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THREE
VIEWS
ON THE

NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



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Jonathan Lunde, general editor

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COUNTERPOINTS
BIBLE & THEOLOGY

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Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament

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Chapter One

SINGLE MEANING, UNIFIED REFERENTS

*Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the
Old Testament by the New Testament*

Chapter One

SINGLE MEANING, UNIFIED REFERENTS

Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the Old Testament by the New Testament

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

One of the key debates of the past four decades has been the problem of identifying the meaning of Scripture for our day and times. Should that meaning be limited to what the human writer of Scripture obtained as a result of standing in the revelatory counsel of God, or were there additional, or even alternative, meanings to be found that God somehow quietly incorporated into the text in some mysterious way, thus hiding them from the author, or perhaps even new meanings that the audience brought to the text on their own?¹ This whole debate has been no small tempest in a teapot, for it is also tied in with several contemporary philosophical and literary movements of our own day and age, affecting the entire theological community, including, of course, many of the evangelical scholars.²

1. One of my earlier articles on this topic was, "The Single Intent of Scripture," in *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer (Nashville: Nelson, 1978), 123–41.

2. C. K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," *JTS* 48 (1947): 155–69; D. L. Bock "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New," *BSac* 142 (1985): 306–19; E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (1957), reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); E. D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (NovTSup 2; Leiden: Brill, 1965); R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in*

Early in my career of teaching the Bible I ran across this assessment of the problem by Bishop J. C. Ryle (1818–1900):

I hold it to be a most dangerous mode of interpreting Scripture, to regard everything which its words may be tortured into meaning as a lawful interpretation of the words. I hold undoubtedly that there is a mighty depth in all Scripture, and that in this respect it stands alone. But I also hold that the words of Scripture were intended to have one definite sense, and that our first object should be to discover that sense, and adhere rigidly to it. I believe that, as a general rule, the words of Scripture are intended to have, like all other language, one plain definite meaning, and that to say words *do* mean a thing, merely because they *can* be tortured into meaning it, is a most dishonourable and dangerous way of handling Scripture.³

I could not agree more heartily; for this has become the standard by which I not only interpret the text as a biblical teacher, but it is the same view I urgently press other evangelicals to adopt.

More frequently, however, there has emerged a strong consensus running in evangelical work in this area that tends to regard the majority of the OT quotations in the NT as “hav[ing] no semblance of predictive intention.”⁴ Donald A. Hagner continued:

St. Matthew's Gospel (NovTSup 18; Leiden: Brill, 1967); Donald A. Hagner, “The Old Testament in the New Testament,” in *Interpreting the Word of God: Festschrift in Honor of Steven Barabas*, ed. Samuel J. Schultz and Morris A. Inch (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976): 78–104; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985); Richard N. Longenecker, “Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?” *TynBul* 21 (1970): 3–38; I. Howard Marshall, “An Assessment of Recent Developments,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture; Essays in Honor of Barnabas Lindars*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988): 9ff.; Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Sheffield, Almond Press, 1983); Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Moisés Silva “Old Testament in Paul,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 630–42; Bruce K. Waltke, “Is It Right to Read the New Testament into the Old?” *Christianity Today* 27 (1983): 77.

3. Bishop J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 2:383.

4. Hagner, “The Old Testament,” 92. There are, of course, a good number of prophecies that have an undeniably predictive intention, such as Isa 9:1–2; Joel 2:28–32; Mic 5:2; Zech 9:9.

All of this leads us to the recognition of what has been called the *sensus plenior*, or “fuller sense,” of the Old Testament Scripture. To be aware of *sensus plenior* is to realize that there is the possibility of more significance to an Old Testament passage than was consciously apparent to the original author, and more than can be gained by strict grammatico-historical exegesis. Such is the nature of divine inspiration that the authors of Scripture were themselves often not conscious of the fullest significance and final application of what they wrote. This fuller sense of the Old Testament can be seen only in retrospect and in the light of the New Testament fulfillment.⁵

It is this wide acceptance of various versions of *sensus plenior* among contemporary evangelicals that renders this discussion so crucial for our day.

But there are several other important issues that relate in some way to this central question—issues such as (1) the extent to which the NT authors also used ancient Jewish exegetical and interpretive methods in their use of the OT; (2) the NT authors’ awareness or disregard of the larger OT context of the passages they quote; (3) the appropriate understanding of the function of typology; and (4) the question of whether contemporary interpreters may replicate the NT writers’ techniques of appropriating and applying the OT Scriptures. After an initial discussion of *sensus plenior*, therefore, I will move to discuss each of these related areas in turn. I will conclude with my perspective on the legitimacy of contemporary Christians employing the same interpretive approach to the OT as was employed by first-century Christians.

CAN WE APPEAL TO *SENSUS PLENIOR*?

Father Raymond E. Brown published his dissertation in 1955,⁶ in which he gave a fixed definition as to what a *sensus plenior* meaning was. Brown defined it this way:

5. Hagner, “The Old Testament,” 92.

6. Father Brown, of course, was not the first one to speak of *sensus plenior*. That distinction belongs to F. Andre Fernandez, who coined the term in his article “Hermeneutica,” *Institutiones Biblicae Scholis Accommodata*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1927), 306.

The *sensus plenior* is that additional, deeper meaning, intended by God, but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation⁷

Later he clarified matters further by candidly instructing interpreters:

Let us apply the term *sensus plenior* ["fuller sense"] to that meaning of his [the author's] text which by the normal rules of exegesis would not have been within his clear awareness of intention, but which by other criteria we can determine as having been intended by God.⁸

Since Brown takes it out of the hands of the human authors who stood in the counsel of God, the question is: In whose hands now does the final court of appeal rest for discovering the authoritative meaning of a biblical text? Roman Catholic scholars, of course, can fall back on the magisterium of the church, to the ecclesial tradition. But to what can Protestants appeal that matches such additional grounds of appeal?

Norbert Lohfink,⁹ a Jesuit scholar, tried to find a way to get at this additional divine meaning that was free of the writer's understanding, which ordinarily was to be found in the grammar and syntax of the author's words. At first he went to the "final redactor" of Scripture, the one who had allegedly placed the books of the Bible in their present canonical shape, but then he shifted his ground to appeal to that which the whole Bible taught. Thus, above, behind, and beyond that which grammatico-historical exegesis established as the author's original meaning of the text, there was another meaning: the one that the whole Bible taught.

7. Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore, MD: St. Mary's Univ. Press, 1955), 92. Also see idem, "The History and Development of the Theory of *Sensus Plenior*," *CBQ* 15 (1953): 141–62.

8. Raymond E. Brown, "The *Sensus Plenior* in the Last Ten Years," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 268–69.

9. Norbert Lohfink, *The Christian Meaning of the Old Testament*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968), 32–49.

But what was there in the whole Bible that could not be found in its individual books or in the exegesis of individual passages using the standard tools such as grammar, syntax, and the like? Trapped by his own logic, Lohfink turned, as so many evangelicals now tend to do, to the theory of *sensus plenior* in an attempt to get *beyond* the writer of Scripture. Whereas the older form of literary criticism had tried to sort out the sources that allegedly were used by the writers of Scripture in an attempt to get *behind* the biblical text, now the goal was to go *beyond* the text as it was written. God, who is viewed in this analysis as the principal author, is depicted as supplying to later interpreters of the text additional and subsequent meanings, thereby relegating the human authors of Scripture to, at best, a secondary level, if not a nuisance for getting at the really deep things of God.

But in a rather brilliant review of this theory, coming from the same Catholic side of the aisle, Bruce Vawter recognized *sensus plenior* as abandoning the old scholastic *analogy of instrumental causality*. He explained:

... if this fuller or deeper meaning was reserved by God to himself and did not enter into the writer's purview at all, do we not postulate a Biblical word effected outside the control of the human author's will and judgment ... and therefore not produced through a truly *human* instrumentality? If, as in scholastic definitions, Scripture is the *conscriptio* [writing together] of God and man, does not the acceptance of a *sensus plenior* deprive this alleged scriptural sense of one of its essential elements, to the extent that logically it cannot be called scriptural at all?¹⁰

The effect of Vawter's argument was to declare that the *sensus plenior* meaning (despite its high claims for being a deeper meaning from God himself to the interpreter) simply was not "Scripture" in the sense that it came from what was "written." That is to say, if the deeper meaning was one that was not located in the words, sentences, and paragraphs of the text, then it was not "Scripture," which in the Greek is called *graphie*, "writing" (i.e., that which stands written in the text)! Moreover, if this

10. Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Theological Resources; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 115.

“fuller sense” opened up new vistas for the interpreter, how did it also escape the sacred writers of Scripture? Could not the same process that, according to this theory, aided the interpreter likewise have aided those who were writing the words declared to be from God? As Vern S. Poythress also noted (even though he admitted his view had “certain affinities” with the idea of *sensus plenior*), this theory left “an opening for the entrance of later Church tradition,”¹¹ and the addition of new dogmas, rather than just the development of the biblical canon. That, of course, is precisely the point noted here thus far.

On the evangelical side of the aisle, it is interesting to see how a slipperiness in interpretation developed — one that slides from a search for “more *significance*” to eventually seeing this “significance” as one of the *meanings*, albeit a deeper one, of the text. Graeme Goldsworthy, for example, was most candid in summing up his view on this matter. He opined:

The *sensus plenior* of an OT text, or indeed of the whole OT, cannot be found by exegesis of the texts themselves. Exegesis aims at understanding what was intended by the author, the *sensus literalis*. But there is a deeper meaning in the mind of the divine author which emerges in further revelation, usually the NT. This approach embraces typology but also addresses the question of how a text may have more than one meaning. While typology focuses upon historical events which foreshadow later events, *sensus plenior* focuses on the use of words.¹²

Such statements are confusing. If this deeper meaning cannot be found in an exegesis of the OT text, then how can it be found in the “words” vis-à-vis typology, which focuses on “events”? If the meaning of the words must await their further elaboration in the NT, then we have to answer two questions:

11. Vern S. Poythress, “Divine Meaning of Scripture,” originally in *WTJ* 48 (1986): 241–79, but reprinted in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Greg K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 108, n. 25.

12. Graeme Goldsworthy, “The Relationship of the Old Testament and New Testament,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 88.

(1) Were not the original audiences, to whom the OT writers addressed these words, left out of these, indeed, of *any* deeper meanings? And (2), if there is no signal from the original writers that more was stored in the words than appeared on the surface meaning, would this not be an example of what we call *eisegesis*, i.e., a reading backwards from the NT into the OT texts new meanings not discoverable by the rules of language and exegesis?

It is to be admitted that the search for the authority status of the *significance* attached to a text is a serious problem and one worthy of our best efforts and explanations. E. D. Hirsch's famous distinction between "meaning" and "significance" brought some immediate relief.¹³ Hirsch declared that "meaning" was all that the human author expressed directly, indirectly, tacitly, or allusively in his own words. But "significance" named a relationship that we as readers drew as we associated what was said in the author's meaning with some other situation, person, institution, or the like. Meaning was *unchanging*, according to Hirsch; significance was *changeable* and must change since the interests and questions asked relate the texts to many new situations, persons, institutions, and scores of other relationships.

The question of the ignorance of the writers of Scripture with regard to their own meanings, which presumably permits interpreters to find "deep meanings," or different senses, than the grammar or syntax reveals, still persists. Hirsch once again addressed some of the most pressing questions:

How can an author mean something he did not mean? The answer to that question is simple. It is not possible to mean what one does not mean, though it is very possible to mean what one is not conscious of meaning. That is the entire issue in the argument based on authorial ignorance. That a man may not be conscious of all that he means is no more remarkable than that he may not be conscious of all he does. There is a difference between meaning and consciousness of meaning, and since meaning is an affair of the consciousness, one can say more precisely that there is a difference between consciousness

13. E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), xi, 8.

and self-consciousness. Indeed, when an author's meaning is complicated, he cannot possibly at a given moment be paying attention to all its complexities.¹⁴

Even Hirsch seems to contradict himself, for he asserts that "an author cannot mean something he did not mean" and yet that same author can "mean what he is not conscious of meaning" and that about which he has no awareness. Which way does Hirsch wish to argue? Furthermore, if what the author writes is a result of a disclosure of God's revelation, how can he write what he is not conscious of writing, unless we incorrectly espouse some form of a mechanical dictation theory of divine communication to the writers of Scripture? Still, Hirsch's distinction between the unchangeable *meaning* of the original author and the various applications of this meaning's *significance* is important—a distinction to which we will return.

