FIVE VIEWS OF

# CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

## GENRE, AUTHORIAL INTENT, AND THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

John Goldingay

Tremper Longman III

Havilah Dharamraj

Jason S. DeRouchie

Craig A. Carter

Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King, general editors

Stanley N. Gundry, series editor

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# RESPONSE TO JOHN GOLDINGAY
## (THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC APPROACH)

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

I will address two main parts of Dr. Goldingay's methodology: (1) How Jesus relates to the First Testament's[1] meaning and significance and (2) typology's nature and role.

## Jesus and the First Testament's Meaning and Significance

Goldingay helpfully states that "a message's meaning is what the giver of the message was seeking to communicate to the recipient" (24). Problematically, however, he further asserts that "Christ . . . is not 'in the First Testament' as someone whom the text mentions. Its message to God's people does not invite them to think in terms of him" (22). Moreover, "To read Jesus back" into the First Testament Scriptures results in our missing "what they have to say" (21). In contrast, Goldingay's case studies disclose that he often fails to read carefully even the close context, which helps identify that the First Testament authors themselves were indeed hoping in the promised Messiah. Furthermore, his approach runs counter to the claims of the New Testament itself.

1. Jesus would agree with Goldingay that the Hebrew Scriptures are not "old, antiquated, and out-of-date" (21). Yet a number of redemptive-historical factors lead me to think the title "Old Testament" is better than "First Testament." In this essay, I will refer to the Old Testament as the First Testament, but the reader should keep in mind that Moses anticipated the old covenant's end and the need for the new (e.g., Deut 4:25–31; 30:1–14), and his teaching guided the later prophets' hopes (e.g., Isa 54:1–55:5; Jer 31:31–34).

## Jesus in Genesis 22:1-19

In his discussion of Genesis 22:1–19, Goldingay maintains that "there is nothing to put the ancestors on the track of the idea that the passage is messianic" (41). But what of the fact that the book's *toledot* structure ("these are the generations of . . .") and the promise of "offspring" throughout the Abrahamic narrative directly tie the story back to the "offspring" promise in Genesis 3:15, upon which the entire world's hope rests? The offspring promise is the means by which God will overcome the problem of sin and its consequences, as curse once again gives rise to divine blessing. By missing the close context, Goldingay fails to note that God promised Abraham not only that he would become a nation (Gen 12:2; cf. 35:11) but also that from this nation would rise a royal *person* who would overcome enemy hostility (49:8–10), bring God's blessing to the nations (22:18), expand God's kingdom (22:17; 24:60; 26:3–4), and make Abraham "the father of a multitude of nations" (17:4; cf. 35:11). The only descendant of Abraham who realizes such hopes is Jesus Christ (Luke 1:68–75; Gal 3:16, 29).

## Jesus in Proverbs 8:22-31

Goldingay maintains that "Christ is not in Proverbs 8:22–31" and that "it caused trouble . . . when Christians came to assume that Christ was in Proverbs 8" (42). Yet Goldingay's exegesis of the text never accounts for how the book's opening in 1:1 invites us to read the whole in the light of the historical and prophetic context of the Davidic covenant. Furthermore, he never addresses how the book's early calls to the royal "son" to pursue wisdom (e.g., 1:8, 10; 2:1) anticipate the character of the messianic king or how the allusion back to 8:22–31 in 30:3–4 calls us to consider who the unnamed "son" is who stands as one of the "Holy Ones" who deserves to be known and feared (9:10; 30:3). While Goldingay recognizes some allusion to the wisdom tradition in John 1:1, he fails to note that Jesus himself seems to allude to Proverbs 30:4 in John 3:13, thus identifying himself with the wisdom of Proverbs 8:22–31 and the "son" of 30:4.[2]

2. Many commentators on John 3:13 direct readers to Proverbs 30:4a. See, for example, J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*, ed. A. H. McNeile, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1929), 1:111; Raymond E. Brown, *The*

Again, Goldingay's exegesis fails to account for the close and continuing contexts, which causes him to miss the First Testament's meaning.

## Jesus in Isaiah 42:1-4

Goldingay says, "Christ is not in Isaiah 42, nor does Isaiah 42 point to Christ" (44). Instead, the "servant" of this text is the people, and the New Testament shows in texts like Matthew 12:17–21 that Jesus's coming prepares "the way for Israel to function as God's servant" (44). But this approach fails, for the nation of Israel as a whole does not stand as a covenant for themselves (Isa 42:6) or operate as a light for the nations to deliver prisoners (42:6–7). Rather, this is the role of the servant-person (cf. 49:3, 6–9). Intriguingly, in an earlier publication, Goldingay sees further significance in the servant's anonymity in 42:1–4 by noting that "Jacob-Israel cannot fulfil this role" but needs "someone to fulfil it."[3] Thus, Jesus himself asserts that Isaiah's claim that the servant "was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa 53:12) was "written about me" and "is reaching its fulfillment" (Luke 22:37). Jesus is addressing the meaning of the words themselves and not just their significance.

## Does the First Testament Prophesy about Christ?

Goldingay appears to commit the word-thing fallacy when he asserts that the First Testament does not prophesy about Christ because it does not announce "Jesus" by name like it did for Josiah (1 Kgs 13:1–2). Similarly, the messianic hope of Micah 5:2 (5:1 MT) is only a matter of significance and not meaning since the term *Messiah* does not appear. However, the "shepherd" (5:4 [5:3 MT]) from Bethlehem (5:2 [5:1 MT]) is an eschatological David, who like the original David, would certainly be an "anointed one" or "messiah" (cf. 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 5:3).

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*Gospel according to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 145; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 201; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 197; Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 112. Furthermore, Köstenberger notes that John 3:13 "may allude to Prov. 30:4a." Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 435. I thank my doctoral fellow Brian Verrett for reminding me of Jesus's allusion in John 3:13.

3. John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 153–54.

Furthermore, the one Isaiah tags "Immanuel" (Isa 7:14) and a child-king (9:6) could still refer to Jesus of Nazareth, even though the prophet never applies the name Jesus or the title "Messiah" to him. Goldingay himself finds "Antiochus . . . in Daniel 11" (38)—a text that never names him, and this fact identifies the fallacious nature of his earlier comments.

Given Goldingay's position regarding the First Testament containing no references to the Messiah, he asserts, "It's hardly surprising that John the Baptizer wonders if Jesus is really the one who was to come (Luke 7:18–19)" (33). Against Goldingay, however, John's claim assumes that the First Testament actually anticipated someone to save (cf. Luke 2:25, 38), and Jesus's response identifies himself as the servant-person for whom Isaiah was looking. Any offense to the imprisoned John would arise only if he failed to hope in the completed work that Christ was inaugurating.

Goldingay denies that Jesus's response to John in Luke 7:22–23 bears any link with Isaiah's words. But Goldingay ignores the close context, missing that the prophet associates the very epoch that Isaiah 35:5–6 describes with the promised king, servant, and anointed conqueror![4] Goldingay further fails to see Isaiah 61:1–2's messianism since he limits First Testament "prophecy" to a particular genre, standing against the New Testament authors who view "prophecy" and "fulfillment" (i.e., *plēroō*, "to fulfill") in much broader terms (Matt 11:13; cf. Luke 16:16). Jesus prophetically fulfills not only explicit promises but also recorded events like the exodus (Matt 2:15; cf. Hos 11:1), legal material from Moses (Matt 5:17–18), and depictions like the servant's role in bringing healing (Matt 8:17; cf. Isa 53:4).

## The New Testament's Claims Regarding the First Testament's Meaning

For Goldingay, when the New Testament links Christ to First Testament promises, we learn about how the "later writer" received or applied the First Testament text (i.e., reception history) rather than "the meaning of the original text" (25). But this understanding fails to explain the New Testament data. Luke tells us that Jesus "interpreted" the First Testament, causing others to "understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27,

4. Cf. Isaiah 35:2 with 40:5; 35:4 with 63:1–6; 35:6–7 with 32:2 and 49:10; 35:8 with 19:23 and 62:10–12.

45). The verbs speak not of *applying* but of *interpreting* and *understanding* what "is written" in the text. More appears operative here than merely addressing the First Testament's lasting significance (cf. 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Pet 1:20–21).

Goldingay asserts, "One cannot prove from the First Testament that Jesus is the Messiah" (35). But is this not exactly what Paul did when "reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8 ESV; cf. 28:23)? And why did Luke commend the Bereans (Acts 17:11)? Furthermore, often the New Testament argument's logic hinges on Jesus residing in the First Testament's meaning (e.g., John 5:45–47; Acts 2:22–36; 13:32–37). Far from Goldingay's claim that the First Testament's "message to God's people does not invite them to think in terms of [Jesus]" (22), Peter said that "God . . . foretold . . . that his Messiah would suffer" through "*all* the prophets" (Acts 3:18, emphasis added; cf. 2:30–31; 3:24). Jesus himself asserted that the account about the servant in Isaiah 53:12 was "written about me" (Luke 22:37). To claim that the New Testament authors only applied Isaiah to Jesus but did not view him as part of the original meaning is to say more than the texts allow.

