

CAN WE REPRODUCE THE EXEGESIS OF THE NEW  
TESTAMENT?  
WHY ARE WE STILL ASKING?

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Can we reproduce the exegesis of the NT? Richard Longenecker posed and answered this question in his 1969 Tyndale House lecture. His answer was that the NT writers' exegesis of OT passages largely follows contemporary Jewish methods. Since these methods go beyond strictly grammatical-historical exegesis, while we believe their interpretations to be revelation, we cannot ourselves reproduce their exegesis in other texts of the OT.<sup>1</sup> In spite of considerable discussion and debate since then, evangelicals have not achieved consensus on the issue. We are still asking the question. I would argue, however, that a certain convergence of perspective has occurred, which should be seen as encouraging a more positive answer than Longenecker was able to provide.

Most evangelical discussion of the NT interpretation of the OT has focused on the issue of its legitimacy and compatibility with inerrancy. This has been in large part due to the challenge presented by Longenecker and others in situating the NT in the context of first-century scriptural interpretation.<sup>2</sup> The conclusion reached by

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<sup>1</sup>R. N. Longenecker, "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" *TynBul* 21 (1970) 3-38, esp. 33-38; id., *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 214-20. See also id., "Who Is the Prophet Talking About? Some Reflections on the New Testament Use of the Old," *Themelios* 13 (1987) 4-8.

<sup>2</sup>Longenecker (*Biblical Exegesis*) and E. E. Ellis (*Paul's Use of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957]; id., "Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* [ed. M. J. Mulder; CRINT 2.1; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 691-725) are among the leading proponents of the view that NT exegesis is to be explained in terms of Qumran pesher and rabbinic midrash. Others would argue that the parallels are much less significant than the differences. Many of the adduced examples of rabbinic exegetical techniques in particular, may be adequately explained as reflecting general logical principles and not unique to rabbinic midrash (M. Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* [ed. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993] 637; R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989] 13). More problematic is the potential for anachronism in the use of the later

virtually all conservative evangelicals is that, however much the NT may be seen to participate in the interpretive methodologies of first-century Judaism,<sup>3</sup> the NT interpretations do not contradict the originally intended meaning of the human (OT) author.<sup>4</sup> That is, they may “go beyond” that original sense in some way, or they may give a kind of “application” of it, but they do not contradict it. (This is not so remarkable among those already committed to inerrancy, but the point of agreement needs to be emphasized.)

The disagreement is between those who insist that the NT correctly grasps the human authorial intention strictly according to grammatical-historical exegesis,<sup>5</sup> and those who see the NT as

rabbinic material as evidence for first-century exegetical practice (Hays, *Echoes*, 11). Silva therefore concludes that “its evidential value is only indirect, and thus its function is largely limited to illustrative, not probative, uses” (Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” 638).

<sup>3</sup>Even if Longenecker and Ellis are right in identifying NT examples of “pesher” or “midrash,” this does not automatically condemn NT practice according to the canons of contextual exegesis. The assumption that it does may trade on an implicit pejorative definition of “midrash as license” (Hays, *Echoes*, 13), or as “the presence of exegetical moves that do not conform to the grammatico-historical method” (Silva, “Old Testament in Paul,” 638). This definition is inaccurate, as the rabbis were quite capable of careful philological analysis and contextual interpretation. R. Kasher’s study, for example, begs the question by separating out from his definition of midrash all examples of literal and contextual exegesis found in midrash (“The Interpretation of Scripture in Rabbinic Literature,” *Mikra*, 547-94, esp. 553-60; see R. Loewe, “The ‘Plain’ Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis,” in *Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies* [ed. J. G. Weiss; London, 1964] 140-85, esp. 175-83, for the refutation of any consistent distinction in rabbinic midrash between the “derash” and the “plain” or literal meaning).