DOES A CANONICAL READING SUPPORT *SENSUS PLENIOR*?

It might seem that advocates of the *sensus plenior* method of interpretation are simply defending the Reformation principle that "Scripture interprets Scripture" (*scriptura scripturam interpretatur*). When we ask, "What did it mean?" Kevin Vanhoozer has observed that it all depends on what "it" refers to. His plea is for a "thick" rather than a "thin" interpretation of biblical passages that involves the whole Christian Bible. He argues:

To interpret isolated passages of the OT as evidence of the religious or cultural history of Israel is to give "thin" descriptions only. . . . To read the Bible canonically is to read the Bible as a unified communicative act, that is, as a complex, multi-leveled speech act of a single divine author. . . . "Thin" descriptions are the result of using too narrow a context to interpret an intended action.¹⁵

14. *Ibid.*, 22.

15. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 61.

This comes closer to solving the problem of getting at the meaning of the text, for we must not act as if God had not given the total canon of Scripture. My only caution would be that there is a place or time in our exegesis at which we introduce the later canonical perspective; it can only come *after* exegesis has established the meaning of the OT text, *before* we go on to see how the divine revelation on this same area of teaching fills out this truth in the subsequent progress of revelation in the later books of the Bible.

In that sense, I too would warn against a premature “thin” interpretation, for I would *not* try to “thicken” my initial exegesis of the text by leap-frogging immediately over to the NT to get right into the “deep things” of God before working on the exegesis of the OT passage. Why not use first of all the divine revelation found in the books that *preceded* the selected text we are reading or studying as the context and “informing theology” that could have the first input to “thicken” the meaning? Why does the “thickening” have to stem only from the *subsequent* revelation? We need to give full weight to earlier revelation and not allow a particular understanding of later revelation to mitigate the force of God’s message to early generations.

Another canonically oriented principle that may be understood by some to entail *sensus plenior* is “The Analogy of Faith.” A clear explanation of the function and use of the method of the Analogy of Faith came from John F. Johnson:

To put it tersely: *analogia* or *regula fidei* is to be understood as “the clear Scripture” itself; and this refers to articles of faith found in those passages which deal with individual doctrines expressly (*sedes doctrinae*). Individual doctrines are to be drawn from the *sedes doctrinae* [chair doctrinal-teaching-passages], and must be judged by them. Any doctrine not drawn from passages which expressly deal with the doctrine under consideration is not to be accepted as Scriptural.¹⁶

Since the NT testimony to Jesus is “clearer” than that which is found in the OT, one could characterize the NT authors’ use of

16. John F. Johnson, “*Analogia Fidei* as Hermeneutical Principle,” *Springfielder* 36 (1972–73): 249–59; esp. 253.

the OT as implying *sensus plenior* meanings on the grounds that these are inevitable and appropriate functions of the Analogy of Faith dictum.

However, it must also be carefully noted that when the Reformers affirmed that “Scripture interprets Scripture” along the lines of the “Analogy of Faith,” they were not erecting an absolute or another external standard by which all Scripture itself had to be measured. If that had been their goal and intention in introducing these two methods of handling Scripture, that standard would have reversed the hard-fought-for and recently acquired independent authority of Scripture and returned it once again to a new set of traditions. Alternatively, it would have amounted to an appeal to a new “canon within a canon,” which would act as a super-interpreter or arbitrator over competing views of the Scripture. Instead, the Reformers aimed these two methods against the tyrannical demands and stranglehold that *tradition* up to that point had exercised over the text of the Bible. As Bishop Marsh warned, “*Analogia fidei* was intended solely to deny that tradition was the interpreter of the Bible.”¹⁷

In addition, Johnson correctly limits these two principles to teaching doctrine from “chair” passages where that doctrine was most fully developed. But neither he nor we would use either method to sanction the all-too-prevalent practice of using the NT as an “open sesame” for OT predictions or teachings. Nor should either of these principles be used as another “canon within a canon,” thereby leveling the whole Bible out to what was the most recent revelation and thereby demeaning the truth unveiled and disclosed from God in its earlier forms.

ALLEGED NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL SUPPORT FOR *SENSUS PLENIOR*

To find further support in favor of the *sensus plenior* approach to Scripture, scholars will oftentimes appeal to NT passages that appear to affirm the ignorance of the OT human

17. Herbert Marsh, *A Course of Lectures Containing a Description and Systematic Arrangement of the Several Branches of Divinity* (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1815), 3:16.

authors regarding the ultimate meaning and reference of their words. The following three passages illustrate these attempts.

Did the Biblical Authors Write Better Than They Knew? (1 Peter 1:10–12)

Invariably, evangelical advocates of *sensus plenior*, still desirous of finding a deeper meaning in the text of the Bible, appeal to 1 Peter 1:10–12 in order to show the possibility of some type of human ignorance on the part of the writers of Scripture as they wrote their books under the direction of God, presumably creating a divine vacuum for a possible later infilling from God. The text reads:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.¹⁸

But as I have argued previously,¹⁹ this text does not support a theory that “the authors of Scripture wrote better than

18. All biblical citations are from the TNIV unless otherwise stated. The RSV, NASB, and the ESV all render the Greek *eis tina e poion kairon* as “what person or what time [emphasis mine] the Spirit of Christ [in the OT prophets] was indicating when they spoke of the Messiah.” Wayne Grudem has a long note earnestly contending for the fact that the prophets did not know the person they were speaking about (1 Peter [TNIV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 74–75). He argues that *poios* could not mean “what kind of,” but only meant “what?” Therefore it would be redundant to have *tina* also mean “what?” Thus, *poios* must mean “what person.” That however was the point; the grammarians said it was tautological! Moreover, if Grudem is correct, why did the prophets say they knew five things about this person if they could not know him?

19. Kaiser, “Single Intent,” 125.

they knew." What 1 Peter 1:10–12 does affirm is that the writers of Scripture "searched intently" for the *time* these things would take place. The Greek phrase states, *eis tina e poion kai-ron*, "unto what, or what manner of time" it was when these things named here in this text would be accomplished. The point is that *tina e poion* form what Greek grammarians refer to as a "tautology for emphasis,"²⁰ both modifying the word *kairon*, "time."

Critical to this whole argument is the way that *tina* is translated; it should *not* be rendered as "what person," as several translations have it.²¹ Accordingly, this passage does *not* teach that the prophets of old were oblivious or ignorant of the exact *meaning* of what they wrote and predicted. Instead, they wished they also had knowledge of the *time* when the five things that 1 Peter 1:10–12 said these prophets announced: (1) they were predicting the coming of Messiah (v. 11); (2) they knew Messiah would need to suffer (v. 11); (3) they knew Messiah would achieve glory; (4) it would come after he had suffered (v. 11); and (5) they knew that what they wrote was not limited to the pre-Christian days, but they would have relevance for audiences beyond their day (v. 12).

Thus, it is not a case of writing better than they knew or even of writing what they were not conscious of saying. Instead, they wrote what God told them and they meant what they claimed God had said.

20. This view of a "tautology for emphasis" is the view held by the following grammarians and exegetes: F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, rev. and trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), 155; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1923), 735–36; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), 691; C. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on 1 Peter* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark), 107–8; and E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 134–38. Richard Schultz has called my attention to the same construction, though in reverse order, in Dionysius (or Longinus): *poia de kai tis aute*, "what and what manner of road is this?" (*On the Sublime*, 13.2 in *The Loeb Classical Library*, Aristotle XXIII, 199 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995]).

21. Cf. the translations in the RSV, NASB, ESV, Berkeley, Amplified, and the NEB footnote.

Did the Authors of Scripture Deny They Understood the Prophets or Their Own Words? (2 Peter 1:19–21)

Another text, to which some have appealed to defend a *sensus plenior* approach to Scripture, is 2 Peter 1:19–21. The text reads:

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own *interpretation* [or better: "loosing"] of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (emphasis mine)

Some argue from this text that the prophets did not always understand, nor were they able to interpret their own words as they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Yet the argument made by Peter was exactly the opposite point: Peter had just claimed in verse 16 of that same context, "we did not follow cleverly devised stories," but we were "eyewitnesses" of Jesus' glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. That is why "we . . . have the prophetic message as something completely reliable [or secure]" found in the OT prophecies (v. 19).

Since prophecy did not originate in the free human creation of messages or by the overt will of human beings, but came as the Holy Spirit moved these ancient writers to write what they wrote, so the NT writers' "loosing" or "freeing" (Greek: *epilyseos*) of those same words was guided, not by their own wills or ideas, but by that same powerful illuminating Spirit that could bring great joy to the hearts of all who would receive it.

The substantive *epilysis* has no other examples in the NT or the Septuagint. In Classical Greek it means a "freeing" or "loosing"—a sense evinced in its cognate verbal form in Mark 4:34, where it means "to set at liberty, to let go, to loose." Only secondarily did it come to be translated "to explain, unfold, interpret." But if this secondary meaning is accepted here, it would claim too much for all parties in this debate, for it would mean that *all* prophetic writings were closed to their writers.

Moreover, it cannot mean “interpretation,” as the TNIV renders it above, for how then could Peter urge his people to give heed to those same OT prophecies, which are as a “light shining in a dark place”? There would be no light on this basis. It would be as if Peter said in a contradictory manner, “give heed to the light shining in a dark place,” because no prophet understood or could explain what he said or wrote, despite the fact that they were being borne along by the Holy Spirit! That “light” would have been darkness and the word would have been enigmatic.

Did Caiaphas Unwittingly Prophecy? (John 11:49–52)

In one final attempt to show that prophets can and did speak “better than they knew,” appeal is made to the high priest Caiaphas in John 11:49–52, which reads this way:

Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. (emphasis mine)

Caiaphas’s judgment about his colleagues was most accurate: “You know nothing at all!” But as Rudolf Stier wittily noted, “What better, then, [did Caiaphas] know?”²² His was a speech of political expediency: “It is better to let Jesus be a sacrificial lamb and let him take the rap personally for all the agitation and unrest in Jerusalem rather than having this whole thing blow up in our faces and have the wrath of Rome fall on our entire nation.”

However, note carefully that it was John’s inspired commentary that picked up Caiaphas’s cynical remark of political correctness and who then turned it into an authoritative word from God. True, John said the high priest “prophesied,” but that

22. Rudolf Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1865), 6:56.

word must have quotes around it, for had not John picked up the words and turned them around against Caiaphas, we would never so much as heard of these words. Accordingly, these cynical and ironic words are not to be classified along with alleged examples of divinely authorized, unintentional prophecies, as Strack and Billerbeck have argued in their comments on this passage. Nor is this text a proof that the prophets of old belonged to a category proposed by Rabbi Eleazar (ca A.D. 270), who argued: "No prophets have known what they prophesied. Only Moses and Elijah knew." Or, "Samuel, the master of the prophets, did not know what he prophesied."²³

But Caiaphas illustrates another process: one where he says in his own cool, calculated way what was politically savvy for his day, but also one in which his words were turned against him by the Holy Spirit to announce exactly what he and most of his nation had sorely misunderstood and denounced. Jesus indeed was that sacrificial Lamb of God whose blood had to be shed for the sins of the Jewish nation and for the sins of the world (John 3:16; 1 Tim 4:10). This view accorded with what John later explained: "Caiaphas was the one who had *advised* [not 'predicted' or 'prophesied'] the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people" (John 18:14, emphasis mine).

Caiaphas's truth-intention/assertion (v. 50) is therefore to be sharply contrasted with the application and *significance* that John found (v. 51) in those hardened, bitter, and cynical words—words that were all the more newsworthy, though aimed in the wrong direction, since Caiaphas was high priest that year. Thus, John seized Caiaphas's remark from its parochial ethnocentricity and its provincialism and turned it toward the universal implications of the death of Jesus (v. 52). Rather than retaining Caiaphas's phrase that this handing Jesus over to the officials was "on behalf of the people" (v. 50), John deliberately expanded it to correspond to the purposes of Jesus' death on the cross, viz., it was now "on behalf of the nation," as well as on behalf of the "children of God scattered abroad" all over the world (v. 52). Had Caiaphas offered a prophecy in the ordinary

23. As cited by Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 412; cf. also Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1960), 339.

sense of the word, there would have been no need for John to correct it and to expand it in his editorial comments. Caiaphas will not support the double-author theory of prophecy.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS' RESPECT FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

Again the question arises as to how far the OT writers perceived or understood the things they were writing. Is it legitimate to find a meaning that goes beyond the "authorial will" of the OT human writer, especially if that meaning exceeds the grammatico-historical process of locating that sense and if the one who exhibits that meaning is no one less than the Lord Jesus himself? And if Jesus (and later on: the apostles) did go beyond the authorial meanings, are we as interpreters allowed to follow his example? In other words, can we reproduce the exegesis of the apostles and Jesus, who are alleged to have supplied meanings not found in the texts they quote?