## Typology

Goldingay's understanding of typology resembles mine, except that he does not treat typology as prophetic in nature. Therefore, for Goldingay, types are only literary features of significance, not meaning, and they are known only in retrospect (*a posteriori*). In contrast, I suggest that typology is related to meaning inherent in the original and not just the significance drawn from it. A case in point is that we learn that Miriam was a "prophetess" when she first sang the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:19–21). This song portrays the first exodus (15:4–10) as a foreshadow that ensures coming future victories (15:13–18). Because Moses viewed the original exodus typologically (i.e., as indirect prophecy), he later associated a second exodus with a messianic royal figure (Num 24:7–9). And on this basis, Isaiah linked a second exodus with a coming Spirit-empowered king (Isa 11:1–12:6) by recalling the words of Exodus 15:2 (Isa 12:2).

Goldingay claims, "In the First Testament, the priests, the sacrifices, and the sanctuary are not shadows of something else" (31). But Paul

asserted that features of the old covenant associated with "food . . . drink . . . a festival . . . a new moon or a Sabbath" are all "a shadow" whose "substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:16–17 ESV). Moreover, Hebrews' author argued that everything associated with the old covenant tabernacle was "a copy and shadow of what is in heaven" and that God "warned" Moses of this very fact, saying, "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain" (Heb 8:5; cf. Exod 25:40). God's speech to Moses in Exodus 25:40 identifies that the prophet himself recognized the typological nature of the earthly tabernacle, and Scripture suggests that he saw the potential for advancement from type to the antitype. In Leviticus 26:11–12 Yahweh promised that he would dwell and walk among the people in a special way (beyond the tabernacle experience) *if* they perfectly obeyed. Jesus, representing Israel the people, perfectly obeyed and thus secured such realities for everyone in him (2 Cor 6:16; cf. Ezek 37:27). *Moses*, thus, knew that the tabernacle bore a built-in obsolescence, such that when the pattern became sight, there would no longer be a need for the earthly replica.

An added feature of typology that highlights its prospective nature is the presence of identifiable patterns within the biblical story. Authors by design draw attention to repeated events, character experiences, or scenarios and do so to identify a predictive cycle, guided by God, that will climax in future fulfillment. Examples include the motifs of "parting waters" leading to "new creation" (Gen 1–2; Exod 14–15; Josh 3–4; Isa 11–12) and of "the sin of the two sons" (Gen 34; Lev 10; 1 Sam 2; 8:1–3; 2 Sam 13–18). Authors generate links between texts that are neither random nor accidental but are instead purposeful and that drive ahead to literary resolution.

## Conclusion

Goldingay claims that the First Testament's inherent meaning never related to Christ Jesus and that typology is only a literary device telling us how later authors found significance concerning Christ in the First Testament. But such perspectives run counter to the New Testament's own claims regarding both the First Testament texts and the New Testament authors' approach. The First Testament prophets foresaw and hoped in Jesus's day (Matt 13:17; John 8:56). By the Spirit's help, they interpreted their Scriptures (2 Pet 1:20–21), searching them and

praying to learn more about Jesus's person and time (1 Pet 1:10–11). New Testament figures like Jesus (Luke 24:27) and Paul (1 Cor 2:13) interpreted what the Spirit revealed to be the meaning of the prophetic writings themselves and of Jesus's teaching (Rom 16:25–26). Interpreting the First Testament texts within their close, continuing, and canonical contexts enables one to recognize that Christ is central to the First Testament's meaning and hope.

# RESPONSE TO TREMPER LONGMAN III
## (THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC APPROACH)

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

Longman rightly affirms Scripture's "organic unity" (75). He also rightly upholds "that a Christian reading of the Old Testament [must] recognize that Jesus is indeed in the Old Testament" and that "the entire Hebrew Bible" "*in some sense* anticipated his coming and work" (83).

Nevertheless, Longman's exegesis in his case studies provides no evidence that Jesus is part of the Old Testament itself. Indeed, he consistently identifies Christ as standing outside the Old Testament and only as the "goal" (*telos*) to which it points. Thus, the "deeper" or "fuller meaning" regarding Christ was (1) usually unknown to the original human Old Testament authors, (2) apparent only after Jesus's resurrection (*sensus plenior*), and (3) something that would have "surprised" the Old Testament authors, although they would approve of it "in the light of the resurrection" (73–74).

## Evaluating Longman's Interpretive Steps

Longman instructs Christians to read the Old Testament twice—first to grasp the Old Testament "in its original context as addressed to its contemporary audience," and second "to understand the passage in the light of the coming of Christ" (74). The necessity of this double reading arises since the Old Testament's intended audience is those who received "the final form of the book—not those . . . reading the book today" (80). As such, on the first reading of the Old Testament text, in order "to listen to its discrete voice," we make no "appeal to Christ"; only on the second reading do we interpret "from the full vantage point of the gospel, in the light of the resurrection" (88).

This proposal wrongly assumes that God ever intended those who know the final chapter to read Scripture's earlier parts as if they are ignorant of the end. The New Testament's authors give no evidence that they interpreted their Scriptures as if Christ had not come. Instead, after meeting Jesus, Paul sought to convince his hearers "about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets" (Acts 28:23 ESV; cf. 19:8; Rom 16:25–26). The apostle's encounter with Jesus reshaped all his biblical interpretation, not just his second step. The apostle never "brackets the fuller knowledge acquired in the further revelation of the New Testament" (74). Longman's own *Hamlet* illustration strongly supports this conclusion. He rightly notes that we would only bracket off acts 1–3 from acts 4–5 if Shakespeare never intended them to be part of the same story; but they are part of the same story, so we must read them together. So, too, with Scripture! God *always* intended that the Christian Bible include both Old and New Testaments, so at no stage of interpretation should we attempt to treat either Testament apart from the other. Longman maintains both that the Bible is "an organic unity" and that we should temporarily "bracket" off the New Testament from the Old Testament. These two approaches are inherently contradictory. I contend that as Christians who have by nature already encountered Jesus, our *first* reading of the Old Testament must account for the end of the story in order to read the whole rightly from the beginning.

Furthermore, the Old Testament authors regularly identify that they wrote to and for *future* generations associated with the new covenant more so than their contemporaries. For example, though Moses's audience remained largely spiritually disabled (Deut 29:4 [29:3 MT]), his words would matter for the transformed, heart-circumcised saints participating in the age of restoration (30:6–8; Rom 2:29). Most of Isaiah's contemporaries were unable to receive his word (Isa 6:9–10; 29:9–12; 30:9), but God called him to write his scroll for a future people who would hear and see (29:18–19; 30:8; Matt 11:5, 15).[1] Again, the Lord charged Jeremiah to "write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you" *because* "days are coming" when God would return his people from exile and one of their own would rule over them in the "latter days"

1. The same blindness remained through the Old Testament era and into the New Testament (e.g., Jer 5:21; Ezek 3:7; Matt 13:14–15; Rom 11:8). But Jesus came to give sight to the blind and understanding to the foolish.

of healing and spiritual understanding, days associated with the new covenant (Jer 30:2–3, 17, 21, 24 ESV; cf. 31:31, 33; Zech 2:9, 11; 6:15). The Old Testament even claims that only the "wise" would understand certain things from the prophets at "the time of the end" (Dan 12:9–10; cf. John 13:7). Peter noted that God "revealed to [the OT prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you" (1 Pet 1:11–12). To "read the Old Testament texts in their discrete setting in the Old Testament time period" *requires* that we equally recognize that we as new covenant believers are regularly the implied readers.

Next, Longman's exegesis appears to bracket off reading a passage even in light of its close literary context, let alone its broader Old Testament context. He stresses that the first reading "must account for the passage's genre and historical context" (88), and this is about as far as he goes in his case studies. Yet faithful interpretation requires more. I attempt to show in my own essay that careful wrestling with the close literary context of each book actually pushes one to read each passage within its broader continuing and complete context and clarifies that each case study passage is indeed about Messiah Jesus.

Longman also wrongly pits the Spirit's work against himself. Citing Peter Enns, Longman claims that the Spirit leads our second reading "with the anchor being not what the Old Testament author intended but how Christ gives the Old Testament its final coherence" (88).[2] Yet the apostle Peter identifies that God's Spirit carried the Old Testament prophets along and predicted Christ's tribulation and triumph through them as they searched and interpreted earlier Scriptures (1 Pet 1:10–11; 2 Pet 1:21). Rather than leading us away from his original intent, our Spirit-led engagement with the Old Testament text leads us to embrace what the Old Testament prophets wrote about—Jesus's suffering and resurrection.