Moreover, studies of Jewish exegesis before AD 70 have argued that a concern for contextual exegesis was widespread, and found even at Qumran (D. I. Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1992]; G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?” *Themelios* 14 [1989] 89, and n. 3). Such a concern is in fact compatible with various techniques and methods of rabbinic and Qumran exegesis, which, considered abstractly, would tend to imply artificiality. Thus, for example, Longenecker identifies cases of *gezerah shewah*, in which two OT texts are brought together on the basis of analogous terminology (*Biblical Exegesis*, 97-98). One can argue that such parallels are legitimate clues to interpretation, if that interpretation pays attention to the overall context, as these instances do. As for pesher, a “this is that” form of exegesis is not fanciful if “that” (OT types, prophecies, symbols) really does speak of “this” (Christ and his people).

<sup>4</sup>Originally intended meaning is to be qualified as our best approximation through the historical context of the sense available to the original hearer or reader. See G. P. Hugenberger, “Introductory Notes on Typology,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 341 and n. 59; W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 37-38; D. McCartney and C. Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994) 275-84.

<sup>5</sup>W. Kaiser is the indefatigable champion of this position, expressed in many articles and books. See, e.g., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 106-14; *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 61-76; with M. Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, esp. chaps. 2 and 8. He argues that there is no legitimate way of finding the meaning of the OT other than through strictly

correctly identifying the divine author's intention, in the light of further revelation (thus, the "fuller sense" or "canonical interpretation").<sup>6</sup> My point is that the latter group—those who believe that the meaning that the NT finds in the OT may go beyond the immediate purview of the human author—do nevertheless contend that this meaning is a legitimate implication or extension of the human author's words and intended meaning.<sup>7</sup>

Given this common ground (concern for the original intent and context), I would like to suggest considerations which call for give-and-take from both camps, and which have consequences for whether and how we follow the exegesis of the NT.

First of all, "fuller intent" or "canonical reading" advocates may have often underestimated the extent of the human OT author's eschatological and messianic understanding. Kaiser is right to emphasize this, following such NT passages as 1 Pet 1:10-12.<sup>8</sup> In whatever manner the crux in v. 11 is to be interpreted (what the prophets were seeking to find out about their prophecies), it is clear from v. 12 (yet often missed) that "it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you." That is, it was revealed to them, and so they understood, that their words and writings were intended for the community of the Messiah (or the Promised One) at the end time. So also, Peter tells us about David in Acts 2:30-31:

And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh suffer decay.

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grammatical-historical exegesis. Hence, whenever the NT authors are offering an OT interpretation, it should be equally discernible to us from the OT. Cf. Beale's reference to studies which may show that some of the most problematic of the NT writers' interpretations are really cases of contextual exegesis ("Jesus and His Followers," 90 and n. 6).

<sup>6</sup>See Beale, "Jesus and His Followers," 392-93 and n. 20 for evangelicals holding this view. Note especially the full and carefully nuanced argument of D. J. Moo, "The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (ed. D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 179-211. Cf. also B. K. Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (ed. J. S. Feinberg and P. D. Feinberg; Chicago: Moody, 1981) 3-18; R. Nicole, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) 622-23; S. L. Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980); D. A. Oss, "Canon as Context: The Function of *Sensus Plenior* in Evangelical Hermeneutics," *Grace Theological Journal* 9 (1988) 105-27.

<sup>7</sup>As Beale says, "There are no clear examples where they have developed a meaning from the Old Testament which is inconsistent or contradictory to some aspect of the original Old Testament intention" ("Jesus and His Followers," 398 and also 393, 395, 400). Cf. Moo, "Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," 204, 210-11; J. I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 350; Waltke, "Canonical Process," 8; Silva, "Old Testament in Paul," 639-40.

<sup>8</sup>Kaiser, *Use of the Old Testament*, 18-21; id., "The Eschatological Hermeneutics of 'Evangalicalism': Promise Theology," *JETS* 13 (1970) 92-96.