These additional meanings, it is usually argued, come from a Christian presupposition and are found by giving priority to the NT text over the OT text. Stephen Motyer observed:

Many New Testament scholars maintain that the New Testament use of the Old Testament works within a closed logical circle: it depends on Christian presuppositions and reads the Old Testament in a distinctly Christian way (even if employing Jewish methods of exegesis), often doing violence to the true meaning of the Old Testament texts employed. Thus, New Testament arguments based on the Old Testament, it is held, would generally be convincing to Christians but hardly to Jews. If this is true, it will be hard to vindicate the New Testament authors from the charge of misusing the Scriptures.²⁴

Precisely so! The argument that has been most persuasive for me,²⁵ as well, is the one that says a prediction must be seen

24. Stephen Motyer, "Old Testament in the New Testament," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 582.

25. See my defense of the same type of argument in my book, *Uses of the Old Testament*, 129–31, and in my book, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 13–35.

ahead of time and not added after an alleged fulfillment takes place.

However, Motyer later turned around and argued precisely in this way: “The New Testament authors both use the Old Testament to explain Jesus and use Jesus to explain the Old Testament—a circular process in which each is illuminated by the other.”²⁶ He continued:

Some basic features of the Old Testament “story” *become* prophetic in the light of Christ—that is, they are discovered to have a forward-looking predictive function in the light of Christ. . . . The word often used to describe this treatment of the Old Testament is “typology.”²⁷

Is this assessment of the function of typology correct? Surely it is proper to speak of typology in Scripture, but can this be the way to describe it? Previous generations of scholars always insisted that the key aspect of typology was the matter of *divine designation*; namely, would the fact that God providentially guided the story of the Messiah and his people be adequate also to indicate the needed divine indication that it was a type found in the text of the OT designation?²⁸ Let us examine this question by looking at two representative uses of the OT by NT authors.

Does John 13:18 Find a Meaning that Goes beyond the Meaning of Psalm 41:9?

The text that we will use to test these questions appears in that magnificent section in John’s gospel called “The Upper Room Discourse” (John 13:1–17:26). In John 13, Jesus washes the disciples’ feet to illustrate his ministry of humiliation and as a way to motivate his followers to similar humble and loving

26. Motyer, “Old Testament in the New Testament,” 583.

27. Motyer, “Old Testament in the New Testament,” 584.

28. Herbert Marsh (*A Course of Lectures*, Part III.B, Lecture XIX, 1–2) stressed that divine intent and designation of a type was most important: “. . . to constitute a type, something is more requisite than a mere *resemblance* of that which is called a type. . . . But it is the very essence of a type to have a necessary connection with its antitype. It must have been *designated* . . . from the very beginning to prefigure its antitype. . . . [having] a pre-ordained and inherent connection between the things themselves” (emphasis his).

acts of putting others ahead of themselves. The narrative is then interrupted by Jesus' announcement that one of the disciples will betray him: "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has lifted up his heel against me'" (John 13:18 from Ps 41:9 [MT, v. 10]). In spite of his cleansing ministry toward his disciples, Jesus knows that among them lurks a betrayer (v. 10). To show that even this is the fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus cites Psalm 41.

Psalm 41 is a psalm ascribed to David. Many regard the background for this psalm to be the treachery committed against David by his son Absalom and the sudden switch of loyalty from David to Absalom by David's trusted friend and counselor Ahithophel (2 Sam 15:1–18:18).²⁹ Neither one is mentioned in the text, but both fit the situation described in the psalm. So wise was the counsel given by Ahithophel that the historical record regarded it as "like that of one who inquires of God" (2 Sam 16:23). With Ahithophel's advice, Absalom rebelled against his father, sending David scurrying off into the countryside to avoid being captured and sentenced by his own son. This treachery must have happened to David during a time of sickness, weakness, and suffering—perhaps some lingering illness, which however is also not otherwise mentioned in the historical books. Such treachery from his son and his best friend was certainly not to be expected, much less tolerated for one who was the king.

The flow of Psalm 41 is as follows: (1) Verses 1–3 (MT, vv. 2–4) entail a blessing from God on the person who is looking out for the helpless; (2) verses 4–9 (MT, vv. 5–10) contain a plea made at a time when David's own family and his "close friend" (Heb. lit.: "man of my peace") became his enemies; and (3) verses 10–13 (MT, vv. 11–14) conclude with a prayer for personal restoration and requital on his traitor.

David in his person and office carried the full weight of the messianic promise-plan of God. David had been given this

29. Franz Delitsch, *Biblical Commentary of the Psalms*, trans. Francis Bolton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 2:44–46, comments that "Ps. xli belongs to the time of the persecution by Absalom. . . . The faithless friend is that Ahithophel whose counsels, according to 2 Sam. xvi. 23, had with David almost the appearance of being divine oracles."

knowledge in 2 Samuel 7, where the promise-plan of God that had been communicated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was now being repeated and offered to him and his “seed” along with an everlasting dynastic “house,” a “throne,” and a “kingdom.” Moreover, just as Genesis 12:3 contained the “gospel” (also see Gal 3:8) in a nutshell, so 2 Samuel 7:19 furthered the same good news by saying that what David had been given here was a “charter for all mankind” (pers. trans. of *wezo’t torat ha’adam*).

Consequently, what David said about himself also extended in significant ways to the Anointed One who would one day arise from his line. Yet the psalm cannot be ascribed to Messiah in its entirety, for in Psalm 41:4, David says, “I have sinned against you.” That in itself is not unusual in promises about the Davidic line, since they often include in their general purview all of David’s heirs (e.g., 2 Sam 7:14–15; Ps 132:12). What is unusual here is that this psalm’s referents are not restricted to David and his heirs; rather, the psalm refers also to the *enemy* of the promised line, including both David and, by extension, the Messiah. Accordingly, along with finding Messiah in the Seed promises of the OT, we also find on the flip side of the same promise-doctrine³⁰ a line of those opposing the promised line, such as Ahithophel, Absalom, and later Judas and the Antichrist. This too is not unique, for the same teaching occurs in John 17:12

30. For years now, I have been impressed with the thesis of Willis J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975). He defined the promise-plan of God this way: “God gave a promise to Abraham, and through him to mankind; a promise eternally fulfilled and fulfilling in the history of Israel; and chiefly fulfilled in Jesus Christ; he being that which is principal in the history of Israel” (178). I have refined that definition somewhat in my forthcoming *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008). I define the Promise in this way: “The Promise-plan is God’s *word* of declaration, beginning with Eve and continuing on through history, especially in the patriarchs and the Davidic line, that God would continually *be* (in his person) and *do* (in his deeds and works) in and through Israel, and later in and through the Church, his redemptive plan as his *means* of keeping that promised word alive for Israel, and thereby for all who subsequently believed. All in that promised seed were called to act as a light for all the nations so that all the families of the earth might come to faith and to new life in the Messiah.” See also my *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 32–40.

and Acts 1:16–20 (the latter quotes from Pss 69:25³¹ and 109:8³²). As S. Lewis Johnson Jr. argued:

The logic . . . found here . . . is simply this: David prefigured the Messiah, i.e., he was a type of the Messiah. . . . Thus it is perfectly natural and justifiable to see His [*sic*] enemies, too, as prefiguring the Messiah's enemies. The unique end of Ahithophel by hanging, the very way by which Judas's life was ended, accentuates the God-designed typical relationship and supports the validity of the use of the Old Testament passage. In fact, Jesus' use of an Old Testament type may have been the pedagogical precursor of Peter's similar use of the Psalms in Acts 1:16.³³

Just as there is a royal line in the promise-plan of God, so there is a line of evil (recall the "seed" of the serpent in Gen 3:15). This line finds its epitome and climactic fulfillment in the final representative of this whole line of the Antichrist.³⁴ Therefore, we are not surprised that a long line of opponents to David and his line should continue to harass that royal line all the way up to Messiah and then to Messiah's second coming. Absalom, then, was only one of those oppressors who sought to waylay David, his line, and the Messiah himself, each one from his mission.³⁵ While agreement may be reached among interpreters on points of the preceding argument, most will miss the key point that Willis J. Beecher pointed out:

Most of . . . [the psalmist's predictions] should not be regarded as disconnected predictions, but as shoots from a common stem—the common stem being the body of connected messianic promise-history. . . . But even the instances of this kind yield more satisfactory meanings when examined in connection with their relations to the central promise.³⁶

31. See my discussion of Psalm 69 in *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 103–7.

32. *Ibid.*, 107–10.

33. S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New: An Argument for Biblical Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 77.

34. Cf. 1 John 2:18, which warned of "many antichrists" who would appear in history before the final Antichrist showed up at the consummation of history.

35. Cf. Matt 26:14–16; 26:47–56; John 13:18; 17:12; and Acts 1:16–20.

36. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, 244.

Returning to the use of Psalm 41:9 in John 13:18, note that the text calls attention to the act of betrayal by a close companion: “He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.” It was most appropriate to use this quote about the eating of bread while the disciples were seated at the Passover, which was the context in John 13:1–17. But it was just as significant that this breach of oriental hospitality was violated, for how could someone with good conscience go from being fed and having his feet washed by the Lord, to carrying out the treachery that Judas accomplished? So dastardly was this heinous crime that the agricultural metaphor of lifting up one’s heel was all that could be said for such treachery. As a mule or a horse would give a swift kick, so Judas managed to do the same that night to the Lord, which act eventuated in the death of Jesus on the cross.

Jesus saw himself as the One spoken of in David’s Seed. Therefore, the opposition that frequently came to David was a type of what would come to Christ. That is why in verse 19, the very next verse after John 13:18, Jesus asserted, “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am.”

Does the Elder of the Church, James, Misuse Amos 9:9–15 in Acts 15:13–18 at the Jerusalem Council?

The question must be faced once again: Did the OT authors have an adequate understanding of the future meaning of their texts, as well as their present meaning, or did the NT meaning go beyond the authorial will of the human writer of the older Scripture when the apostles used materials from the OT? If it did exceed the boundaries of the original writer in the OT, would not such an exegesis be self-condemned because it had left out a theological meaning that would have come from placing each OT pericope in its own literary and biblical theological context?

We will contend that the human authors, as well as many of the original hearers and readers of the Scriptures, were more attuned to the continuing, unifying plan of God throughout history than many contemporary scholars or believers allow. Given the “generic wholeness” of the divine promise-plan of God, the prophets were divinely enabled to see “near” fulfillments, as

well as some of the more “distant,” climactic fulfillment of those same near fulfillments. It is this “generic”³⁷ quality of the promise that enables one to understand that the words contained but *one meaning* that was generically related to the collective wholeness of the fulfillment.³⁸

For example, a “sharp dispute and debate” (Acts 15:2) broke out at the Council of Jerusalem with “certain individuals” (15:1), who apparently were from the party of the Pharisees, claiming, “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved” (15:1). Attempts to resolve this question for the Council from an experiential point of view by the apostle Peter and his surprising experience with Cornelius (Acts 10), or Paul and Barnabas’s missionary experiences in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) among the Gentiles, did little to halt the debate. It was only after James spoke up and pointed to “the words of the prophets,” by which he meant the OT prophets—especially in this case, Amos (Amos 9:11–12)—that a solution was in sight.³⁹

But what was it in this OT passage that offered any hope for settling this ethnic controversy? Did James claim that the mission to the Gentiles was part of the divine revelation given to the prophet Amos—in any form whatever? And was James now claiming thereby that a fulfillment of Amos’s prophecy had come to pass in the day of the apostles?