Finally, Longman fails to sufficiently account for the New Testament's clear testimony regarding how much the Old Testament prophets knew about Jesus and his coming. Jesus declared, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad" (John 8:56 ESV). The patriarch delighted in the Messiah and his coming era from

2. Longman here cites Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 148–49.

a distance. Thus, we read, "Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it" (Matt 13:17; cf. Luke 10:24). And again, "Isaiah . . . saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him" (John 12:41). These Old Testament saints "all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" (Heb 11:13 ESV). Their faith was future-oriented, related to the coming kingdom and the perfecting work of Christ found in the new covenant (11:40; 12:2; cf. 10:14; 12:23–24).

## Evaluating Longman's Case Studies

Longman's hermeneutical missteps become very apparent in his case studies. Far from identifying the "discrete voice" of Genesis 22:1–19, Longman's first reading fails to place the story within the close context of Genesis as a whole. He never reflects on how God's promise of offspring to Abraham relates to the offspring promise in Genesis 3:15; nor does he identify that Isaac is *not* the offspring but the one through whom God will name him (21:12). Longman speaks of "the promise," which appears identified with Yahweh's declaration that the patriarch would "receive the land and have numerous descendants—the prerequisite to becoming 'a great nation'" (89). But he fails to note how the book's hope is not only in a *people* but in a *person* who overcomes the curse and God's enemies and brings divine blessing to all the earth's nations (e.g., 3:15; 22:17–18; 24:60; 49:10).

In case study two, Longman helpfully notes that Woman Wisdom "is a personification of God's wisdom" (93). However, he fails to assess Proverbs 8:22–31 in light of its close context. He neither interprets Wisdom's call within the historical and prophetic setting of the Davidic covenant (1:1) nor recognizes Wisdom as God's "son" (30:3–4), which in context bears allusions to earlier messianic prophecies (30:1 with Num 24:3, 15; 2 Sam 23:1) and which Proverbs depicts with royal overtones. This failure causes him to believe that Woman Wisdom is not "Jesus as if Proverbs 8 is a prophecy" about him (95). Additionally, Longman claims that "Jesus is not the firstborn of creation," for he is not a created being (95). However, this is Paul's exact language (Col 1:15), and Longman's view wrongly assumes that "firstborn of creation" refers to a created being and that Proverbs 8:22 teaches that Wisdom is created.

In case study three, Longman avers that the New Testament authors "applied" Isaiah's suffering servant passages to Jesus and believed they "describe him," although they originally referred "to the faithful remnant of Israel" (98). Yet the only one Isaiah has identified thus far as being endowed with God's Spirit (42:1) and as bringing justice to the nations (42:1, 4) is the anticipated king (11:2, 5), whose very names are closely tied to God himself (9:6–7; cf. 7:14). Indeed, how apart from Jesus Christ's preceding work does the faithful remnant "bring justice to the nations," operate as "a covenant for the people and a light for the gentiles," "open eyes that are blind," and "free captives from prison" (42:1, 6–7; cf. 49:8–9)? Is the remnant truly "righteous," having "done no violence" (53:9, 11; cf. 50:5, 8–9)? Did the remnant ever die a substitutionary death, rise to life, "justify many," and "bear their iniquities" (53:5, 11)? Longman never answers these questions.

Furthermore, Longman fails to assess the close context to recognize that Isaiah identifies the remnant *not* as the (singular) servant but as the servant's "offspring" (Isa 45:25; 53:10; 54:3; 59:21; 65:23; 66:22)—the "many" (52:14–15; 53:11–12) multiethnic (plural) "servants" (54:17; 56:6, 8; 65:13–15; 66:14) whom the servant-person justifies (45:25; 53:11). He also misses how Isaiah links the suffering servant and anointed conqueror with the royal figure from earlier in the book (e.g., 9:7 with 42:1, 4; 9:7 with 55:3; 11:2 with 42:1 and 61:1; 11:5 and 32:1 with 59:17; 11:8 with 53:2). We do not need to jump to the New Testament to see "Jesus as the ideal Israel"; Isaiah himself already made this identification (49:3, 6; cf. 45:25).

Finally, Longman moves beyond the "discrete voice" of the Old Testament itself and says that Isaiah could not have had in view an individual because "what we know about messianic expectation in Second Temple Jewish literature as well as the Gospels themselves" shows us that "no one was thinking in those terms" (98). Thus, Longman illegitimately limits prophetic ability and intention based on communal perception. Moreover, prior to Jesus's resurrection, David along with "all the prophets" and Simeon foretold with Jesus that he would die and rise (Mark 8:31; Luke 2:34–35; Acts 2:30–31; 3:18). Yes, Israel's majority was blind and deaf (Mark 4:11–12; Rom 11:7–8), but the remnant could see, for through Christ "the veil is taken away" (2 Cor 3:16).

## Conclusion

Longman claims the idea that Abraham, Moses, Solomon, or Isaiah would have hoped in an individual messiah "stretches credulity" (99), suggesting that my approach naively believes that the Old Testament prophets could not have spoken about the Christ in detail. I disagree based on my exegetical arguments from the close, continuing, and complete contexts. I appreciate that Longman recognizes the need to interpret the Old Testament "in the light of the whole canon" (100). Nevertheless, his two-readings approach supplies an interpretive strategy that has no precedent in Scripture. To act as though Christ has not come at any stage in our biblical interpretation is to restore a "veil" over our hearts (2 Cor 3:14–16) and to act as a "natural" rather than "spiritual" person who cannot accept the things of God (1 Cor 2:13–14). Lastly, Longman's exegesis in his first readings fails to account for the numerous clues in the close contexts of all his case studies that signal that the human author was anticipating an individual messiah.

# RESPONSE TO HAVILAH DHARAMRAJ
## (THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC APPROACH)

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

I commend much in Dr. Dharamraj's exegesis and intertextual appraisals, for her case studies exemplify that she observes carefully, understands rightly, and evaluates fairly much of what is in the compared texts. This is so because Dharamraj typically affirms that the Common Reader should maintain the normal author-centered "hermeneutical rules governing sound exegesis" (151) when assessing passages independently of one another. She also celebrates interpretations that are not "theologically problematic" (138) and that align with "historic Christian orthodoxy" (144).

Nevertheless, when attempting to "correlate [the OT] with Jesus" by placing "Old and New Testament texts in conversation with each other," Dharamraj thinks that the Common Reader must follow a "Reception-Centered, Intertextual Approach" that seeks to discover the interrelationship's "effect" and "christological resonance" (131). This "largely reader-centered, literary" approach "resists speculating about how one text is dependent on another" (128–29); instead, the Common Reader draws on their intuition and the "public meaning" from their "particular social universe" to "create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole" (128).[1]

I agree that readers play fundamental roles in biblical interpretation, and that the social contexts from which we arise (e.g., "socioeconomic, cultural, political, religious, and denominational" [131]) influence the

1. Here Dharamraj cites Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, 1953), 2–3.

perspectives we bring to the Bible. Such preunderstandings are not bad in themselves; indeed, recognizing our presuppositions allows us to evaluate them in the light of Scripture and increasingly conform them to it. The challenge comes when we allow our presuppositions to become prejudices that produce meaning, and this results in the reader of Scripture assuming a higher authority than the divine author himself.[2] Dharamraj's approach to intertextual interpretation fails at just this point.

## Evaluating Dharamraj's Presuppositions

To begin, I will evaluate Dharamraj's four presuppositions. First, she states that, as a "canon," the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are "in conversation with each other" (130), and it is this conversation that allows one to relate "icons" (i.e., dominant themes) and identify christological Old Testament texts. I would go further and note that biblical texts can be mutually interpreting because God ultimately authored the Bible and inspired the Scriptures by his Spirit, guiding the prophets' interpretations (2 Pet 1:20–21; cf. Luke 24:27; 1 Cor 2:13) as they "searched and inquired carefully" (1 Pet 1:10 ESV) into previous Scripture and God's new revelations. Moreover, biblical texts often include "essential interpretive links" with previous texts—truths from other Scriptures that the author expects the reader to import into the present text in order to fully grasp his meaning.[3] Such an example is found in the third case study with the use of Isaiah 42:1–3 in Matthew 12:18–21. In such instances, the interpreter must perform inner-canonical exegesis to rightly understand the later passage, yet Dharamraj's model has no room for this approach (see below). Finally, the concept of canon as *rule* (i.e., *God's* authoritative word) requires that an "author-centered" approach govern all biblical interpretation, including wrestling with inner-biblical relationships, and Dharamraj's intertextual interpretive strategy misses this fact.