Because "David knew" about God's promise to him, he could write with conscious intention about the future resurrection of the Messiah, even as he wrote in the first person, speaking for himself too (Ps 16:8-11).<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Kaiser, in spite of his important elucidation of the "informing theology," does not consistently base his messianic interpretations on the OT apart from the NT (i.e., he does not deduce it as the meaning, strictly by grammatical-historical exegesis). What he shows is that the NT interpretations can fit within the theological framework of the OT passages they treat; that they are consistent with what contextual exegesis can determine to be the human author's intention. For it is often the case that grammatical-historical exegesis alone, without the added verification or information from the NT, is not able to provide sufficient warrant for confidently deducing the implications drawn by the NT.<sup>10</sup>

Consider Ps 16:10: "For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay." By careful grammatical-historical and theological investigation, we might be able to show the possibility that David in this verse looked forward with conscious intention to speak of the resurrection of the Christ. We might even argue that David's understanding of promise theology and his own role as prophet and King would make this

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<sup>9</sup>David wrote "I . . . my . . .," even though intending to speak of the future Messiah. Yet this is not justification to presume that David could not write such psalms out of his own experience of personal faith and hope. Rather we should expect David to feel deep personal identification with his own prayer and hymn compositions, even while intending his greater Son as their ultimate referent. Kaiser explains this duality in terms of a concept of "corporate solidarity," related to W. T. Beecher's "generic prediction" (*Use of the Old Testament*, 67-68; id., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983] 67-70). Cf. 2 Sam 23:1-7, where David indicates his understanding that, in his speaking, the Spirit of the LORD was also speaking, and that this concerned his personal salvation. Regarding the resurrection, we should not presume that David was incapable of conceiving of the idea, or that he could not ground his personal hope for his own resurrection upon that of the promised Holy One. (For evidence that a concept of resurrection was present in Israel much earlier than is generally admitted in biblical scholarship, see L. J. Greenspoon, "The Origin of the Idea of Resurrection," in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* [ed. B. Halpern and J. D. Levenson; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981] 247-321.)

<sup>10</sup>In Kaiser's various examples, after providing an in-depth demonstration of the broad eschatological, promise, and messianic background to the OT passage, he proceeds to analyze the NT citation and show how it is consistent with that OT context. Kaiser's work here is valuable, but falls short of the purely grammatical-historical derivation of the NT interpretation. For him, in fact, the NT should be irrelevant for our determination of the OT meaning. See R. D. Kunjummen, "The Single Intent of Scripture—Critical Examination of a Theological Construct," *Grace Theological Journal* 7 (1986) 95, n. 50, on Kaiser's exegesis of Gen 3:15. Cf. also the useful work of G. L. Archer and G. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1983). Its examination of problematic NT text-forms of OT citations is intended to show their compatibility with the original intent of the OT, bringing out its "implications and connotations," and thus preserving inerrancy (p. xxviii). However, this is far from deriving the NT's exegesis from the OT on grammatical-historical grounds (as is clear, e.g., in the case of Eph 4:8, p. 73).

conclusion probable. But the absence of any contextual indication to take the speaker as Christ in this particular verse (or in vv. 8-11) would not permit us to claim exegetical demonstration.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, could (or would) we deduce from the OT text that the prophets (all of them) knew that the things they spoke concerning the Messiah were intended for the end time community (as 1 Pet 1:10-12 tells us)?

But now we do claim these things to be true. In fact, we confess them as certain facts about the OT time and context, even though ascertained through NT revelation. How then can this not affect our scientific historical investigation? Now we know that David understood God's promise to him in 2 Sam 7:12-16 to refer to his (and God's) eternal Son, even as he called him Lord in Ps 110:1. Now we know what David meant in Psalm 16.

Nevertheless, while taking the NT interpretation as a given, we will still expect to know better what David meant, the more rigorously and thoroughly we apply all the tools of modern exegetical study. It is still God's word through a humanly authored text.<sup>12</sup>

If, then, the NT interpretations of OT passages are legitimate guides to the true meaning of those passages, even to the humanly intended meaning,<sup>13</sup> must they not also inform the rest of our OT interpretation? They must, even to the extent that we reproduce the exegesis of the NT. This is so for two reasons, one from the NT, and one from the OT.