The subject of Amos 9:11 is the present condition of David’s house or dynasty, which Amos describes as a “booth,” “tent,” or “hut” (*sukkah*) that is currently in a state of dilapidation, i.e., it is “falling down” (*hannopelet*). The word *sukkah* was used for the hastily constructed shelters made of branches cut from nearby

37. Beecher defined a generic prophecy as “one which regards an event as occurring in a series of parts, separated by intervals, and expresses itself in language that may apply indifferently to the nearest part, or to the remoter parts, or to the whole—in other words, a prediction which, in applying to the whole of a complex event, also applies to some of its parts” (*The Prophets and the Promise*, 130).

38. See my discussion of this in *Uses of the Old Testament*, 70–71.

39. I have examined these texts in my article “The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:9–15 and Acts 15:13–18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems,” *JETS* 20 (1977): 97–111, which was reprinted for the most part in my book, *Uses of the Old Testament*, chapter 9, “Including the Gentiles in the Plan of God,” 177–94.

trees to form temporary shelters in order to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:40, 42; Deut 16:13). Thus, what had been styled “the house of David” (2 Sam 7:5, 11)—his dynasty, with all its glorious promises of blessing—was in the state of collapsing (Hebrew Qal active participle) and looking like a makeshift booth seen at the time of the Festival of Booths. However, despite what the house of David was now or about to suffer, God promised to raise that house from its dilapidated condition in three special ways, as described by three clauses that follow in Amos 9:11b, c, d.

The three clauses and the suffixes (usually rendered neutrally as “its” or “it” in most translations) on each of the three terms in these three clauses are of special interest to the theology of this passage. These clauses are:

1. “its/of them broken places/breaches,” using a feminine plural suffix
2. “its/his ruins,” using a masculine singular suffix
3. “built it/her,” using a feminine singular suffix

C. F. Keil was certain that the feminine plural suffix (“breaches of her [pl.]”; *pirsehen*) “can only be explained from the fact that the *sukkah* actually refers to [the healing of the split kingdoms (fem. pl.)], which [were] divided into two kingdoms,”⁴⁰ but God would reunite that breach “in that day” between the ten northern tribes and the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin. That, of course, is what Ezekiel 37:15–28 would later on anticipate as well. The masculine singular suffix on “its/his ruins” (*harisotayw*), however, must refer to none other than David himself, and not to the “booth of David,” which is feminine. Therefore, under the new-coming-David, Christ himself, the destroyed house of David would rise from the ashes of “destruction.”⁴¹ The text, however, does not say when or how except to locate it “in that day” (9:11a).

With these two acts of reconstruction mentioned, the third clause about “rebuilding her” (*benitiha*) appears. The feminine singular refers naturally to the “fallen tent.” But it is important to note that it too will be restored “as it used to be” (Amos 9:11).

40. C. F. Keil, *Minor Prophets* (Commentary on the Old Testament 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 1:330.

41. For this meaning of *harisa*, cf. Isah 49:19.

This surely is one of the keys to the passage, for it points back to the promise made in 2 Samuel 7:11, 12, 16, where God had promised that he would raise up David's seed after David died and God would also give David a throne and a dynasty that would "endure forever."

All of this would take place "so that they might possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that bear my name," taught Amos in 9:12. Linked together in this passage, then, were the reunited kingdom of Israel, a restored David, a renewed Davidic dynasty, the people of God, and a remnant from all the nations that were called by the name of the Lord.

Some think that verse 12 is even more problematic than verse 11, especially its annoying reference to "the remnant of Edom." But Edom is not referred to in a negative sense or even in a retaliatory way. Instead, Edom, along with all the other nations, is to be brought under the reign of the Davidic King who was to come, the Messiah. But there was a "remnant" that was to share in the promise made to David.

Some will object further that Amos's words in 9:12 are not the same as those found in James's citation in Acts 15:17. The differences between the two are obvious:

Amos 9:12: "so that they may possess the remnant of Edom"

Acts 15:17: "that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord"

However, the Hebrew word for "possess" (*yarash*) could in the ancient Hebrew script be easily mistaken for "seek" (*darash*) since the difference would only be in the length of the tail between the letters *yod* and *daleth* in that early script. Moreover, "Edom" (*'edom*) and "man/humanity" (*'adam*) are almost identical in Hebrew except for the vowels (which were not part of the original text).

It is true that the Qumran text *Florilegium* supports James's reading on this clause in Amos.⁴² Therefore, there is a real possibility

42. J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the OT Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the NT* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1966), 25–26. However, the phrase "after this I will return" does not appear in 4Flor or CD. Nor can this phrase be an allusion to Jeremiah 12:15, as Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece* suggests, since the only word common to both is *meta*. The *tauta* is missing in the LXX of Jeremiah and *epistrepso* is common only to the D text of Acts.

that the NT and Qumran readings may preserve the better text from Amos, which would make even stronger our argument for the suitability of James's appeal to this text to show that Gentiles had been in the promise-plan of God all along. But even if textual criticism is unable to verify James's reading as the preferred one, the interpretation of the present Masoretic text of Amos amounts to the same conclusion. Edom is used here and elsewhere in the OT as representing the nations of the world. Even the Edomites, then, will one day be called by the name of the Lord.

The only question left then is this: Is the remnant of mortals going to seek the Lord as a result of God's raising up the dynasty of David one more time, or is God going to fulfill his promise to David in that day so that not only the remnant of Edom may be [re-]possessed as part of the revitalization of the Davidic Covenant, but even all the Gentiles/nations over whom God will call his name may be likewise treated in the same manner? That is, are the nations called by God or do they themselves call upon God?

Gerhard Hasel pointed out that Amos employed the "remnant" theme in three ways: (1) "to refute the popular expectation which claimed all of Israel as the remnant" (Amos 3:12; 4:1–3; 5:3; 6:9–10; 9:1–4); (2) "to show there will indeed be a remnant from Israel" in an eschatological sense (Amos 5:4–6, 15), and (3) "to include also the 'remnant of Edom,' among and with the neighboring nations, as a recipient of the outstanding promise of the Davidic tradition" (Amos 9:12).⁴³

Edom has been singled out because of her defiant hostility toward Israel. In that sense she is similar to the Amalekites, who in Exodus 17:8–16 and Deuteronomy 25:17–19 stood over against the kingdom of God as representing the kingdom of humanity.⁴⁴ Moreover, Edom's representative role is further seen in the explanatory note in Amos 9:12: "and/even all the nations/Gentiles who are called by my name." Thus, the text is not talking about the military subjugation of Edom or of the Gentiles,

43. Gerhard Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Idea of Remnant from Genesis to Isaiah* (AUSS; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews Univ. Press, 1972), 393–94.

44. See the discussion and bibliography of M. H. Woudstra, "Edom and Israel in Ezekiel," *CTJ* 3 (1968): 21–35.

but of their spiritual incorporation into the kingdom of God. Had not God promised Abraham that would be the case in Genesis 12:3?

It would appear that the verb “to possess” in Amos 9:12 was chosen perhaps to hark back to Balaam’s prophecy in Numbers 24:17–18, where a “star” and a “scepter” would rise in Israel to take possession of Edom, “but Israel will grow strong.” Can there be any doubt that the “star” is a reference to our Lord’s first coming and the “scepter” a reference to his second coming?

What brought this text to the mind of James, this leader of the Church in Jerusalem? Could it be his comment in Acts 15:14 where he said, “Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles”? The usage of the clause “to choose a people for his name” placed all objects or persons so named as being under divine ownership. What God or man named, they owned and protected. This expression is also practically equivalent to the phrase in Joel 2:32 (Heb. 3:5), “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD.” Accordingly, “and all the nations that bear my name” (Amos 9:12) is one of the most crucial phrases for this passage, for it teaches that the Gentiles would certainly be included in the future reign and rule of God.

Did James get it right, then, when he used this quote from Amos to quell the debate over what to do with all these Gentiles who were being saved? Did the OT text have any bearing on the problem at the Council, or was James using the OT text merely for illustrative purposes or in some kind of a spiritual way?

Two fine dispensational writers, Willard M. Aldrich and Allan MacRae, stressed the importance of the words “first” and “after this” in Acts 15:14 and 16.⁴⁵ Their argument was that “God first [*proton*] visited the Gentiles” (v. 14); “after this [*meta tauta*] [visitation he] will return . . . and rebuild the tent of David” (v. 16) when God regathers Israel to her homeland and God rebuilds the house of David in events connected with the second coming of Christ.

If this interpretation is followed, then the citation of the OT reference from Amos has *no* bearing on the question the Council

45. W. M. Aldrich, “The Interpretation of Acts 15:13–18,” *BSac* 111 (1954): 317–23, esp. p. 320; A. MacRae, “The Scientific Approach to the Old Testament,” *BSac* 110 (1953): 309–20, esp. pp. 311ff.

is facing. However, the point James was making did not hinge on James's reworking the introductory words from Amos 9:11, which he recited, perhaps from memory, "after this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent," but rather his emphasis fell on the fact that "the rest of humanity may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name" (Acts 15:17). Aldrich would want the words "I will return" to apply to Christ's second coming. But the Hebrew text used the words "I will raise up" (*'aqim*), not "I will return" (which would in that case have read, *'ashub*). Thus, the reference is not to the second coming, but is a reference to the historical fact that God had been saving Gentiles, to which Peter, Barnabas, and Paul testified. To obtain a dispensational view of this text, one must assume that the "first" of verse 14 signified the "first [era]" of the Gentiles (a clear interpolation) and that the second reference would then mean "after this [Gospel dispensation]" God would "come again" and restore Israel.⁴⁶ But this cannot be the meaning of this text in this context.

James's summary of Peter's testimony is surprisingly pointed, for he says, "God first intervened to choose a people [*laos*] for his name from the Gentiles [*ethnon*]" (v. 14). Accordingly, the Gentile converts were described just as Israel was, as the "people of God." It is with this fact just stated, the conversion of the Gentiles, that the writing of the prophets agreed. In fact, this is the only time in the book of Acts that an OT quotation is introduced in this manner. Moreover, there is no set formula for introducing an OT citation in the book of Acts.

There is no need to take "David's fallen tent" to mean "the tabernacle of David" and then to make that into a type of the Christian church. Instead, the rebuilding of David's tent is a brief, but direct reference to the program announced by God to David in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. Just as God had promised Abraham and his line that all mortals would be blessed through his seed (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:17-18; 26:3-4; 28:13-14), even so

46. J. E. Rosscup, "The Interpretation of Acts 15:13-18" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1966), 148, chided Aldrich and Zimmerman ["To this Agree the Words of the Prophets," *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (1963): 28-40] for making "after these things" so strategic in their interpretations. For Rosscup noted that *meta tauta* is also used by LXX of Joel 2:28 to translate the Masoretic text, *'ahare-ken*, "afterward."

God had announced to David that the “multitude of nations” who would believe in the Seed that came from his line would be part of the “charter for all humanity” (*torat ha’adam*, 2 Sam 7:19).

The missionary consciousness of the OT reached its zenith in the eighth-century prophets like Amos and Isaiah. “The Servant,” Israel, would be given to the world as a “light for the Gentiles” (Isa 42:6). Indeed, “nations you do not know will come running” to Israel (Isa 55:3–5) because the Lord was their God. Thirty-six times Isaiah linked the nations with the promise-plan of God in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah.

What are we to conclude then about the Jerusalem Council? Did the ancient promise-plan of God envisage the inclusion of Gentiles in that promise? In fact, Jews and Gentiles, yes, even Edomites were to be part of the kingdom of God when they too put their trust in the coming Man of Promise. James used a plain, simple and straightforward hermeneutic when he appealed to Amos. His understanding of the term “David’s tent” was replete with all the revelation of God that antedated that eighth-century revelation. What had been promised to Abraham was recommitted to David with an enlarged scope of reference: it was a veritable “charter for all humanity” (2 Sam 7:19)! As a dynasty, it symbolized God’s rule and reign on into eternity.

However, the political and national aspects of that same promise could not be deleted from Amos’s true intention. As the suffixes in Amos 9:11 indicate, the northern and southern kingdoms, the Davidic person, the people of Israel, and the remnant of humanity at large were all encompassed in that rebuilding of “David’s tent,” even though its outward fortunes would appear to sag in the immediate events of the eighth century.

DID THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS USE THE JEWISH EXEGETICAL METHODS OF THEIR DAY?