Second, a "corpus of meaning(s) of the text generated by a collective

2. I draw the distinction between "presuppositions" and "prejudices" from Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 412–13.

3. For this concept, see Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, BibInt 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 30–31.

or a community" influences every Common Reader and guides them as they look for "icons" (i.e., dominant themes) in a text. I concur that everyone brings to the task of biblical interpretation a web of interconnected beliefs about what is true. Yet the Bible itself needs to confirm or correct these views, and this necessitates that the interpreter allow questions of "causality and purpose" and authorial intent to guide which texts they place in conversation and how they assess their collective meaning. Through their own predictions, exegesis, and redemptive-historical themes, the biblical authors themselves must direct and arbitrate the meaning we see in intertextual relationships. How would the Jews in Berea have "examined the Scriptures . . . to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11) if they could not consider questions of intent, cause, and purpose when comparing the Old Testament text with Paul's words?

Third, Dharamraj believes that authorial intent does not significantly influence Common Readers when they build textual connections. I question this perspective, for even the Common Reader reflects on authorial intent when relating a textbook's various claims, when reading a friend's account of a conversation, or when receiving parental instruction through a sibling. This type of *personal* communication shapes Scripture, and it demands a production / author-centered approach to interpretation. Yet even if most Common Readers give little thought to an author's intent, the interpreter's role at any level is not to be a Common Reader but an Ideal Reader.[4] The Ideal Reader is one who actively seeks to become the author's implied reader—one who aligns with the author's expectations of being a disciple of Christ who approaches Scripture as authoritative and seeks to align with its teachings.[5] The goal as a reader should never be the lowest common denominator among many. Rather, the biblical interpreter must move "beyond the elementary teachings about Christ" and be "taken forward to maturity" (Heb 6:1) by training

4. I thank my doctoral fellow Brian Verrett for reminding me of the following resource. For more on "Identifying and Becoming the Ideal Reader of the Biblical Canon," see Ched Spellman, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible: Exploring the History and Hermeneutics of the Canon*, New Testament Monographs 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 184–215. Cf. Ched Spellman, "The Scribe Who Has Become a Disciple: Identifying and Becoming the Ideal Reader of the Biblical Canon," *Them* 41 (2016): 37–51.

5. Cf. Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study*, STI (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 69–72, 92; Spellman, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible*, 197–215.

oneself "to distinguish good from evil" as defined by God (Heb 5:14; cf. 2 Tim 2:7, 15).

Fourth, "certainty that one text has influenced the composition of another is not always easy to nail down" (131). In response, epistemological humility accompanies our biblical interpretation not when we replace our pursuit of biblical truth with our own created meaning but when we seek to justify our claims to the Bible's meaning by the biblical text itself. Recognizably, "[Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand," but it is such letters that "ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:16). Anytime we allow our own presuppositions to prejudice our biblical study, we put ourselves and those following us in grave danger. A complete approach to *exegesis* ("to bring out") and *theology* ("study of God") requires that we maintain an author-centered approach at all times, including when we assess intertextual relationships. Meaning is fixed by the biblical author(s), and our goal should be to rightly grasp not only what the Bible says but why it says it that way (including why biblical authors use other Scriptures).

## Evaluating Dharamraj's Interpretive Steps and Case Studies

Because different Common Readers will pair up different texts and identify different icons, Dharamraj identifies "a measure of subjectivity" in every reader-response method (130). She claims to curb this arbitrariness with "inbuilt hermeneutical checks and balances," including these (131):

1. Probing "sufficient background information" enough to properly understand the proposed icon (i.e., dominant theme).
2. Considering "whether the icon being pursued is a significant one in both the texts" (T1 and T2).
3. Evaluating "whether the intertextual conversation (T3) emerging out of the study appears forced or flows naturally."
4. Assessing whether T3 actually deepens "the reading of each text (T1 and T2) toward orthodox Christian faith and practice." This is done by assessing T3, the transcript of the intertextual dialogue.

While Dharamraj's approach allows a given text's meaning to measure the significance of a proposed icon, it appears that intuition, public meaning, and orthodoxy supply the only measures for evaluating "whether the textual conversation (T3) . . . appears forced or flows naturally" (132). This strategy allows one to stay within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy, but it neither allows one to justify claims from Scripture nor guards one from embracing right doctrine from the wrong texts.

In Dharamraj's comparison of Genesis 22:1–19 and Philippians 2:6–11, she chooses the icon of "the willing son" (134). At no point does she wrestle with whether the narrator intended such a focus in Genesis 22:1–19; nor does she consider it significant that Paul never tags Christ the divine "Son" within Philippians. Many of her comparisons between the two texts were both valid and insightful, but I believe this is because Genesis 22:1–19 itself points ahead to Christ, both typologically and directly. Moses's conscious foresight justifies a potential theological link, even conceptually, between Genesis and Philippians, yet Dharamraj never attempts to establish such an intentional connection.

In the second case study, Dharamraj considers "the relationship between God and the one celebrated" in Proverbs 8:22–31 and Colossians 1:15–20 (138). In alignment with her method, she never considers whether Paul intentionally shaped Colossians to reflect Proverbs' wisdom tradition. In contrast to the first case study, Dharamraj identifies greater dissonance between how Proverbs portrays Wisdom and how Paul depicts Jesus. While I appreciate that "the effect of the intertextual conversation (T3) is the adoration of Jesus" (144), she unjustifiably pits Christ against Wisdom. Paul uses language that intentionally invites the reader to think of Christ as the Wisdom of Proverbs 3, 8, and 30 (cf. 1 Cor 1:24, 27, 30). When read within its close context, Proverbs teaches that Wisdom is both the preexistent Son and coeternal with God (8:22; 30:3–4), that Wisdom was God's appointed representative by whom he originally created the world (3:19–20; 8:23), and that Wisdom's joy was one of the great ends for which God made all things (8:30–31). These align with Paul's portrait of Christ in Colossians 1:15–20. Jesus did not say, "Something greater than Wisdom is here," but "Something greater than Solomon is here" (Matt 12:42; Luke 11:31). Thus, he was not

contrasting himself with Wisdom but was identifying himself as both the embodiment and resulting source of all Wisdom.

The last case study clearly identifies the inherent problem with Dharamraj's reader-response approach to intertextuality. When faced with the opportunity to compare Isaiah 42:1–4 with Matthew 12:17–21, which cites it and relates it to Christ, she dismisses the possibility because "a kingly Jesus appears absent" (146). Instead, she parallels the Isaiah text with Revelation 19:11–16—a connection that is not bad and in fact opens the door for helpful insights. Nevertheless, such a move does differentiate the Common Reader from the Ideal Reader, for the latter would allow God's intentionally and clearly designated inner-biblical correspondences to initially guide all theological wrestling.

Specifically, the Ideal Reader would recognize that the kingly servant in Isaiah 42 is meek (v. 2), cares for the broken (v. 3), opens blind eyes (v. 7), and frees the captives (v. 7), and this is the very point in Matthew's identifying Jesus with this servant. Indeed, Matthew frames his whole narrative by highlighting the royal identity of Jesus (1:1; 2:2; 28:18), alludes to Isaiah 42:1 earlier at Jesus's baptism (3:16–17), and synthesizes Jesus's primary message as "proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23). Furthermore, Matthew's citation of Isaiah 42 is preceded by the declaration that he is "Lord of the Sabbath" (12:8) and followed by the fact that his Spirit-empowered exorcisms identify that "the kingdom of God has come upon you" (12:28). To say that Jesus's healing ministry does not fulfill the portrait of the royal figure in Isaiah 42 fails to read the close context of both Isaiah and Matthew. It does not matter whether the Common Reader associates the royal servant of Isaiah with the portrait of Jesus in the Gospel. What matters is that Matthew did just this, and the evangelist's purpose aligns with God's purpose.

Lastly, following the rules of traditional exegesis would require that one seek to identify Yahweh's servant in Isaiah 42:1–4. If Isaiah's servant is not Jesus, how does the Common Reader know that their growing view and appreciation of Jesus in these two texts is indeed biblically grounded? Once again, Dharamraj's reception-centered approach to intertextuality locates authority in the reader rather than in God as Scripture's author.

## Conclusion

Dharamraj's essay leaves many questions regarding Christ in the Old Testament. She identifies Isaiah's servant as "a figuration of Christ" (145), which appears to mean a pointer to but not identical with him in some way. Old Testament texts are only "potentially christological," yet one identifies "christological resonance" both through personal study and through the text's "public meaning . . . as they have experienced it" (132). Dharamraj is not clear as to whether the Old Testament even includes direct messianic predictions, let alone whether there are God-intended christological types. If one can meet Jesus only by comparing Old Testament and New Testament texts, what did Jesus mean when he claimed, "These are the very Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39)? And if Old Testament texts are only christological because of their (subjective) intertextual relationship with New Testament text, then it necessarily follows that none of the Old Testament authors intended to write about Jesus. Yet if this is so, how can Dharamraj justifiably speak of encountering Jesus in these texts?

