS, with that in the PS. The aspect of calling, in the sense of naming, is a dominant feature of the promised child motif in OT prophecies. A few instances that come to mind, are Isaiah 9:6; 7:14, Jeremiah 23:6, Genesis 17:19 and Psalm 72:17. The feature also appears in 4Q246, from the Qumran scrolls (Fitzmyer 1993). In the first chapter of his Gospel, Matthew used this motif twice (Mt 1:21, 23), and it is not a surprise that he uses it again in 2:23. In most cases, the name in these naming motifs, does not refer to a proper noun (name), but to a title.

Judges 13:5 reads as follows in the MT and the OT Greek respectively: כי נזיר אלהים יהיה [for he shall be a nazirite of God] / οὗτος ἡγιασμένον ναζωραῖον ἔσται τῷ θεῷ [for he shall be

10. Most scholars generally give a date around 70 CE. See for example Levertoff and Goudge (1942:124–125).

11. One may also recall the instance where Matthew relates, whether deliberately or accidentally, the near homographs אַתְּמִן and אַתְּמִן in the context of Isaiah 42, in the process of producing the Matthew 12:18–21 FQ (Mushayabasa 2022:6).

sanctified, a nazirite of God].¹² Through mechanisms of conceptual blending, Matthew probably read this clause in the PS, in the context of the naming of a promised child motif. In order to properly align to such a motif, Matthew only needed to replace the Hebrew verb $\text{קרא} \text{ו} \text{שמו}$ [Greek ἔσται] with $\text{קרא} \text{ו} \text{שמו}$ [call his name], which in Greek would correspond to the verb form καλεω and hence κληθήσεται . The passive of the Hebrew verb can also be used without the noun phrase $\text{ו} \text{שמו}$. On the other hand, Jesus is *called* [λεγόμενος] a Nazarene in the WS. And if λεγόμενος is used from the perspective of a prophecy of events still in the future, the resultant prophetic statement would most appropriately be represented by a future passive of καλεω , which is κληθήσεται [he will be called].¹³ In this way, a verb used in the PS [ἔσται] is connected by mechanisms of elaboration with a verb in the WS [λεγόμενος], and placed in the naming of a promised child motif, in such a way that the verb, κληθήσεται , is the one that becomes appropriate to evoke an instance of prophecy.

Compression

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1995:199), the integration of events or compression is a motivating factor in conceptual blending. This basically entails, for example the reduction of two separate elements or events into one element or event in the blended space and may also be known as *compression*. In coming up with the quotation, the concrete events of the birth of Samson are put into perspective regarding the birth events of Jesus of Nazareth, to produce an integrated single event of prophecy and fulfilment.

Further, in understanding Matthew 2:23 as a quotation from the Judges 13 account, one will have to decompress the word *Nazarene* into its ritualist–sectarian, as well as its gentile referential aspects, that I discussed above.¹⁴ Consequently, there are referential compressions that have gone into the term, Nazarene, as Matthew uses it in Matthew 2:23. Primarily, the terms Nazarene and nazirite are merged into one term, but in such a way that there is only one of these terms, ‘Nazarene’, appearing in the sentence that results from the blend.

Conclusion

In the current article, I sought to demonstrate that Matthew 2:23 has been produced, following processes that are similar or approximate to the conceptual blending processes advocated by among others, Fauconnier and Turner. Most other quotations of the OT in the NT may scarcely qualify as

12. There are variant readings in the OT Greek manuscripts, but the differences are immaterial to our argument. In this instance, I have used the reading from LXX according to Ralphs and Hanhart (eds. 2006). See also Menken (2001:458).

13. In a brief study carried out in Matthew for the present article, it has been found that when Matthew refers to an entity that is known historically by a specific name or title, he uses the lexical form as in Matthew 2:23, where it reads: ‘εις πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ (to a town called Nazareth) (see also Mt 1:16; 4:18; 10:2; 26:14, 36; 27:16; 27:17, 22, 33). However, when the naming of a person or an entity is still in the future (hence prophetic), Matthew uses the more prophetic form at the end of this verse in the form of κληθήσεται (see also Mt 5:9; 21:13; 23:8, 10). Exceptions occur for example in Matthew 10:25 and 27:8.

14. By ‘a sectarian referential use’, I refer to the use of the term ‘Nazarene’ to refer to a group, believed to have been adherents of Jesus himself or his disciples (O’Neill 1999:135).

resulting from conceptual blending. Such quotations ordinarily result from tracing correspondence between OT prophetic texts and NT events and reproducing the OT text almost verbatim. In such cases, there will be a fulfilment space, but without complex conceptual operations like those discussed above. In the Matthew 2:23 blend, a new perspective on the Judges 13 account emerged in that it was not merely a narration of the birth of Samson, but it was also a prophetic oracle in terms of event symbols that prefigured the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. It contains within it detail about Jesus’ childhood citizenship: Nazareth. From an orthodox reading of the text, one would scarcely have been able to relate the Judges 13 account to the birth of Jesus in Matthew. Further, insight on the word ‘Nazareth’, as used in the WS concerning Jesus, also came to light in which its semantic reference apparently could not simply and singly be tied to a gentile reference. Rather it seems to also have had religious and ritual overtones, that could have ultimately connected it to the word nazirite in the PS. The apparent blend thus encapsulates real meaning, meaning emerging from texts and context that have been blended together, producing somewhat new significance, or meaning, worthy to be qualified as inspiration. In view of such findings, conceptual blending helps us resolve the long-standing problem of the sources of Matthew’s FQs. This is not a completely new understanding of the origins of the quote, but critically, it introduces a new scientific method of understanding it and exploring it further, which may lead to a unified way of understanding the FQs in general.

Matthew’s intention did not amount to tracing a text of the very same wording in the OT. Rather he wanted his audience to be able to see the subtle semiotic relations between the PS and the apparent events in and after Jesus’ provenance (WS), and how they could be related in such a way that a prophecy and fulfilment relation could be observed. Judges 13 was then a kind of indirect prophecy of the childhood of Jesus. From this point of view, Matthew’s FQs were meant to indicate the connections, rather than act as ordinary quotations, as one may understand them today. Such quotations are therefore largely useless, as far as the textual criticism of the OT is concerned.

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The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Author’s contributions

G.M. is the sole author of this research article.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, G.M., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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