Another way in which a *sensus plenior* type of approach to the NT writers’ use of the OT has been defended is the contention that the apostles utilized the Jewish interpretive methods of their day, allowing them to derive meanings from OT texts that, at times, were separate and different from those in the minds of the OT authors of those texts. Admittedly, it is not uncommon to see both Jewish and early Christian interpreters support brand new mean-

ings for devotional or meditative purposes, but one would be hard-pressed to find any convincing apologetical value for validating the messianic or doctrinal claims based on the use of such interpretive procedures as *midrash*, *peshet*, allegory, or even psychological impositions on the OT text. Yet the tendency in modern scholarship has been to affirm the NT authors' use of such rabbinical exegetical methods as they utilized the OT, leading to various kinds of rabbinical modifications of the meaning of the texts.⁴⁷ Frederic Gardiner (1822–89) anticipated this tendency already in 1885:

In all quotations which are used *argumentatively* in order to establish any fact or doctrine, it is obviously necessary that the passage in question should be fairly cited according to its real interest and meaning, in order that the argument drawn from it may be valid. There has been much rash criticism . . . that the Apostles, and especially St. Paul, brought up in rabbinical schools of thought quoted Scriptures after a rabbinical and inconsequential fashion. A patient and careful examination of the passages themselves will remove such misapprehension (emphasis mine).⁴⁸

I share Gardiner's convictions.

Therefore, we will look at two NT uses of the OT that are frequently submitted as illustrating the apostolic use of typical Jewish exegetical methods—one cited for the purpose of showing that what happened in the life of Jesus was in fulfillment of what had been announced long before the event came to pass, and one that applies the OT law to the life of the early church.

Is *Peshet* a Valid Category for Peter's Use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2?⁴⁹

The challenge of the prophets to all listeners and readers was this: whereas idols and other divine pretenders claimed to

47. See esp. Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

48. Frederic Gardiner, *The Old and New Testaments in Their Mutual Relations* (New York: James Pott, 1885), 317–18.

49. For a fuller discussion of this issue, see my article "The Promise to David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25–33 and 13:32–37," *JETS* 23 (1980): 219–29. See also the chapter in *Uses of the Old Testament*, 25–41.

know the future ahead of time, it was only the God of the Bible who existed as the God who knew the future and spoke about it *before* the events came to pass. The challenges went like this:

Who then is like me? Let them proclaim it.

Let them declare and lay out before me
what has happened . . .

and what is yet to come—

yes, let them foretell what will come. . . .

Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? (Isa
44:7–8)

Declare what is to be, present it—

let them take counsel together.

Who foretold this long ago,

who declared it from the distant past?

Was it not I, the LORD? (Isa 45:21)

I foretold the former things long ago,

my mouth announced them and I made them known;

then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. . . .

Therefore I told you these things long ago;

before they happened I announced them to you

so that you could not say,

“My images brought them about. . . .” (Isa 48:3, 5a-b)

The NT writers assumed this was so and therefore affirmed that God had previously announced many of the things they were witnessing. For instance, the apostle Peter boldly declared, “God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer” (Acts 3:18). In the same manner, the apostle Paul “reasoned with them [the Jewish people in the Thessalonian synagogue] from the Scriptures [i.e., the OT], explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead” (Acts 17:2b–3a). Central to this apologetic was their appeal to the prophecy of Jesus’ resurrection in Psalm 16.

Few psalms raise simultaneously as many important methodological and theological questions as does Psalm 16. Nevertheless, it has a most honored place in the early Christian church, for it serves as one of the scriptural bases for Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25–31) and for Paul’s address at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:35–37). Both of these apostles at-

tribute to Psalm 16 a conscious prediction of the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah from the dead. Why is it, then, that so few contemporary commentators and readers of Psalm 16 concur with the apostles, but instead feel that it was Peter and Paul who invested the old text with new meanings that can now point to Christ, based on our contemporary reading of the NT? Or is there some implicit system of interpretation that exceeds an author's known truth intentions, but which legitimizes the imposition of NT's values and meanings? Specifically, are the NT authors utilizing a *peshet* form of argument, disregarding by and large the original context and arbitrarily interpreting it as a direct prophecy of Jesus' resurrection?

If such a new imposition of meanings be allowed, we run into the warning given by Milton Terry years ago: "But the moment we admit the principle that portions of Scripture contain an occult or double sense we introduce an element of uncertainty in the sacred volume, and unsettle all scientific interpretation."⁵⁰ In the same manner, Louis Berkhof argued:

Scripture has but a single sense, and is therefore susceptible to a scientific and logical investigation. . . . To accept a manifold sense . . . makes any science of hermeneutics impossible and opens the door for all kinds of arbitrary interpretations.⁵¹

John Owen also declared, "If the Scripture has more than one meaning, it has no meaning at all."⁵²

Some fear that this type of insistence will produce minimal results, but such are avoided if we take into account the OT writers' awareness of the antecedent scriptural development of words, phrases, concepts, events, and expectations. Equipped with this perspective, we will attempt to show that Psalm 16 is best understood as being messianic in its own OT context, justifying the fulfillment affirmations by both Peter and Paul, without accusing them of "reading" these into the OT text in a *peshet*-like manner.

50. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 493.

51. Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 57.

52. John Owen as cited by Terry, *Hermeneutics*, 493.

Many reject the messianic reference of Psalm 16, arguing that it is simply the prayer of a godly man seeking preservation from death. That is how S. R. Driver viewed it:

The Psalm contains ... a great declaration of the faith and hope of an Old Testament saint. ... But when we study it in itself, and consider it carefully in its original import, we see that v. 10 *will not support the argument which the Apostles built upon it*, and that the Psalm cannot be appealed to, in the way in which they appealed to it, as a proof of the resurrection of Christ.⁵³

Peter Craigie argued similarly:

With respect to the initial meaning of the psalm, it is probable that this concluding section should not be interpreted either messianically or in terms of personal eschatology. ... Yet it is apparent that in the earliest Christian community, the psalm was given a messianic interpretation. ... *This change in meaning* ... is an example of the *double meanings* which may be inherent in the text of Scripture. The new meaning imparted to the text suggests not only progress, but contrast.⁵⁴

Nor are C. S. Lewis's comments helpful here. He opined:

If the Old Testament is a literature thus "taken up," made a vehicle of what is more than human, *we can of course set no limits to the weight or multiplicity of meanings* which may have been laid upon it. If any writer may say more than he meant, then these writers will be especially likely to do so. And not by accident.⁵⁵

These solutions are faulty. The first two place a heavy discontinuity between the two testaments and devalue the stock of the OT (apparently) in order to increase a high value on the NT. That does not sound like Paul's estimate that "all Scripture is

53. S. R. Driver, "The Method of Studying the Psalter: Psalm 16," *Expositor*, Seventh Series, 10 (1910): 37 (emphasis mine).

54. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 158 (emphasis mine).

55. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections of the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1958), 117 (emphasis mine).

God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16). The third begins too low by assuming that the human input must be "taken up" or "upgraded" (by the NT, apparently) so we can see all that is there in the text. But this also fails to provide for the fact that Peter claims that what the prophets wrote and said did not originate from their own wills or minds but came as a revelation from God. I will seek, therefore, to demonstrate that David had within his forward-looking purview a reference that exceeded his own experience to include that which pertained to his heirs, culminating in the Messiah.

Both because the ancient title to this psalm attributes it to David⁵⁶ and because many of the phrases in the psalm are used in the better-known psalms of David,⁵⁷ we concur with the NT attribution of this psalm to David (Acts 2:34). It is important to note that the psalm focuses first of all on David of the royal line of the Messiah.

David begins in Psalm 16:1 with a plea to God: "Keep me safe, for I have committed myself to you."⁵⁸ This is covenantal language, implying the relationship that he and his people enjoyed with the Lord. He therefore commits himself to God in the knowledge that God has measured off to him a "portion" and a "delightful inheritance" (vv. 5–6). Thus, what has been given to him are not "portions" in this world, but an "inheritance" of spiritual joys, chief of which is God himself and his presence, grace, and fellowship. It is because of this heritage that David concludes in v. 9 that his "body also will rest secure." God will not "abandon [him] to the grave, nor [will he] let [his] Holy One see decay" (v. 10).⁵⁹

The identity of God's "Holy One" (*hasid*) is crucial to interpreting this passage correctly. The word *hasid* is a technical

56. The title to this psalm calls it a *miktam*, a name also used in Psalms 56, 57, and 59—all written during David's exile and Saul's persecution and pursuit of him. However, *miktam* is probably a musical term and not one that signifies the type of its contents, for the sentiments and expressions found in Psalm 16 are much different from other psalms using the same name.

57. See the list of references in my *Uses of the Old Testament*, 30.

58. My translation. The Hebrew word *hasad*, used in a secular sense in Judg 9:15 and Isa 30:2, refers to a vassal who attached himself to a suzerain king in order to enjoy his protection.

59. My translations.

term as were the terms “Seed,” “Servant of the Lord,” and “Messiah” in the OT. *Hasid* is best rendered as a passive form, “one to whom God is loyal, gracious, or merciful,” or “one in whom God manifests his grace or favor.”⁶⁰ A key passage that connects *hasid* with David is Psalm 89:19–20 (MT 20–21):

Then you spoke in a vision to your Holy One⁶¹ and said: I have set the crown on a hero [a mighty man of valor], I have exalted a choice [chosen] person from the people. I have found [an election term] David my servant [a messianic term in Isaiah] with my holy oil and I have anointed [another messianic term] him. (my translation)

What else can we conclude than that in the view of Ethan the Ezrahite, writer of Psalm 89, Yahweh’s *hasid*, king, servant, and anointed one, were one and the same in the person, office, and mission of David? As early as the time of Moses (Deut 33:8), there was a reference to “the man of your *hasid*, whom Israel did test at Massah” (a reference to Exodus 17, where water came from the rock). However, the only “man” who was tested and put to the test in Exodus 17:2, 7 was the Lord himself. Could this have been the background against which David began also to understand the term of himself and the Messiah who was to come through his line?

Neither are the seventeen references to *hasid* in the plural a problem for the messianic view, for the oscillation between the one and the many is exactly what we observe in parallel examples of other technical terms for Messiah: Seed, Anointed One, Servant, and Firstborn.⁶² This literary technique is known as the concept of “corporate solidarity,” in which the One (the

60. *Hasid* occurs thirty-two times and only in poetic texts, never in prose, with twenty-five examples in the Psalms. Seventeen times it is plural and eleven times it is singular and four times there are variant readings. See my defense of this meaning in *Uses of the Old Testament*, 33.

61. Many manuscripts use the singular form rather than the plural held in the MT and NIV.

62. The “seed” (Heb., *zera’*) can refer to either all the “descendants” or to the “Seed” who represents them all, just as Israel, in twelve out of the twenty references to the “Servant of the Lord” in the singular, is called the “servant” in Isaiah 41:8–10; 43:8–13; 43:14–44:5; 44:6–8, 21–23, etc., and Israel is called God’s “firstborn” in Exod 4:22–23. Hebrews 12:23, however, uses the plural “firstborn ones.”

Messiah) and the many (the Davidic line and those who believe in the Messiah) are embraced in a single meaning usually indicated by a collective singular, instead of it being either a simple singular or plural noun.

David, then, in Psalm 16 is God's *hasid*, his "Favored One"; yet, not David as a mere person, but David as the recipient and conveyor of God's ancient and ever-renewed promise-plan for Israel and for the world. As Beecher observed:

The man David may die, but the *hhasidh* [*sic*] is eternal. Just as David is the Anointed One, and yet the Anointed One is eternal; just as David is the Servant, and yet the Servant is eternal; so David is the *hhasidh*, and yet the *hhasidh* is eternal. David as an individual went to his grave, and saw corruption there, but the representative of Yahaweh's [*sic*] eternal promise did not cease to exist.⁶³

The fact that David is conscious and fully aware of the fact that God is his Lord and his inheritance allows him also to affirm that his "body . . . will rest secure" (v. 9) as well. This confidence is grounded in his understanding of his own role. As I wrote elsewhere:

David, as the man of promise and as God's *hasid* ("favored one"), was in his person, office, and function one of the distinctive historical fulfillments to that word that he received about his seed, dynasty, and throne. Therefore, he rested secure in the confident hope that even death itself would not prevent him from enjoying the face-to-face fellowship with his Lord even beyond death, because that ultimate *hasid* would triumph over death.⁶⁴

David expected to arrive safely complete with all of his immaterial as well as his material being with the Lord because God had promised a future deliverance from the grave to his own *hasid*—the ultimate and final manifestation of the messianic line of which David was a part. If Messiah could be resurrected, then David's hope of being raised from the dead was just as good and just as sure.

63. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, 325.

64. Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament*, 41.

Once we have correctly understood the identity, office, and function of the “Holy One”/“Favored One” (*hasid*), it is possible for us to see that David perceived God’s plan to raise up the last King in his line, so that the Messiah would not be abandoned to the “grave”/“Sheol,” nor would he experience “decay” in the tomb. Instead, he would see the “path of life,” a phrase Mitchell Dahood equated from the Ugaritic texts as meaning “eternal life.”⁶⁵

This interpretation is then confirmed by the way the apostles Peter and Paul used Psalm 16.⁶⁶ S. R. Driver, like so many of his day and ours, chose to conclude minimally saying:

It is difficult not to think that the application of the words to Christ found in Acts ii. 25–31, xiii. 35–37 was facilitated by the mistranslations of the Septuagint. . . . But the apostles used arguments of the kind usual at the time, and such as would seem cogent both to themselves and to their contemporaries.⁶⁷

But Driver and our contemporaries fail to note that Peter’s claim is that David was a “prophet” who “spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah,” because he was “seeing what was to come” (Acts 2:30–31). Acts 2:25, moreover, carefully introduces this quotation from Psalm 16:8–11 with the phrase, “David says with reference to [*eis*] him,” rather than “concerning [*peri*] him” (which would have meant that the total reference was to the Messiah alone). Peter insists that his view is not a view that is novel and unique to his own style of interpreting the text (say, after the manner of the rabbis), but it was the one David offered under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

Neither Peter nor any other NT author invents or retrojects meaning from their setting and perspective back onto the OT text. Instead, it is precisely because the older text speaks so clearly that they are filled with confidence and hope as they announce that God has acted just as he said he would ages

65. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms* (AB; Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965), 1:91. Dahood showed that Ugaritic *hayyim* was used early on in parallelism with “immortality.”

66. See my explanation of Paul’s use of Psalm 16 in Acts 13:35–37 in *Uses of the Old Testament*, 36–37.

67. Driver, “The Method of Studying the Psalter,” 36.

beforehand. Peter's use of Psalm 16 is therefore not an example of a *peshet*-type exegesis that endows the OT text with a meaning that was not in the truth intention of the original author.

Is Allegory a Valid Category for Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:7–10?⁶⁸

Students of Scripture have long noticed that older biblical texts are used and applied by subsequent generations of listeners and readers. But all too many argue that the biblical writers do this by departing from the literal sense of the older text. For instance, David J. A. Clines, like many postmodern interpreters, wants to give the older text a life of its own, independent of its first speaker. His case for a totally autonomous text is as follows:

Once it is recognized that the text does not exist as a carrier of information, but has a life of its own, it becomes impossible to talk about *the* meaning of a text, as if it had only *one* proper meaning. . . . Meaning is seen to reside not in the text, but in what the text becomes for the reader. . . . Thus the original author's meaning, which is what is generally meant by *the* meaning of a text, is by no means the only meaning a text may legitimately have (or rather create). We cannot even be sure that a literary text (or a work of art) "originally" — whatever that was — meant one thing and one thing only to its author; even the author may have had multiple meanings in mind. . . . [Therefore] . . . it is not a matter of being quite wrong or even quite right: there are only more and less appropriate interpretations . . . according to how well the world of the [literary piece] comes to expression in the new situation.⁶⁹ (emphasis his)

The most effective response to this suggested solution is to apply his own hermeneutic to what he himself wrote and

68. See my article, "The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:8–10," *JETS* 21 (1978): 3–18 and its reproduction in *Uses of the Old Testament*, 203–20.

69. David A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* (JSOT-Sup 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1976), 59–61. See also his "Notes for an Old Testament Hermeneutic," *Theology, News and Notes* 21 (March, 1975): 8–10.

to interpret his view exactly opposite of what Clines was trying to advocate: viz., we understand him to say that meaning is fixed, determinative, and singlefold as found in the author's own grammar and syntax. If Clines then objects, as he of course must, then he is left without any recourse since we will insist that that is what we got out of what he said. Who is to say otherwise, since I as an interpreter am in the driver's or the cat bird's seat? Eventually, advocacy for a plurality of meanings might drive us back to the "four senses" view found in many of the patristic and medieval exegetes.

But let us look at the Scripture found in Deuteronomy 25:4: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." This is found in an OT context that sets forth a number of laws for society. For example, there is exemption from military service for those recently married (Deut 24:5), the prohibition against taking a millstone as security for a loan (24:6), the law against kidnapping (24:7), laws on leprosy (24:8–9), laws on loans (24:10–13), protection for hired hands (24:14–15), provisions for each one being accountable for his or her own sins rather than blaming the parents or children (24:16), protection for the weak and vulnerable (24:17–18), provisions for the poor to glean the edges of the harvest field (24:19–22), and limitations on the flogging of criminals (25:1–3). It is at this point that 25:4 appears. All these provisions are to raise social awareness of a caring and helping hand for those who are poor, weak, and vulnerable. God wants to see something happen in the hearts of his people—a sense of caring and a concern for moral justice and equity.

The NT context in 1 Corinthians is just as important for gaining an appreciation for how Paul uses Deuteronomy 25:4. In its setting, 1 Corinthians 8:1–13 deals with things offered to idols. The principles are announced in chapter 8 and these same principles are illustrated in chapter 9.⁷⁰

Now with this as a background, what use does the apostle make of the text from the Mosaic law and what meaning does he derive from it before he applies it to his new situation? A good

70. The principles involve these points: (1) Giving to the Lord imitates the law of the harvest; (2) giving to God is a grace and not a work; and (3) some of the highest examples of giving often come from those who have the least to give.

number of scholars, such as W. Arndt,⁷¹ have claimed that Paul uses an allegorical or mystical understanding of Deuteronomy 25:4, which, while not violating the literal meaning, is not dependent on it either! How one can do that, is not clear to me.⁷² As A. T. Hanson observed, “interpreting a text in a sense which completely ignores its original meaning, or in a sense whose connection with its original meaning [is changed] is purely arbitrary.”⁷³

Richard Longenecker similarly defends an allegorical interpretation: Paul, he thinks, “seems to leave the primary meaning of the injunction in Deut 25:4 ... and interprets the Old Testament allegorically.”⁷⁴ For Longenecker the key issue is the meaning of the word *pantos* (“it is written *pantos* for our sakes”). If *pantos* is to be translated “altogether,” or “entirely,” then Paul would be claiming that he thinks Moses is only concerned about the keepers of the oxen and not the oxen themselves.

But it is possible to argue that *pantos* is to be rendered “certainly” or “undoubtedly.” If so, Paul is claiming that the literal principle can be applied to a new situation. Yes, oxen should be allowed to take a swipe of grain as they walked round and round, hour after hour, treading out the grain while being attached to a central post. But this ruling not only benefited the animals; it also produced a much gentler and kinder oxen owner simultaneously!

Adolf Deissmann is most caustic in his advocacy of the allegorical interpretation:

With Philo, as also with Paul, allegorical exegesis ... was more a sign of freedom than of bondage, though it led both of them to great violence of interpretation.

[Among the] instances of such violence [is] ... the application of the words about the ox, which was not

71. W. Arndt, “The Meaning of 1 Cor 9:9, 10,” *CTM* 3 (1932): 329–35.

72. 1 Cor 9:7–10 and Gal 4:21–31 are usually regarded as the two prime examples of the Pauline use of allegory in his interpretation of Scripture.

73. A. T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 159. Hanson went on to argue that the original meaning had not completely disappeared. Consequently, 1 Cor 9:8–9 was only “formally” an allegory, but “not consciously to be so” (166).

74. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 126.

to be muzzled while threshing. . . . Paul speaks in these strangely unpractical and feeble words as a man from the city, who does not regard animals.⁷⁵

Others argue that this text exhibits a rabbinic type of argument called *qal wahomer*,⁷⁶ i.e., an argument from the lesser or lighter to the greater or heavier. W. Orr and J. A. Walther chose this form of interpretation in their commentary on 1 Corinthians.⁷⁷

A third view explains that Paul expounded the passage from the Mosaic law “according to the Hellenistic Jewish principle that God’s concern is with higher things,” thereby allowing the literal sense to be abandoned, because it spoke of something unworthy of God.⁷⁸

Despite these three aberrant views, our contention is that Paul has neither abandoned the literal meaning nor has he taken liberties with the Mosaic legislation in order to gain divine authorization for ministerial honoraria or salaries. Few have handled this citation from the OT better than F. Godet. He shows that the whole context in Deuteronomy was one of explaining what are the moral duties of mortals to one another and to God’s created order. He explains:

Paul does not, therefore, in the least suppress the historical and natural meaning of the precept. . . . He recognizes it fully, and it is precisely by starting from this sense that he rises to a higher application. . . . Far from arbitrary allegorizing, he applies, by a well-founded *a fortiori* [argument], to a higher relation what God had prescribed with reference to a lower relation. . . . The precept has not its full sense except when applied to a reasonable being.

It is difficult to suppress a smile when listening to the declamations of our moderns against the allegorizing mania of the Apostle Paul. . . . Paul does not in the

75. Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. W. E. Wilson (New York: Harper, 1957), 102–3.

76. Also known in Latin as a *minori ad majus* type of argument.

77. W. Orr and J. Walther, *1 Corinthians* (AB; Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1976), 238.

78. Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Leitch (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 155 and n. 38.

least allegorize.... From the literal and natural meaning of the precept he disentangles a profound truth, a law of humanity and equity.⁷⁹

Calvin was as insistent that Paul got it right:

We must not make the mistake of thinking that Paul means to explain that commandment allegorically; for some empty-headed creatures make this an excuse for turning everything into allegory, so that they change dogs into men, trees into angels, and convert the whole of Scripture into an amusing game.

But what Paul actually means is quite simple: though the Lord commands consideration for the oxen, He does so, not for the sake of the oxen, but rather out of regard for men, for whose benefit even the oxen were created. Therefore that humane treatment of oxen ought to be an incentive, moving us to treat each other with consideration and fairness.⁸⁰

But what about Paul's question: "Is it about oxen that God is concerned?" (1 Cor 9:9c)? Paul answers in 9:10a: "Surely he says this for us, doesn't he?" But what would appear to be a flat Pauline denial that God has any interest in oxen is clarified by Arthur P. Stanley's reminder:

[1 Cor 9:10 is] one of the many instances where the lesson which is regarded as subordinate is denied altogether as in Hos. vi. 6, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and in Ezek. xx. 25, "I gave them statutes which were not good."⁸¹

Therefore, while God is concerned for animals, he had spoken "mainly" or "especially" (hence a better rendering of *pantos*)

79. F. Godet, *Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. A. Cusin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957 reprint): 2:11, 13, 16.

80. John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 187–88. See also Philip Schaff, ed., *The Works of St. Chrysostom in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (New York: Christian Literature, 1889), 12:120–21.

81. Arthur P. Stanley, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 4th ed. (London: John Murray, 1876), 142. Further examples of the same phenomenon might be added: 1 Sam 15:22; Jer 7:21; and Matt 9:13; 12:7. Also see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 24.

for people.⁸² “Yes,” (*gar*) Paul went on to say, “this was written for us.”

Paul then introduces the rest of v. 10 by means of the Greek word *hoti*, which may be taken in one of three ways. First, it could be translated “that,” carrying a declarative or explicative sense that gives the substance of the Deuteronomy command. Second, it could be understood as the equivalent of our quotation marks—in this recitative sense, it would be seen to introduce a quotation from a noncanonical source, since there is no OT equivalent to these words. Third, it could be translated as “because,” communicating a causal notion that gives the reason why God gave this figurative command.

Since Paul uses the standard introductory formula of “it is written,” this can only be a citation from Deuteronomy, and any apocryphal book as a source is immediately ruled out.⁸³ So also is the declarative sense ruled out, since Deuteronomy had no more to say on this subject than the straightforward statement. Paul wants, instead, to tell us why this command is normative for all mortals and was written for our edification. For this reason, the causal sense of *hoti* must be in Paul’s mind here.