Resisting questions of dependence, causality, purpose, and intention when assessing inter-biblical relationships fails to treat the scriptural canon as rule, wherein it gets to make its own claims regarding textual correspondences and an author's meaning and intent. In my view, when "the corpus of meaning(s) of the text generated by a collective or a community" becomes the a priori framework for our understanding the meaning of textual correspondences within the biblical text even before we start reading Scripture, we have undermined the Bible's authority with our own, placing ourselves over the text rather than as servants of it.

CHAPTER FOUR

# REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC APPROACH

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

The only Bible Jesus had was what we call the Old Testament, and he believed many of its elements concerned him (Luke 24:27).[1] Jesus opened his disciples' minds to "understand the Scriptures," and he empowered them to see a unified, overarching message in the Old Testament regarding a suffering and sovereign messiah who would spark a global mission of reconciliation with God (Luke 24:45–47). Christ's followers should aim to properly magnify Jesus where he is evident in the Scriptures. As John Owen said in 1684, "The revelation . . . of Christ . . . deserves the severest of our thoughts, the best of our meditations and our utmost diligence in them."[2] I propose the most biblically faithful way of doing this is through a multifaceted approach that accounts for the central role Jesus plays in redemptive history.

## Part 1: The Nature of Scripture

### *Christ Is Central in God's Redemptive-Historical Purposes*

The fundamental presupposition of evangelical hermeneutics is that Christian Scripture, both the Old Testament and the New Testament,

1. I am deeply grateful to the editors and to my research assistants, Brian Verrett and Nicholas Majors, for their help in editing this essay.

2. John Owen, "Meditations on the Glory of Christ," in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William Goold, 23 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 1:275.

is God's revealed word (2 Tim 3:16), which by nature implies inspiration, inerrancy, unparalleled authority, and unity amid the diversity. Redemptive history is the progressive unfolding of God's saving purposes disclosed from Genesis to Revelation, all of which grow out of and culminate in God's commitment to glorify himself in Christ. Jesus is, therefore, the beginning and end of the Bible, holding it and all else together (Col 1:16–17).

Scripture progresses through five distinct but overlapping covenants (see below) and through various events, peoples, and institutions, all of which climax in the person and work of Christ. The Old Testament's history (Matt 2:15), laws (5:17–18), prophecy (Acts 3:18), and wisdom (1 Cor 1:23–24) all point to Jesus. Indeed, in him the Old Testament's problems find their solution. All that the Old Testament anticipated is eschatologically realized as shadow gives rise to substance (Col 2:16–17), types move to antitype (e.g., Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 10:6, 11), and what God promised he now fulfills (Luke 24:44; Acts 3:18).

Christ Jesus stands as both the climax and center of God's saving purposes. This is why Jesus told the religious leaders, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life" (John 5:39–40 ESV).[3] It also explains why Jesus told his disciples that we have come to "understand the Scriptures" if we see the Old Testament's message climaxing in his death and resurrection and sparking a worldwide missions movement (Luke 24:45–47; cf. Acts 26:22–23).[4]

In Christ, the new creation, new age, and new covenant overcome the old creation, old age, and old covenant as the end of history intrudes into the middle of history. Scripture's redemptive story culminates in Christ's first and second comings, and through him God fulfills all Old Testament hopes. Hence, "no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ" (2 Cor 1:20).

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3. John 5:39 provides believers a "comprehensive hermeneutical key" for rightly interpreting the entire Old Testament, according to D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 263.

4. For the central place of these verses in Luke-Acts's theology, see Brian J. Tabb, *After Emmaus: How the Church Fulfills the Mission of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021).

## *Jesus Is Central to Biblical Interpretation*

In considering the relationship of the Testaments and their unity centered on the divine Son, G. K. Beale has identified five principles that are rooted in the Old Testament's own story of salvation history and that guided the New Testament authors' Old Testament interpretive conclusions:[5]

1. New Testament authors always assume *corporate solidarity*, in which one can represent the many.
2. The Messiah represented the true (remnant) Israel of the old covenant and the true (consummate) Israel, the church, of the new covenant.
3. God's wise and sovereign plan *unites salvation history* in such a way that earlier parts correspond to later parts.
4. Christ has initiated the age of eschatological fulfillment.
5. Christ stands as the climax and center of history such that his life, death, and resurrection provide *the key* for fully understanding the earlier portions of the Old Testament and its promises.

Within God's redemptive purposes, Jesus operates as the culmination of salvation history and provides both the beginning and end of Old Testament interpretation. This—Beale's last principle—is perhaps the most controversial, but it finds support from both Testaments and impacts all biblical inquiry.

### The Old Testament Anticipates That God's People Will Only Understand Its Full Meaning When the Messiah Comes

Many texts in the Old Testament identify how the rebel majority in the old covenant were truly *unable* to know God's word, see his glory, or hear his voice (Deut 29:4 [29:3 MT]; Isa 29:9–12; cf. Rom 11:7–8). However, Yahweh's prophets had promised that God would overcome his people's resistance when he raised up a covenant-mediating

5. Summarizing G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 53, 95–102.

prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15–20), the one we know of as Jesus (John 6:14–15; Acts 3:22–26). To him the restored community would listen, and they would then obey all that Moses had taught (Deut 18:15; 30:8; cf. Matt 17:5) because through this Messiah, God would have put his words in their hearts (Deut 30:14; Isa 59:20–21), taught them (Isa 54:13), and given them spiritual sight and hearing (Isa 29:18).[6] Thus, only in the latter days of the Messiah and the new covenant would God empower his people to more fully accept and understand his Old Testament word. Christ's person and work supply a necessary lens for rightly grasping all that God intended through his Old Testament prophets.

Concerning the prophets, we know that they usually understood at least most of what they were predicting, for they "searched [the Scriptures?] intently and with 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 the Messiah and the glories that would follow" (1 Pet 1:10–11; cf. John 1:45; 5:46; Rom 1:1–3). Most Old Testament prophets were probably like Daniel, whom God empowered to comprehend "mysteries" (Dan 2:19; 4:9) and who gained "understanding of the message" (10:1; cf. Acts 2:30–31). Nevertheless, in at least one instance, the Lord declared he would only reveal full understanding in the future "time of the end" (Dan 12:8–9).

### The New Testament Identifies Jesus as the Lens for Fully Understanding the Old Testament's Meaning

The above passages disclose (1) that believers today can understand and appropriate the Old Testament better than any of the old covenant rebel majority could, and (2) that, in at least some instances, we on this side of the resurrection can understand the Old Testament mysteries more than the prophets themselves did. The New Testament affirms that unregenerate Jews could not understand how the Old Testament pointed to Christ (John 5:37; cf. Rom 11:8; 2 Cor 3:14). It also affirms how the

6. For this future-oriented reading of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 with Romans 10:6–9, see esp. Colin James Smothers, "In Your Mouth and in Your Heart: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul's Letter to the Romans in Canonical Context" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

elect disciples did not even fully understand the Old Testament's meaning until Jesus's resurrection (John 2:20–22; 12:13–16)[7] but that it was the Old Testament itself that clarified its meaning (Luke 24:27, 32; cf. 16:29–31). Indeed, it was after the resurrection that Jesus opened "their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). The Old Testament gives necessary backdrop to Jesus's resurrection, and through Jesus's resurrection God guides our Old Testament interpretation, revealing the end, and by this allowing us now to arrive at the fullest meaning he originally intended.

Thus, God has now "revealed and made known through the prophetic writings" the full meaning of his mystery that was present but latent in the Old Testament all along (Rom 16:25–26). Through Christ, the veil is removed (2 Cor 3:14).[8] Additionally, only by Christ's spiritually transforming us through his saving work does God enable believers to accept and understand the Old Testament's ethical expectations (cf. 1 Cor 2:14).

## *Grasping Authorial Intent*

So how should we understand authorial intent? Scripture calls us to see both an organic unity and a progressive development between the Testaments. Often the Old Testament authors appear to have grasped both the shadow and the substance, the acorn and the oak tree, in relation to what they were writing (e.g., Dan 10:1; John 8:56; Acts 2:30–31). Other times, however, while the typological nature of an event, person, or institution was innately present from the beginning (1 Cor 10:6, 11), the full meaning (and perhaps even the predictive recognition) of that type may only have been understood in retrospect. In such instances, it is as if the Old Testament gives us the start of a pattern in which we read "2" followed by "4," but we need the New Testament to clarify what comes next (2 → 4 → NT?). If the New Testament identifies that the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Christ as the digit "6," then we

7. D. A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel," *TynBul* 33 (1982): 59–91; Ardel Caneday, "The Word Made Flesh as Mystery Incarnate: Revealing and Concealing Dramatized by Jesus as Portrayed in John's Gosel," *JETS* 60 (2017): 751–65.