First, from the NT: one of the most salient features of OT interpretation in the NT is the occasional nature of its scriptural references. Citations and allusions are given only as they happen to relate to the issue at hand. C. H. Dodd's solution of identifying certain major blocks of OT text chosen for Christological exegesis has been influential, but besides being totally hypothetical, did not go far enough.<sup>14</sup> Why did many, apparently more appropriate, messianic references receive no mention, and so many that are

<sup>11</sup>This is so in spite of the messianic significance of מְשִׁיחַ ("favored one"), which Kaiser so helpfully develops. His argument still does not establish that David specifically "looked ahead" to the future "favored one," even with an assumption of an idea of corporate solidarity. See Kaiser, "The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and its Application in Acts 2:25-35 and 13:32-37," *JETS* 23 (1980) 219-29, esp. 224-26; and also id., *Uses of the Old Testament*, 25-41. So Moo contends that what Peter says "cannot be demonstrated from exegesis of the psalm" ("Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," 211).

<sup>12</sup>Thus, I do not agree with those who would jettison the grammatical-historical method. I only argue that it is inadequate for correct OT exegesis without the input of NT revelation. But with that NT guidance, contextual research can only enrich our understanding.

<sup>13</sup>There are clear cases, such as Psalm 16, where the NT tells us about David's intention. But my point does not depend on deciding whether and in which passages the meaning given by the NT interpretation was (entirely or in part) grasped by the human author.

<sup>14</sup>C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952). For a recent critique, see D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 19-22.

mentioned cited only once?<sup>15</sup> And why is the messianic understanding of the citation frequently assumed rather than argued, as the Scripture is cited to make another point (as e.g., in Romans 15 and Hebrews 1)?<sup>16</sup> Many have recognized that there is only one sufficient explanation for such “haphazard” references: an underlying rationale that sees the whole OT—all of God’s dealings with Israel—as having their ultimate meaning and purpose in speaking of Christ and his people.<sup>17</sup> This rationale can be analyzed

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<sup>15</sup>Much of the response to Dodd has revived the idea of “testimonia,” or collections of OT Scriptures strewn together especially for apologetic purposes. While there may be some evidence for the existence of such early traditions, they are nevertheless insufficient to supply a rationale for selection and omission. See D. M. Smith, Jr., “The Use of the Old Testament in the New,” in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays* (ed. J. M. Efrid; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972) 25-30; K. Snodgrass, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New,” in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation* (ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) 422-23. For the view that the reason for the selection was their familiarity from the synagogue liturgy, see D. G. McCartney, “The New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament,” in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic* (ed. H. M. Conn; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988) 102-3, and the references cited there. Or perhaps we have underestimated the extent to which the choice of OT texts was controlled by theological and pastoral concerns of the authors as they dealt with the issues in their communities (Hays, *Echoes*, 162-63). In either case, there would therefore be nothing more especially “messianic” about the chosen texts as opposed to others which might have been appealed to.

<sup>16</sup>Hays thus argues that the messianic interpretation was already an established tradition—an “exegetical convention”—in early Christianity before the writing of the NT (“Christ Prays the Psalms: Paul’s Use of an Early Christian Exegetical Convention,” in *The Future of Christology* [ed. A. J. Malherbe and W. A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1993] 123, 127-29). Similarly, Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 177-85.

<sup>17</sup>Juel’s study (*Messianic Exegesis*) is an example of the growing stress on recognizing a broader base of OT exegesis than is apparent on the surface of the NT. He argues that messianic exegesis developed by analogy and correspondences of wording from certain key passages, such as Psalm 89. However, this very extensibility of messianic exegesis would need to presume the operation of a set of controlling principles, and this can itself provide the simplest explanation for NT exegetical practice. As Hays contends, Israel’s historical experience of national failure combined with the divine promise of restoration to produce a hermeneutical framework. Thus, for example, the royal lament psalms

would be construed—by most Jews, not only by Christians—as paradigmatic for Israel’s corporate national sufferings in the present time, and their characteristic triumphant conclusions would be read as pointers to God’s eschatological restoration of Israel. Thus “David” in these psalms becomes a symbol for the whole people and—at the same time—a prefiguration of the future Anointed One . . . who will be the heir of the promises and the restorer of the throne. (Hays, “Christ Prays the Psalms,” 130)