82. R. Jamieson, A. F. Fausset, and D. Brown, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 2:278, follow Grotius in translating *pantos* as “mainly” or “especially,” a meaning that is permissible for this word and which certainly conveys the sense in this passage.

83. In his article on “Inspiration” in the original set of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, B. B. Warfield famously argued that when “It is written” appears in the Bible, it means the same thing as “God said” (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], 3:1473–83). However, Henry Preserved Smith (1880–1941) challenged Warfield’s case with one exception he had noted. It was Paul’s use of Job 5:13 in 1 Cor 3:19. That quotation in Job was taken from one of Eliphaz’s speeches: “For it is written, He taketh the wise in their [own] craftiness” (see James Oliver Buswell Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962], 1:208–10). Warfield did not directly answer Smith’s argument, for no one held that the speeches of Job’s three friends were in any sense authoritative or normative, much less from God. However, Wilbur Wallis noted that the citation Paul used in 1 Cor 3:19 was not from Job 5:13 alone, but instead God used Eliphaz’s smart words back on him when, in Job 42:7–8, God told Job to pray for his three friends and for their folly. Thus, “It is written,” in the NT citations of the OT, means “it is authoritatively written in the Word of God” (in Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 1:208–10).

What then was Paul's reasoning? It was not to show that plowing and threshing were two parallel works each worthy of reward. Rather, it was that the one who had been on the job working (or in Paul's continuing agricultural metaphor, plowing the field in hope) ought to be the one who is there when the recompense for the labor is passed out (i.e., at the threshing floor when the harvest comes in). Paul has not given us a different or a secondary hidden sense from the assertion Moses would have made. Instead, he has expertly taken off the temporary wrapping and cultural setting in which the teaching was first given to show us the permanent principle that Moses and the Holy Spirit intended all along.

Herein lies a graphic illustration as to how we might begin to bridge the gap between the "then" of the text from yesterday to the "now" of today.⁸⁴ Paul's argument was grounded in the authority of Scripture found in Deuteronomy. However, he was not so taken with animal husbandry and the deuteronomic background that he had no message for later generations. It was not that Scripture has a hidden meaning that was only known by God until Paul happened to get a hold of this text.

To allow this "pastoral application" of Deuteronomy 25:4 does not mean there is something else to be found in, under, or beyond the text than the grammatical-syntactical-historical meaning. Marshall goes too far in a discussion about a different passage when he asserts, "I would be prepared to accept a 'pastoral' interpretation of John 4, even if it were not in the author's mind.... It could be that in Scripture too there is a meaning different from that intended by the author."⁸⁵ One need only to distinguish "meaning" from "significance," as E. D. Hirsch has argued all along.

It is remarkable that Paul does not appeal to Deuteronomy 24:15, which teaches: "Pay them [the hired men] their wages

84. Paul actually argues his case for pastoral monetary support from four separate illustrations: (1) the illustrations found in experience of the soldier, vine grower and herdsman (1 Cor 9:7); (2) the authority of Scripture found in Deut 25:4 (1 Cor 9:8–11; cf. 1 Tim 5:18 in a subsequent application of the same text of Deut); (3) as an illustration from the current practice of the church and even in pagan religions (1 Cor 9:12–13); and (4) the authoritative teachings of Jesus (1 Cor 9:14).

85. I. Howard Marshall, "The Problem of New Testament Exegesis," *JETS* 17 (1974): 67–73, esp. 72.

each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.” Perhaps in the wisdom of God, the oxen text made a better teaching tool, for it may have embarrassed God’s reluctant people to give to the teachers/pastors who served them well what they ordinarily would have given to dumb animals. Moreover, this text fits nicely the illustration from the sphere of agriculture just given in verse 7.

The apostle rightly understands that God spoke to men (not oxen) primarily for their moral growth in generosity, fairness, and equity. If the principle is that what was written in Scripture was that all workers have a right to be paid for their services (be they animal or human), then that is what Moses meant and that is what God meant. That settles the principle.

But the original teaching can be contextualized in new situations, with new relationships, where the identical principle can be established for the same reasons. We are taught, then, how to move from the BC text to the twenty-first century AD, using the same methodology that Paul illustrates in his application of Moses’ teaching to the first-century AD situation. The practical application of the Bible is not as mysterious as some would make it to be. We need only observe the methods Paul used and then follow them in each new situation we face in our day.

SHOULD MODERN INTERPRETERS REPLICATE THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS’ USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Modern readers and interpreters of the Bible certainly may follow in the steps of the NT writers when they use the OT, for those NT writers argued most carefully when they cited the OT as an authority for apologetical or doctrinal reasons. It is only when we begin to doubt that the NT writers were faithful to what had been written in the OT that we begin to face problems that are issues more for our day than they were for that day or for most of the centuries preceding our twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Just because we have found midrashic, *pesher*, allegorical, and alleged *sensus plenior* meanings in the writings of nonbiblical texts surrounding the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry

and of the NT writers is not a sure sign that any or all of these methods must thereby be found or consistently employed in the NT's use of the OT. For the past decades, NT scholars generally have not pursued OT studies as strenuously as they have studied extrabiblical literature, such as the rabbinic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi (Gnostic) texts, and the like. Our plea, therefore, would be to let the older Testament be searched first and then the later Testament analyzed before appeal is made to extrabiblical texts for answers to the problems that beset us in interpretation. In short, specialization in one Testament along with cognate studies have forced patterns on biblical studies that do not always represent the fairest way to set the problems up in the first place.

It is the question of the divine authority of the OT that drives us to seek the authorial assertions of the meanings of their texts. It is that same quest that would make us hesitant to see the NT override what God had originally said unless he signaled in the OT text that what had been said had a built-in obsolescence and was effective as a "model" or "pattern" (*tabnit*) only until such a time as the real came (Ex 25:9, 40). Otherwise, all Scripture is inspired by God and remains useful—not always for the same thing, but in no sense is it declared to be antiquated and subject to new meanings from subsequent biblical writers or readers.

RESPONSE TO KAISER

Darrell L. Bock

Before launching into a response to “Single Meaning and Unified Referents,” it is important to recall where agreement lies. All the essays agree that the Scripture comes to realization in Jesus Christ and that the plan of God centers in him. The disagreement is on how this works. So the discussion is like a discussion on which route is the best one to take on a trip.

SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The key factors in this discussion include (1) the time in history when a passage is read for understanding the nature of its referents and the context into which it is placed (what we might call the temporal factor), and (2) whether the claims a person makes concerning the possible meaning of a text actually relate to the authorially intended meaning of that text and how they do so. In addition, to show that some texts can work on a single-meaning, human understanding model does not mean all such texts work this way. In some ways, Kaiser’s approach has the highest burden of proof. This is because of his claim that all texts work in this manner.

Kaiser’s essay begins by framing the entire issue in the following way:

Should that meaning be limited to what the human writer of Scripture obtained as a result of standing in the revelatory counsel of God, or were there additional, or

even alternative, meanings to be found that God somehow quietly incorporated into the text in some mysterious way, thus hiding them from the author, or perhaps even new meanings that the audience brought to the text on their own?

The way this question is framed is prejudicial to the discussion. Here the prophet is escorted into God's presence (standing in the revelatory counsel of God) and any additional meaning is "mysteriously" supplied. Do not be moved by what is essentially a rhetorical claim. First, the other two essays in this volume try to remove the sense of mystery to this process by identifying in historically sensitive ways how the themes of "additional" meaning emerge. The process is not as mysterious as this citation suggests.

Second, Kaiser paints an exaggerated picture of the prophet being given a clear presentation of what he is writing (as if he had a conversation with God in the counsel room) versus being a vessel through whom God expresses himself.

Third, Kaiser's stark manner of contrast between one meaning and additional meaning presents the issue in too much of an either-or manner. My essay argues that the meaning that emerges is not disconnected from the original meaning. In other words, a key option is not even put on the table by posing the question this way. What of the option that God begins to reveal the promise in early texts, but develops that meaning through time as the progress of revelation takes place, adding new pieces to the puzzle? All of this is crucially important, because to have a beneficial conversation about how things work, the options need to be clearly stated.

The same definitional concern applies to the issue of *sensus plenior*. Let me simply note that this term also has an ambiguity. When it simply means "there is more here and God did it," then I share Kaiser's objections. However, when it is seen how such a sense emerges in the unfolding progress of revelation, then the term can be useful in a limited way. Our real discussion centers on how the progress of revelation works. Is revelation that is antecedent to the human author the key, or is it also tied to subsequent revelation and *how that later revelation connects to the text in question*? It is the second option that I prefer because it covers more ground adequately.

The handling of typology is similarly problematic. The Moyer quotation making typology strictly retrospective is not the only way to define the category. In my essay, I suggest a more nuanced approach to the issue of typology. The key to this category is how history was read as having divine “patterns” in it, which allows for both a prospective and a retrospective typology in Second Temple readings. This was so because God was seen as the designer of history no matter when the pattern was spotted.

Finally, many of Kaiser’s citations that bear the burden of being authorities on this question come from a period when our knowledge of the first-century world of scriptural usage was much less than it is today. They predate the development of Second Temple period studies and the Dead Sea Scroll finds. The careful study of these sources has shown that what was seen as persuasive argument and standard practice in handling Scripture in the first century was far more varied than our very tightly defined, modern exegetical method.

These finds raise an important question. What are the rules of the game in persuading people about what a text means? Are they rules we fix today? Or did the writers play by rules they agreed on in the first century? It is a little like the difference between football and football (soccer). In one game the hands are key, but in the other they are mostly illegal. Knowing the rules of the game is required before evaluating what is or is not allowed. This is why so many of the citations Kaiser reacts against come from the more recent period. Our understanding of interpretative method has grown. Most exegetes recognize this development.

All of these factors mean that the choice is not merely between the human author’s meaning and alternative added meaning, as Kaiser’s essay argues. There is also the option that later revelation can complete and fill meaning that was initially, but not comprehensively, revealed in the original setting, so that once the progress of revelation emerges, the earlier passage is better and more comprehensively understood. Such a reading is not “going beyond” the original writer but working within the parameters his message introduces. (By the way, E. D. Hirsch, whom Kaiser cites, actually goes this way in his subsequent treatments of these themes, as I note in my essay).

THE CENTRAL ISSUE AND SPECIFIC PASSAGES

The key issue is whether or not the texts Kaiser cites bear all the meaning he claims for them. His claim is that earlier or antecedent revelation gives sufficient backdrop to gain a full understanding of claims made by the human author. Such a claim already ignores the fact that some writers tell us they do not understand their own prophecies. Daniel 12:8–9 indicates that this is the case for Daniel, showing that a lack of human understanding is a possibility for a prophetic text. Kaiser's assertion that 1 Peter 1:10–12 only speaks of ignorance of the time misreads the syntax of *eis tina e poion* ("what person or time") and of the analysis put forward in the Blass-Debrunner grammar. This is an important line to consider, but it is not just time that is highlighted because person and time do not belong in the same category.

The most important question is whether Kaiser has shown that the way he reads his sample passages is the best way to read these texts in their original contexts. Because of space limitations, I will discuss two examples: Amos 9 and Psalm 16.

Kaiser opens with these questions to set up this passage:

Did the OT authors have an adequate understanding of the future meaning of their texts, as well as their present meaning, or did the NT meaning go beyond the authorial will of the human writer of the older Scripture when the apostles used materials from the OT? If it did exceed the boundaries of the original writer in the OT, would not such an exegesis be self-condemned because it had left out a theological meaning that would have come from placing each OT pericope in its own literary and biblical theological context?

My answer to this question is, "No, not if themes are brought in that fit the larger theology of the Scripture."

Our first example in Acts 15 begins with a rather unique introductory formula. It reads, "The words of the prophets are in agreement with this." James introduces his remarks by noting this is something *the prophets* (plural!) teach. The Greek verb translated "are in agreement" means "to combine." We get our word "symphony" from this verb (*symphonousin*). In other words, James cites but one text of several he might note. He

cites Amos, but Isaiah 2:2–4 also comes to mind. The topic is, as Kaiser said, the dilapidated “tent” that is the Davidic dynasty. However, the context is the restoration of a unified kingship for the divided people of God, Israel. The key to understanding the text in the original context is Edom, which is seen as the arch-enemy of Israel, typical of her worst enemy (Ps 137:7; Isa 34:5–15; 63:1–6; Lam 4:21; Ob 1). The image in the context is that of a restored Davidic house exercising decisive power over all.