8. For more on the theme of mystery and the centrality of Jesus in biblical interpretation, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Mystery Revealed: A Biblical Case for Christ-Centered Old Testament Interpretation," *Them* 44 (2019): 226–48.

know not only the final answer but also that the Old Testament problem was "2 + 4." If, however, the New Testament establishes that the next digit is "8," then we know both the answer and that the Old Testament problem was "2 × 4." The coming of Christ often supplies both the answer key and the algorithm that clarify how the divine author desired all along for us to read the Old Testament and to grasp the relationship of the parts.

## Part 2: Interpretive Steps for Readers

### *Interpret through Christ and for Christ*

Though elements of discontinuity exist, we must presuppose a fundamental unity from Old to New Testaments since all Scripture comes from God. The whole Bible progresses, integrates, and climaxes in Christ, and Scripture discloses a God-intentioned unity in how the unchanging Lord is working out his purpose of exalting himself through Jesus (Eph 1:9–10, 20–21).[9]

In God's good purposes already set forth in the Old Testament, when John, Peter, and Paul met the resurrected Christ, their reading of the Old Testament was never the same. Indeed, "only in Christ" is the veil removed that allows one to read and appropriate the old covenant material as God intended (1 Cor 2:13–14; 2 Cor 3:14). By disclosing Christ as the Old Testament's goal, the Father also illuminates his intent for the earlier parts. And in turn, those earlier parts then clarify the meaning of Jesus's person and work. We may initially come to Scripture, reading it front to back. However, when God the Father has given us "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" and "enlightened the eyes of [our hearts]" through Christ (Eph 1:17–18), we read Scripture back to front and then front to back.

The flow of God's saving purposes in history demands that Christian Old Testament exposition starts and ends with Christ. That is, our Old Testament interpretation is both redemptive-historical and Christocentric: it must flow from Jesus and point to him. The divine Son is at the heart of all exegesis and theology because he is the means

9. For more on the centrality of Jesus in whole Bible theology, see Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020).

and focus of God's self-revelation through his Scriptures.[10] This is what I mean when I say that my approach is Christocentric.

## *Assess a Passage's Three Overlapping Contexts*

Faithfully seeing and celebrating Christ in his Scriptures requires a multiform approach, because Jesus fulfills the Old Testament in various ways (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:44). Working through rigorous exegesis and theology, the Christian interpreter must follow the signals God supplies us to properly magnify the Messiah and his work.[11] Rightly identifying these signals requires that we interpret Scripture along three distinct but overlapping contexts,[12] enabling us to understand most fully what God intended a given Old Testament passage to mean and how a passage points to Jesus.

1. The "close context" (C1) focuses on a passage's immediate literary context within the whole book. Here we observe carefully what and how the text communicates, accounting for both the words and the theology that shapes those words.
2. The "continuing context" (C2) considers the passage within God's story of salvation. We examine how an Old Testament text is informed by antecedent Scripture (e.g., the OT use of the OT) and contributes to God's unfolding drama, whether by progressing the covenants or developing a biblical theme or typological pattern that culminates in Christ.
3. The "complete context" (C3) concerns a text's placement and use within the broader canon. We consider whether and how later Scripture uses or builds upon this passage and keep in mind revelation's progressive nature, the way Christ's work influences

10. This study approaches the question of Christ in the Old Testament in a broad rather than narrow sense by seeking to identify any legitimate means for magnifying Jesus from his Scripture.

11. Elsewhere I have summarized a twelve-step exegetical and theological process in Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017).

12. For these headings, see Trent Hunter and Stephen J. Wellum, *Christ from Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 42–69. My categories are similar to but not identical with the textual, epochal, and canonical "horizons" found in Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 293–310.

all history, and how the divine authorship of Scripture allows later passages to clarify, enhance, or deepen the meaning of earlier texts.

## *Principles for Seeing and Celebrating Christ in His Scriptures*

My redemptive-historical, Christocentric approach identifies at least seven possible ways of faithfully magnifying Christ in the Old Testament. All seven principles assume that we are reading the Old Testament through the lens of Christ, for only in him are we empowered to see, live, and hope as God intended from the beginning.[13]

### 1. See and Celebrate Christ through the Old Testament's Direct Messianic Predictions (P1)

Christ fulfills the Old Testament as the specific focus or goal of direct messianic predictions and redemptive-historical hopes. The Old Testament contains many explicit and implicit predictions.[14] For example, Peter agrees that Isaiah's words directly predict the Messiah: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed" (1 Pet 2:24 ESV; cf. Isa 53:5).

### 2. See and Celebrate Christ through the Old Testament's Salvation-Historical Story and Trajectories (P2)

Scripture's entire story line progresses from creation to the fall to redemption to consummation and highlights the work of Jesus as the decisive turning point in salvation history (cf. Luke 16:16; Gal 3:24–26). Five major covenants guide this story line, each of which finds its terminus in Christ (Adamic/Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, David, new).[15] Furthermore, various themes develop or progress as God gradually reveals more of himself and his ways, including covenant, God's

13. For more on these seven areas, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Question 3: How Does Biblical Theology Help Us See Christ in the Old Testament?," in DeRouchie, Martin, and Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, 41–47.

14. For a few examples, see Gen 22:17–18 with Gal 3:8, 14; Ezek 34:23 with John 10:16; Micah 5:2 with Matt 2:6.

15. See Jason S. DeRouchie, "Question 22: What Is a Biblical Theology of the Covenants?," in DeRouchie, Martin, and Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, 215–26.

kingdom, law, temple and God's presence, atonement, and mission. Christ fulfills all of the Old Testament's salvation-historical trajectories.

### 3. See and Celebrate Christ through the Similarities and Contrasts of the Old and New Ages, Creations, and Covenants (P3)

Jesus's saving work creates both continuities and discontinuities between the old and new ages, creations, and covenants. For example, while both the new and old covenants contain a similar structure (i.e., God redeems and then calls his people to obey), only the new covenant supplies freedom from sin and power for obedience to *all* covenant members; the old covenant did not change hearts (Deut 29:4; Rom 8:3). Similarly, whereas Adam disobeyed and brought death to all, Christ obeys and brings life to many (Rom 5:18–19). Whereas access to Yahweh's presence in the temple was restricted to the high priest on the Day of Atonement, Christ's priestly work opens the way for all in him to enjoy God's presence (Heb 9:24–26; 10:19–22). These kinds of similarities and contrasts between the old and new ages, creations, and covenants encourage a messianic reading of the Old Testament within the redemptive-historical approach.

### 4. See and Celebrate Christ through the Old Testament's Typology (P4)

The author of Hebrews said the Old Testament law was "a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb 10:1), and Paul spoke similarly (Col 2:16–17). In the New Testament, these anticipations and pointers are called "types" or "examples" (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 10:6) that in turn find their counter in Jesus as their ultimate realization. God structured the progressive development of salvation history in such a way that certain Old Testament characters (e.g., Adam, Melchizedek, Moses, David), events (e.g., the flood, the exodus, the return to the land), and institutions or objects (e.g., the Passover lamb, the temple, the priesthood) bear meanings that clarify and predictively anticipate the Messiah's life and work.

### 5. See and Celebrate Christ through Yahweh's Identity and Activity (P5)

When we meet Yahweh in the Old Testament, we are catching glimpses of the coming Christ. Recall that Jesus said that "no one has ever seen God" the Father except the Son (John 1:18; 6:46), but

that "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9 ESV). Minimally, this means that those who saw God in the Old Testament enjoyed preliminary and partial glimpses of his glory (Exod 33:18–23). It also may imply that, at least in some instances where Yahweh becomes embodied in a human form in the Old Testament, we may be meeting the preincarnate Son (e.g., Gen 18:22; 32:24–30; Josh 5:13–15). Additionally, since the New Testament identifies Jesus with Yahweh (cf. Phil 2:10–11; Isa 45:23), when we hear God speaking or acting in the Old Testament as the object of people's faith, we are seeing the very one who would embody himself in the person of Jesus (see, e.g., Heb 11:26; Jude 5).

### 6. See and Celebrate Christ through the Ethical Ideals of Old Testament Law and Wisdom (P6)

The Old Testament's laws and wisdom provide fodder to magnify Christ's greatness. The Mosaic law pointed to the importance for Christ in the way it identified and multiplied sin (Rom 3:20; 5:20), imprisoned the sinful (Gal 3:10, 13, 22), and showed everyone's need for atonement. The law by its nature, therefore, predicted Christ as "the end of the law" (Rom 10:4 ESV).