The whole book of Psalms, then, could be viewed as “the Messiah’s prayerbook,” as the Christ is assumed to be “the true and ultimate speaker of Israel’s laments and praises” (ibid., 129). This is also the opinion of B. Waltke, who says that “in all fairness” we cannot conclude that the NT intends to limit the psalms which have reference to Christ. Rather it points to an underlying assumption that the whole Psalter is to be so interpreted (“Canonical Process,” 7). See also R. Nicole, “Patrick Fairbairn and Biblical Hermeneutics as Related to the Quotations of the Old Testament in the New,” in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 773. He argues for this position from the work of Fairbairn on typology.

and seen to involve certain identifiable principles, such as: typological (historical) correspondence;<sup>18</sup> an eschatological (forward-looking) perspective for OT authors; and identity between Messiah and his people.

Thus, Paul could presume to cite Scripture as everywhere addressing the church (see, e.g., Rom 4:23-24; 15:4; 1 Cor 9:8-10; 10:11). Notice that Paul does not characteristically say that the OT Scriptures were written "for our sake also," as he does regarding the text describing Abraham's personal justification by faith. Rather, his repeated assertion is that the OT Scriptures were "written for our instruction." Not, of course, to suggest that they thereby had no significance for the original hearers or readers, but that their primary purpose was for us. Why? Because we are those "upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor 10:11).<sup>19</sup> Therefore, they address us not just in application, but in their true meaning and intent.<sup>20</sup>

Second, the OT text itself leads us to reproduce the exegesis of the NT, as we recognize the principle of contextual analogy. Knowing that in Ps 16:10-11 David is speaking as Messiah about the resurrection, we will find that implied as well in Ps 17:15, with its similar description of the beatific vision and its use of potential resurrection terminology (יָקִיץ, "awake"). So also Ps 21:4-6, including the king's request: "He asked life of thee, Thou didst give it to him, Length of days forever and ever." All of these as Davidic psalms participate in the same informing theology, and allow us to see David's own experience heightened, as he consciously refers it to the Christ.

The lament psalms, among the most frequently quoted in the NT, often employ figurative language, intended to refer to Christ's

<sup>18</sup>Fairbairn argued that "nothing could be more arbitrary" than to limit the typological principle to the cases which happen to be attested in the NT, and to exclude the many OT characters and events which play an even more prominent role (*The Typology of Scripture*, Vol. 1 [reprint; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900] 23, as cited by Hugenberger, "Introductory Notes on Typology," 339). Cf. E. P. Clowney: "Only the lack of hermeneutical method can shut us up to recognizing types only where the New Testament itself explicitly recognizes them" (*Preaching and Biblical Theology* [Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1975] 111-12).

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Hays: "All that God has ever done in the past converges toward the eschatological community, and all past words of Scripture find their sense rooted in the present graced time" (*Echoes*, 170).

<sup>20</sup>Longenecker agrees that this was indeed the perspective of the NT authors (a "Christocentric perspective" on all OT redemptive history and Scripture; *Biblical Exegesis*, 208-9). He holds, however, that this may as likely not reflect anything of the original OT intent and context. They worked back from their experience of Jesus to construct their pattern of OT "prefigurements," a procedure that is therefore not appropriate for modern interpreters ("Who is the Prophet Talking About?" 5, 8). Hays argues, on the other hand, that while original intention in the sense of "historical scrupulousness" is not the primary goal of Pauline exegesis, it does function as a mutually interpretive relationship, a "dialectical intertextuality," that appeals to the "allusive complexity" of that original divine revelation (*Echoes*, 155-56, 176-78). This mode of interpretation is inseparable from the formulation of the gospel, and therefore requires our emulation (*ibid.*, 182). Only so, following the guidance of the Spirit, can we discover the true meaning of the OT text (*ibid.*, 184).