This reading is different from the LXX, which is closer to James’s rendering. The LXX speaks of the hope “that the remnant of men may seek me.” This turns an oracle of judgment and victory into an oracle of hope. This more positive reading does fit with other OT texts of end-time hope (Isa 66:19–24; Zech. 14:2, 9, 16). I cannot develop this in detail for lack of space, but my point here is that subsequent revelation has filled out how victory occurs. It not only is a conquering, as Amos originally detailed, but also an incorporation of the nations.

Thus, by the time of the first century—and in light of canonical considerations—the victory came to be understood as victory over and participation by the nations. This point implies, regardless of which specific view of the LXX text’s origin is taken, that the LXX reflects a pre-Christian reading of Amos. In one case, we have the original, but in the other we have a reading that involves the result of connecting Amos to other expectations of what comes with deliverance. If the LXX reflects the original, then the passage moves us closer to Kaiser’s claim. But since the conceptual understanding of victory still has the twofold expectation we have described, my view of canonical influence still applies.

There is one other difference to note. It appertains no matter which reading—the MT or LXX—is the original. In Amos, the restoration of the Davidic hut for a united, political Israel is in view. In the NT, the resurrection of Jesus and the presence of the exalted Messiah in a new entity is the point of the restoration. All Amos declares is the Davidic restoration and victory (the term “Messiah” is not present). The filling out of the referent in a more detailed understanding of expectation is another result of the progress of revelation, incorporating other subsequent texts, and the events tied to Jesus. Subsequent revelation and divine design are at work here. This means that the human au-

thor did not completely understand the details of the direction his words set. This kind of an outline of end-time expectation is something James's listeners and even many Jews of the period would have embraced, especially given his appeal to the prophets in general.

We turn more briefly to Psalm 16. Here we simply point out that the first person references throughout this psalm make a more natural reading to refer to the psalmist himself, who is the subject throughout. Otherwise, we must argue that one part of one verse treats a subject different from the rest of the psalm. A better way to read Psalm 16 is as a typological text. When the psalm is placed into the Psalter, it becomes a text of hope for which the experience of the psalmist is representative. As such, the psalm can ultimately be about Jesus, who is not left in death but is resurrected from it, even though Jesus' experience exceeds that of the psalmist who likely hoped for some form of deliverance from God for himself.

CONCLUSION

Although I appreciate and understand the effort to argue for a reading that is singular throughout, this view has too many hurdles to climb to be the most likely solution to the use of the OT in the NT. Being aware of the full array of options makes it more likely that NT readings are not merely exercises in exegesis in the technical, modern sense but presentations of theology taking the whole canon and theology of hope into view.

RESPONSE TO KAISER

Peter Enns

Kaiser's articulation of the NT's use of the OT is one that is well known to anyone familiar with his writings. The views he expresses in his essay do not, in my opinion, represent any real change from his previously published articles and books. I respect the work Kaiser has put into this issue and the influence he has had. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that his approach to this hermeneutical issue is helpful or accurate.

Kaiser's essay begins by addressing the general issue of "alternate" or "multiple" meanings in Scripture, but I feel that, even at the outset, we are being led down a wrong path. In fact, I disagree with the entire way in which Kaiser sets up his argument; he begins at the wrong end. He spends much effort at the beginning of his essay building a case *in the abstract* for why meaning should be located in an author's intention and why multiple levels of meaning should be avoided at all costs. This is rhetorically effective, perhaps (who would want to disagree?), but Kaiser undertakes this argument without addressing the real and difficult problems for such an approach that *are generated by the NT data themselves*.

Moreover, he sets up his own case by presenting opposing views in a negative light. Note the first series of questions at the outset of Kaiser's essay that refer to multiple meanings "*somehow quietly* incorporated into the text in some *mysterious* way, thus *hiding* from the author, or perhaps even new meanings that the audience *brought to the text on their own*" (emphasis added). This is not a helpful way of setting up the problem of the NT use

of the OT, which is, for most scholars, a very real hermeneutical conundrum. Kaiser's bias is seen throughout the essay in the way he sets up arguments and employs language that leaves little room for a dispassionate view of the biblical and Second Temple evidence.

Kaiser's discussion of *sensus plenior* is likewise problematic. By citing the Roman Catholic scholar Raymond Brown, Kaiser seems to be using guilt by association to undermine *sensus plenior*. Brown is able to take meaning "out of the hands of the human authors who stood in the counsel of God" because Brown's Catholicism has an ecclesiastical tradition that allows him to treat Scripture so shabbily. I am not Catholic, but I was a bit offended by such a caricature, since Protestant scholarship owes so much to the careful and nuanced work of Roman Catholic scholars. Moreover, it is somewhat beside the point to portray Roman Catholics as manipulating the meaning of Scripture so casually. The real hermeneutical issues before us, *generated as they are by the NT evidence itself*, will not be settled by such rhetoric.

Moreover, Kaiser's treatment of *sensus plenior* is itself a caricature. It is not as if scholars are trying to find some way to wrest Scripture's meaning from the words on the page and place it in some mystical realm, and so make up the concept of *sensus plenior*. The issue, rather, is how the real difficulties of the NT use of the OT *leads* to theories such as *sensus plenior*. That, I would suggest, is the point of the three essays in this volume. But, instead of dealing head-on with the topic at hand, Kaiser mounts a pejorative case for why multiple meanings not anchored in the human author's intention are suspect, and *then* turns to the NT evidence with this conclusion firmly in hand. Kaiser should begin with the models of explanation the NT evidence allows and then offer explanations based on that analysis.

Similarly, what fuels much of Kaiser's argument is his uncritical adoption of methodologies that a study of modern hermeneutics, and especially the NT use of the OT, calls into question. It seems, in fact, that he is keen to call into question modern hermeneutical developments in general, as can be seen by his recurring citation of scholars (e.g., Bishop Ryle, Herbert Marsh, Frederic Gardiner, F. Godet) who wrote before the discoveries at Qumran. Old is *certainly* not bad, but a lot has happened in our understanding of biblical hermeneutics in the last

one hundred years; it seems that particular kinds of progress in biblical studies are troubling to Kaiser, and he wishes to guard against them. To do so, however, Kaiser assumes an approach to interpretation whereby “standard tools such as grammar, syntax, and the like” or “rules of language and exegesis” are employed.

I certainly sympathize, as my own essay demonstrates, but surely Kaiser must see that such an appeal cannot alone solve the hermeneutical problem before us. For one thing, it is precisely a “grammatico-historical” exegesis of the NT that renders Kaiser’s hermeneutical model unworkable (as I discuss in my essay). Secondly, Kaiser’s own handling of the NT’s use of the OT departs quickly from the standard of “grammar, syntax, and the like” and plunges him into hermeneutical maneuvers that are fairly midrashic.

Kaiser then turns to the question of canonical readings and whether a defense of *sensus plenior* can be found there. Predictably, the answer is no. I fully agree with Kaiser’s contention that we do our OT exegesis before we see how things develop in the “subsequent progress of revelation.” The “first reading,” as I and others like to call it, is important. I also agree that the “thickening” of theology is a two-way street: that our understanding of the OT is augmented by seeing subsequent revelation, but that also our understanding of the NT is enriched by paying attention to the theological contours of the OT. (In this respect, Kaiser is echoing somewhat the concern of Brevard Childs and his students.)

I part company with Kaiser, however, in understanding this mutual theological “thickening” to be a function of the theological *tensions* generated by the first and second readings; that is, by reading the OT on its own terms *and then* reading how the NT authors use the OT in ways informed by Second Temple interpretive practices and a Christotelic eschatology. Moreover, it is clear that for Kaiser the theological trajectories inaugurated in the OT are *determinative* for how subsequent authors (be they later OT authors or NT authors) handle the prior revelation. In other words, subsequent authors do not stampede over the OT sense in order to read Christ willy-nilly, but are bound to the “authorial will” of prior biblical writers. Kaiser’s argument here is not based so much on the behavior of biblical authors,

but on Kaiser's precommitment to what kinds of hermeneutical activities inspired biblical authors—not to mention God himself—may engage in.

Continuing his argument against *sensus plenior*, Kaiser begins to engage biblical data by addressing alleged NT support for *sensus plenior*. This is ground Kaiser has covered elsewhere, and he addresses three passages: 1 Peter 1:10–12; 2 Peter 1:19–21; and John 11:49–52. I actually have large areas of agreement with Kaiser at this point. I do not think that appeal to these passages can establish *explicit* biblical support for *sensus plenior*. But more importantly, appealing to any one passage or two is not going to help the case either way. Rather than looking for a proof text or two to justify *sensus plenior*, one should pay greater attention to how the NT authors behave (a point Bock makes well) and, moreover, how they behave in the context of their hermeneutical environment (as I argue).

This is why an appeal to the passages Kaiser cites is *irrelevant* for *both* sides of the debate. They are irrelevant for *pro-sensus plenior* advocates because the hermeneutical practices of NT authors cannot be established by teasing the matter out of a couple of moderately amenable texts. But neither are these passages helpful for Kaiser. For even if it can be shown that, say, 1 Peter cannot be bent in a *sensus plenior* direction, the *fact* remains that the manner in which the NT uses the OT needs serious explaining. Kaiser, in other words, can neither appeal to abstract hermeneutical standards (as he has done thus far), nor can he appeal to the passages cited above, which supposedly establish some sort of anti-*sensus plenior* hermeneutical principle. All Kaiser has done thus far is to cast doubt on *sensus plenior* on grounds that are at best peripheral.

Rather than arguing how things ought to be or must be, Kaiser should begin his discussion inductively so that his assumptions and methodologies are more in line with the data the NT presents. As it stands, however, Kaiser's argument against *sensus plenior* that precedes his discussion of actual examples of the NT use of the OT is unpersuasive, and perhaps even misleading.

Kaiser eventually turns his attention to four examples to demonstrate that the NT authors did not go beyond the "authorial will" of the OT authors: (1) John 13:18 and Psalm 41:9; (2) Acts 15:13–18 and Amos 9:9–15; (3) the alleged use of *pesher* in

the use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2; and (4) Paul's use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:7–10. These are all fine examples and raise a number of important issues, such as the Jewish interpretive environment, the use of allegory, and other things. At the end of the day, however, I do not think Kaiser makes a convincing case that the NT authors have a hermeneutical commitment to respect the context of the OT authors they cite.

Space does not permit an extended discussion of the problems with Kaiser's examples, but some major issues can be mentioned.

1. He essentially ignores the Second Temple evidence (with one exception of a selective use of the Qumranian materials; see his discussion of Amos 9).
2. In attempting to demonstrate how OT meaning is determinative of its NT use, Kaiser engages in a type of exegesis of the OT that has some fairly midrashic properties. It is somewhat ironic, therefore, that Kaiser's defense of the determinative influence of "authorial will" actually demonstrates the very thing he seems so intent to guard against.
3. At significant junctures in his argument, Kaiser simply assumes the point to be proven; namely, that NT authors would never handle the OT in ways that are not tied significantly to the original OT meaning.
4. Kaiser's contention against "many contemporary scholars or believers" who are open to a flexibility of meaning in the OT does not take into account why there are in fact so many such scholars.
5. Kaiser reiterates the old argument that an ancient citation of the OT would only be persuasive if it is cited in harmony with its OT meaning. This ignores the entire issue of the use of the OT in Second Temple hermeneutics, and what would or would not be deemed persuasive *by ancient conventions*.
6. Kaiser's appeal to 2 Timothy 3:15–16 in defense of his position does not account for how *Paul himself* used the OT in creative ways. There is little here that will persuade those not already convinced of his position.

Finally, with respect to whether we can follow the NT authors in their hermeneutic, Kaiser's answer is an implied yes,

provided we understand their hermeneutic the way Kaiser does. But in doing so, he claims that contemporary hermeneutical models that differ from his are caused by unfortunate academic specialization, or a failure to trust the NT authors in rendering carefully and faithfully what the OT authors had written. If the matter were that simple, however, there would be far less disagreement among evangelicals, and Kaiser would not have to spend quite so much effort in making his case. My contention is that if we *truly* allow the NT authors to lead us in our hermeneutic, we will come to a very different conclusion than the one Kaiser offers.