Moreover, as God's word was made flesh, Jesus manifests in his person the essence of every ethical ideal aligned with Yahweh's revealed will, and he then imputes this perfection to believers (Rom 5:18–19; cf. Phil 3:9). When you observe how the Old Testament law and wisdom express ethical ideals, know that the justifying work of the divine Son fulfills them all.

### 7. See and Celebrate Christ by Using the Old Testament to Instruct or Guide Others in the Law of Love (P7)

Jesus came not "to abolish the Law or the Prophets . . . but to fulfill them" (Matt 5:17), and the way he fulfills the various precepts guides our pursuit of love. While old covenant instruction no longer bears *direct* authority in the Christian's life, it still indirectly guides us when read through the mediation of Christ (2 Tim 3:15–16). Through Christ, the very texts that used to condemn now lead us in a life of love, and God empowers such love (Rom 13:8–10) by changing our hearts and filling us with his Spirit (Ezek 36:27; Rom 2:26, 29). The Old Testament helps

guide our Christian obedience, and every step of this obedience magnifies Jesus's sanctifying work.

## Part 3: Applying the Approach–Three Case Studies

Having presented seven principles for seeing Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures, I now apply this redemptive-historical, Christocentric approach to Genesis 22, Proverbs 8, and Isaiah 42.

### *Genesis 22:1-19: Proof and Pledge That Yahweh Will Fulfill His Offspring Promise*

#### Placing the Offspring Promise in the Context of Genesis

Before considering Genesis 22's messianic predictions, which are both typological (P4) and direct (P1), the interpreter must first place the passage within the continuing context of God's story of salvation (C2). Genesis is threaded by the promise of "offspring," which includes not only peoples but a person. Due to Adam's sin bringing both curse upon the whole world and corruption within all humanity (3:14–19; 6:5, 11–12), the Lord declared that a single male "offspring" (*zera'*) of the first woman would, through his own personal tribulation, triumph over the evil serpent, thus reversing the curse and bringing new creation (Gen 3:15).[16] From this point forward, the world's only hope for blessing and reconciliation with God rested on Yahweh's preserving and realizing the promise of this singular offspring.

The narrator ties the offspring promise of Genesis 3:15 to the patriarchs by the book's repeated heading ("this is the account of X's family line") and the linear genealogies in 5:1–32 and 11:10–26.[17] Genesis 22:1–19 occurs within Terah's family line cycle (11:27–25:11). This cycle begins with Yahweh promising that Abra(ha)m would (1) become a great nation (12:2), (2) be the agent of curse-overcoming blessing (12:3), and

16. Collins rightly notes that Hebrew authors make explicit whether the collective singular noun *zera'* ("seed, offspring") bears a singular or plural referent by including singular or plural adjectives and/or pronouns (whether independent, object, or suffix pronouns). The lexicalized singular pronoun *hu'* in 3:15 identifies that the woman's "seed" is a male individual (cf. 2 Sam 7:12–13). C. John Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *TynBul* 48 (1997): 139–48, esp. 142–44.

17. See Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2; Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis," *JETS* 56 (2013): 219–47.

(3) have offspring who would inherit the promised land and become numerous like the dust (13:15–16).

Genesis 15 builds on these promises by stressing that the patriarch has yet "no offspring" (v. 3 ESV) but believes (v. 6) Yahweh's promise that *one* "offspring" from his own loins will be his heir and become countless as the stars (v. 5).[18] This astronomical imagery connects directly with the singular seed of Genesis 22:17 (see below), where God promises, "I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky" (author's translation). Abraham would become the father of many nations (17:4; cf. Gen 12:2–3) in many lands (26:3–4; cf. Rom 4:13) through the promised offspring's arrival (Gen 22:17–18).

Two elements in Genesis 22:1–19 indicate that the offspring promise provides a governing backdrop for the narrative. First, the narrator stresses that the patriarch must sacrifice his "son" (22:2), frequently repeats the word "son" (22:3, 6–10, 12–13, 16), and notes Abraham's fatherhood (22:7). These elements recall God's earlier pledge, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (21:12; cf. 17:19, 21), which distinguishes Isaac from the coming offspring (cf. 26:3–4). Second, Yahweh directly predicts how the individual offspring will multiply like the stars, possess the gate of his enemies, and be the instrument of blessing to the nations (22:17–18). Thus, I summarize the point of Genesis 22:1–19 as follows: God tests whether Abraham will fear him and obey the divine call to sacrifice his only son, thus proving that he truly believes that Yahweh will fulfill his promise of a singular male offspring through Isaac who will deliver and bless all nations.

### Indirect/Typological Foreshadowing of Christ in Genesis 22:1-19

Genesis 22:1–19 narrates Abraham's obedient willingness to offer his son as a burnt offering, Isaac's sacrificial role and deliverance, and Yahweh's providing the ram as a substitute sacrifice. Through these features, the passage typologically foreshadows (i.e., P4) that God would not spare his own Son (Rom 8:32; cf. Isa 53:6, 12), Christ would die and rise to life (Heb 11:19), and he would serve as a substitute sacrifice for sinners (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13–14; 1 Pet 2:24). Scripture suggests that

18. Note the singular pronoun and verbs in verse 4. For more on Genesis 15:1–6, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Lifting the Veil: Reading and Preaching Jesus' Bible through Christ and for Christ," *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 167–77.

the patriarch himself understood to some degree the predictive nature of his test.

*The father did not spare his son.* By recalling the complete context (C3), we see that the Synoptics (Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 20:13) and John's writings (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10) may present Jesus as the antitypical beloved son whom Isaac foreshadowed (cf. Gen 22:2, 12, 16). Romans 8:32 likely provides a more direct allusion, however: "He who *did not spare his own Son* [*idiou huiou ouk epheisato*], but *gave* [*paredōken*] him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (emphasis added). Along with seeing an allusion to Isaiah 53:6, 12 (Yahweh *gave up* [*paredōken*, LXX] his servant to death for our sins), many scholars propose Paul is alluding to Genesis 22:12, 16, where the Lord declares to Abraham, "You *have not spared* your beloved *son* [*huiou . . . ouk epheisō*, LXX]."[19]

Ironically, while Father Abraham, like Father Yahweh, was willing to give up his son, God did not allow the patriarch to complete the sacrifice. The typology in this instance is therefore only partial, or perhaps better, inverted (or ironic). That is, Jesus alone as God's Son fulfills Abraham's hope that "Yahweh will see" (cf. Gen 22:14) and stands as the antitype to the substitutionary role Isaac foreshadowed but could *not* fulfill and that the ram supplied.[20]

*Isaac, the potential burnt offering.* Abraham's test required that he willingly "sacrifice [Isaac] . . . as a burnt offering" at Moriah (Gen 22:2–3; cf. 22:6–8, 13). Prior to the tabernacle's construction and the incorporation of the sin and guilt offerings, the burnt offering was the only atoning offering for human sin.[21] Texts like Leviticus 9:24–10:2 (C3) demonstrate that burnt offerings can consist of *substitutes* (9:24) or *sinners* (10:1–2),[22] but only the killing of the substitute allows the repentant rebel a renewed relationship with God.

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19. For example, Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 634; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 451.

20. For more on inverted typology, see Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 92–93.

21. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 176–77.

22. Other texts identify as sacrifices the sinners Yahweh destroys at the day of his coming (e.g., Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10; Ezek 39:17; Zeph 1:7).

Was Isaac to die as a substitute or a sinner? Scripture most commonly uses the language of "burnt offering" with respect to substitution, and nothing in the close context (C1) draws attention to a wickedness in Isaac demanding immediate justice (contrast Deut 9:4–6). Hence, God likely sets Isaac forth as a vicarious sacrifice standing in for the sinner Abraham or a broader community.

However, God did not allow Isaac to stand as a substitute sacrifice, likely because he himself was a sinner. The complete biblical context (C3) informs us that burnt offerings would continue until the ultimate substitute's arrival since they functioned as an "illustration/figure" (NIV/ESV, *parabolē*) pointing to what God would accomplish in Christ during "the time of the new order" (Heb 9:9–10). Abraham, like Noah before him (Gen 8:20–22), required sustained substitutionary expressions. Isaac could not stand as the substitute, for he himself bore sin's blemish.

*God supplies a curse-bearing substitute.* Within the story of God's salvation (C2), the Lord had promised Abraham, "Whoever curses you I will curse" (Gen 12:3). When ratifying his covenant of land, offspring, and blessing to the patriarch, Yahweh dramatically passed between the animal parts, signaling that he would bear the curse of death if his fulfilling the covenant with Abraham was jeopardized (15:9–18; cf. Jer 34:18–20).[23] But since he also conditioned the fulfillment of the covenant promises on the obedience of Abraham's children (Gen 18:19) and because all people were innately wicked (8:21), Genesis both anticipates that God would be forced to curse them and implies that the Lord would, in turn, have to curse himself.