death and resurrection. This is perhaps most obvious and accepted in the famous description of Christ's suffering in Psalm 22. But why have we not then gone on to develop the implications of the deliverance described in the latter part of this psalm for the parallels in other psalms, most evidently in Psalm 102? Compare, for instance, Ps 22:30—"posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord"—and 102:18—"This will be written for the generation to come [or, the last generation]; That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD." The Messianic text of Ps 102:18 is enhanced by the context (vv. 12-22); see vv. 21-22: ". . . When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD" (cf. also Heb 12:22-23).

This suggests that we give a Messianic interpretation also to the similar Ps 48:13-14 and 71:14-21. We find Ps 78:2 explained in Matt 13:35 as "spoken through the prophet," and "fulfilled" as the words of Christ. Ps 40:7-8 are cited in Heb 10:10: "Behold I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me; . . ." The next verses in the psalm, 9-10 ("I proclaim glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; . . .") are not quoted in the NT. But they closely parallel Ps 22:22 ("I will tell of Thy name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee"), which is cited in Heb 2:12 as Christ's proclamation in the eschatological "great congregation," i.e., the church. So also, v. 2 of Psalm 40 ("He brought me up out of the pit of destruction") should be understood as Christ's deliverance from death, especially by comparison with Ps 69:2, which, while again not quoted in the NT, occurs in the context of the psalm with the most verses cited in the NT. (Also cf. Jonah 2; Ps 18:4-6.) Then all those psalms have implications for our understanding the present reign of Christ in Psalms 96-98, where the LORD is proclaimed as the reigning and coming judge, whose salvation has been displayed before the nations. This is further confirmed by the ascription of Ps 97:7 to the exaltation of Christ in Heb 1:6, "And let all the angels of God worship him."<sup>21</sup>

It is also important to recognize the possibility of metalepsis, in which some of the most important features for the NT's interpretation occur in the immediate OT context of the verse that is actually cited.<sup>22</sup> Hays identifies Paul's reference to Ps 18:49 in Rom 15:9 ("Therefore I will give thanks to thee among the nations, O LORD, And I will sing praises to thy name") as an example of this technique. For the next verse of the psalm (though not cited), v. 50, says "He gives great deliverance to his king, And shows

<sup>21</sup>The more exact matching of the citation with the LXX of Deut 32:43 does not restrict its relevance for Psalm 97. Whether or not that line in the LXX reflects the original, it is probably related in some way to Ps 97:7 by intertextual development within the OT. The contexts of both of the OT passages are thematically parallel.

<sup>22</sup>Hays, *Echoes*, 20, 88-90. Silva refers to the "greatly compressed" character of rabbinic interpretation, in which much more may be alluded to than immediately meets the eye ("Old Testament in Paul," 640; id., "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Text Form and Authority," in *Scripture and Truth*, 160).



lovingkindness to his Messiah, To David and his seed forever." Hays argues, moreover, that Paul is actually alluding to the whole narrative of the psalm. Its description of David/Christ being delivered from death and his enemies supports Paul's argument in the context of Romans 15 (cf. esp. vv. 3, 8).<sup>23</sup>

Many who would admit that we can reproduce the NT writers' exegesis of the OT, nevertheless hesitate to recommend that we do so, fearing past abuses.<sup>24</sup> But why must we fear that this is warrant to find anything anywhere in Scripture? What is warrant to do is to find Christ in the OT exactly as the NT does. We have clear guidelines and safeguards if we: 1) follow its theological and typological principles;<sup>25</sup> 2) make careful use of analogy with unambiguously identified messianic references; and 3) always seek to inform and deepen this understanding with contextual exegesis. This is not an optional exercise if we would be instructed by the whole counsel of God concerning his Christ and if we would hear Christ as he speaks in all the Scriptures.

Why then do evangelicals continue to produce so many excellent textbooks and studies on hermeneutics, with yet hardly a word on how students should learn biblical interpretation from the practice of the apostles?<sup>26</sup> Why do we still often speak of the NT "use" of the

<sup>23</sup>Hays, "Christ Prays the Psalms," 134-35. Paul's point is to encourage us to hope in the midst of following Christ's example of suffering for the sake of others, with the same goal as Christ's: the unity of his people in shared praise to God. Hays also points out how the (unexpressed) context of Paul's quote from Psalm 69 in v. 3 contributes to this message (ibid., 131-33).

<sup>24</sup>For example, even after Moo's positive answer to the question of our reproducing apostolic exegesis, he concludes "we should be very cautious about suggesting 'deeper meanings' in the text that are not clearly enunciated within Scripture" ("Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," 210). With this idea of caution, we might not dare to touch it with a ten-foot pole. Yet, as Beale notes, is not such care called for in all our biblical interpretation ("Jesus and His Followers," 93)? The implicit logical fallacy sometimes at work here is identified by Hugenberger: "the abuse of an interpretive method does not disprove its validity" ("Introductory Notes on Typology," 336).

<sup>25</sup>Hugenberger's article ("Introductory Notes on Typology") provides a succinct statement of principles and safeguards for a broad application of typology. Beale offers "a framework of five hermeneutical and theological presuppositions" ("Jesus and His Followers," 90). Against this, cf. Ellis, who argues that we should not pursue the "logical extension of NT patterns" as a guide for hermeneutics (*Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 134). But, such a "logical extension" is precisely what is needed.

<sup>26</sup>G. R. Osborne's *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991) is subtitled *A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. It indeed conveys a wealth of information on grammatical-historical, contextual exegesis, moving on to theological formulation and homiletics. Yet the whole preoccupation of the NT writers in their OT interpretation—the Scriptures speak of Christ and his people—is virtually absent. A few remarks on "the Christological method" essentially characterize it as "subjective speculation and reductionism" (ibid., 280).

*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993), by W. W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg, and R. L. Hubbard, Jr., has more claim to comprehensiveness in devoting most of a chapter to this issue under the title "The Goal of Interpretation." Their treatment, however, results in more questions than guidance, which reflects the ambivalence of contemporary evangelicalism on the issue. While admitting a divine

OT? Those NT writers do not see themselves as only “using” or “applying” or “appropriating” the separate meaning of the OT for their new circumstances. They proclaimed what it meant. That meaning was what the Lord himself had explained (διερμηνεύω) to them (Luke 24:27) and opened their minds to understand (v. 45) concerning himself. It was the meaning which was in all the Scriptures (v. 27), and which must (δεῖ) find its fulfillment in him (v. 44). Dare we say that we have not been foolish and slow of heart to believe it?

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intention in Scripture (ibid., 134), they tentatively argue that we are limited to what can be determined of the human author's intention (ibid., 126, 132-33). They observe the failure of “fuller sense” proponents to develop a practical methodology, and conclude that there are no means to determine and validate such a sense (ibid., 138-39). What then of the NT authors' characteristic exegesis? It is the finding of new meaning or significance in the light of their experience of Christ, and hence no different from what we can do (ibid., 131, 144-45). But then, the NT writers (in so far as they do this) have nothing to teach us about how to discover the meaning which either the human or divine author (the Holy Spirit) intended in the OT text.

*Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, by D. McCartney and C. Clayton (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), is virtually unique among books on biblical interpretation. The authors argue that apostolic exegesis, in both goals and methods, should be determinative for our own exegetical methodology, and clarifies the limits of grammatical-historical interpretation (ibid., 67-71). On this basis they offer some helpful principles and controls for following the pattern of NT exegesis (ibid., 72, 157-64). However, the implications of their position, as of the approach argued in this paper, demand a textbook development of those principles, and a mapping of the specific exegetical paths laid out for us in the NT. Perhaps it will be their next book.