We now see the significance of the coming offspring and the way Genesis 22 points to the Son of God who would himself stand as humanity's substitute. At the beginning of Genesis (C1), God promised that an offspring of the woman and divine-image-bearing son would destroy the evil one and his sinful work (3:15; cf. 5:1–3). Thus, where the first man and son of God failed to provide and protect (2:15 with

23. On reading the covenant ratification ceremony as a self-maledictory oath sign, see Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 16–17, 41–42; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 286–94.

3:6), thereby bringing curse to the original creation, the logic of Genesis 3 and complete biblical context (C3) teaches that this new man and Son of God would succeed, thereby securing blessing for a new creation (cf. Rom 5:18–19; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 5:17). Nevertheless, while God would raise up this new son, his victory would be costly. The serpent would smite the man's heel (Gen 3:15), which when considered from the complete context (C3), at least implies that this son would endure a blow from the one who has been "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). From the start, therefore, Genesis anticipates that the promised offspring would in some way bear the curse but overcome (smiting the serpent's head, Gen 3:15), thus reconciling the world to God.[24] Before Genesis 22, the narrator has already intimated for the reader the future curse of both the offspring and God himself. Later prophetic revelation (C3) further associates the self-sacrificing royal deliverer with Yahweh (e.g., Ps 2:1–7; Isa 7:14; 9:6) and God with his wise royal son (e.g., Ps 45:6–7 [45:7–8 MT]).

Prior to Genesis 22 (C1 and C2), the narrator has already associated Isaac with the coming offspring (Gen 15:3–5; 21:12; cf. 26:3–4), such that Isaac's arrival reinforces the certainty that the deliverer will come after (and from) him. Since Isaac's life is so bound with the offspring who is to experience tribulation unto triumph, one is not surprised that Isaac will endure suffering to foreshadow the one to come. Yet he is not sufficient for the role. In Abraham and Isaac's dramatic dialogue up the mountain, the father declared, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (22:8). The Hebrew term rendered "lamb" is *se* (Gk. *probaton*), a generic term for any small livestock beast. After Yahweh's angel held back the patriarch's death-bringing hand, the specific type of beast God supplied was a "ram" (22:13). Perhaps to distinguish the type from its antitype, Isaiah notes that the suffering servant was "led like a lamb [Heb. *se*; Gk. *probaton*] to the slaughter" (Isa 53:7). Both Isaac and the substitute are figures for the greater substitute that Genesis itself anticipates (cf. John 1:29; Acts 8:32–35; 1 Pet 1:18–19).

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24. See Alan F. Segal, "'He Who Did Not Spare His Own Son . . .': Jesus, Paul, and the Aqedah," in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 175–77.

*Abraham rejoiced that he would see Christ's day.* At least two features within Genesis 22:1–19 (close context) suggest that Abraham himself understood the predictive significance in his test. First, even after seeing the substitute ram and offering it "as a burnt offering instead of his son" (22:13), Abraham called the place "Yahweh *will see*" (*yhwh yir'eh*), not "Yahweh *has seen*" (22:14). Abraham recognized the replacement ram as a foreshadowing of how "Yahweh will see" to fulfilling the offspring promise and overcome the curse with blessing (22:18). Thus, his testimony became a perpetual statement of hope in the one we call the Christ: "At the mount of Yahweh it will be seen" (22:14, author's translation).

A second feature indicating that Abraham saw his test as predictive further supports this reading. The three-day journey from the region of Beersheba in the Philistines' land (Gen 21:33–34) to Moriah (approximately 91 kilometers, or 56.5 miles) was unnecessary if Yahweh only desired to test Abraham, for this could have been done without distant travels.[25] By means of this journey, the patriarch would have recognized something more about the promised offspring as a person and about the location, means, and timing of how God would secure his victory.

As for the *location*, God brings Abraham to a mountain in "the region of Moriah" (Gen 22:2), the future location of temple sacrifices (2 Chr 3:1) and, ultimately (C3), Christ's sacrifice (Mark 10:33; Acts 10:39). The chronicler explicitly identifies Moriah as the place of sacrifice, showing that he saw Abraham's words as prospective.

With respect to the *person*, in coming to Moriah, Abraham has returned to the region of (Jeru)Salem and the King's Valley where the priest-king Melchizedek of (Jeru)Salem blessed him (Gen 14:18–20). By this act and for Abraham's benefit, Yahweh is likely associating Melchizedek, the "king of righteousness" and "peace," with the promise of the offspring whose coming the patriarch's obedience at the mountain would secure (cf. Ps 110:1–2, 4; Heb 7:17, 21).

As for *means*, Yahweh calls a father to give up his son. Within the complete biblical context (C3), this act points to the Father's greater

25. So, too, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Genesis 22:2: Sacrifice Your Son?," in *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, by Walter C. Kaiser Jr. et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 126–27.

gift in Christ (cf. John 3:16; Rom 8:32; 1 John 4:9–10). The Lord also restores this son and supplies a substitute to bear the wrath that Abraham or a broader community deserved (John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21). Abraham knew his son would return with him, by whatever means the Lord chose. Thus, Abraham told his servants regarding him and his boy, "*We* will worship and then *we* will come back to you" (Gen 22:5, emphasis added). The author of Hebrews saw in Abraham's statement his belief that God could "even raise the dead" (Heb 11:19). Within the complete context (C3), Isaac's "resurrection" anticipates the promised offspring, who likewise would triumph through tribulation (Gen 3:15; 49:8–12; cf. Col 2:13–15).

Regarding *timing*, the narrator identifies that Abraham's test, culminating in his figuratively receiving back his son from the dead, occurred "on the third day" after he began his journey (Gen 22:4). As such, this narrative may be one of the instances where in Scripture (C3) "this is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead *on the third day*" (Luke 24:46, emphasis added; cf. 15:3–4).[26]

### Direct Predictions of Christ in Genesis 22:1-19

In his second speech, Yahweh's messenger makes two promises, both expressed by an infinitive absolute + *yiqtol* construction in Hebrew: "I will surely bless you and will surely make your offspring as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore" (22:17, author's translation). Yahweh's commitment to bless recalls his words in 12:2. His mention of the stars alludes to 15:5, which identified that the offspring who would come from the son from his loins would become countless like the stars. Against the NIV, we should regard the offspring in 22:17b as singular since the verb "multiply" (*rbh*) commonly means to produce children when it governs living organisms (e.g., 1:28; 9:1, 7; 17:2, 20).[27] In light of this, it seems possible that the "offspring" in Genesis 22:17 is actually the singular deliverer who will himself multiply into a community. The masculine *singular* pronoun "his" modifying "offspring" in verse 17 further supports this conclusion. Moreover, Genesis's overall

26. See Jason S. DeRouchie, "Why the Third Day? The Promise of Resurrection in All of Scripture," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 20.1 (2021): 19–34.

27. I thank my research assistant, Brian Verrett, for this observation.

plot structure witnesses a narrowing of vision that moves from the world to Israel to a royal offspring in Judah's line upon whom all the world's hopes rest (Gen 49:8–12).[28]

The offspring in Genesis 22:17–18 is singular according to C. John Collins's understanding that an adjective or pronoun's number makes explicit whether *zera'* ("seed, offspring") bears a singular or plural referent.[29] The close proximity of the three instances of *zera'* in 22:17–18 suggests that *all* are singular in this context.[30] The flow of thought is as follows:

1. The singular male offspring of the woman who will strike a death blow to the head of the serpent (3:15) and whom Yahweh will name through Isaac (21:12) will multiply like the stars (22:17).
2. The first result of this community will be that the singular offspring will possess the gate of his enemies (22:17; cf. 24:60).
3. The second result is that all the nations of the earth will regard themselves blessed in this offspring (22:18; cf. Ps 72:17; Isa 65:16; Jer 4:2).

The earth's nations counting themselves blessed (22:18) constitutes the promised great multiplication (22:17) and likely signals the eschatological shift from Abraham fathering one nation (Israel during the old covenant) to fathering many nations (the church, united to Jesus the true Israel, in the new covenant) (17:4–5). All these are in some way incorporated into the singular offspring (22:18), and through their multiplying, he claims enemy turf (22:17). This suggests that during the reign of the male deliverer, the "land" promised to Abraham will expand to "lands," which is exactly what Yahweh promised Isaac in 26:3–4. Furthermore, when considering the complete context (C3), both Peter and Paul regarded 22:18 as a messianic text (see Acts 3:13, 18, 24–26;

28. DeRouchie, "Blessing-Commission," 235.

29. Collins, "Syntactical Note," 142–44.

30. Contra Alexander and Steinmann, who affirm a singular referent for *zera'* in 22:17c–18 but a plural referent in 22:17b (T. Desmond Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis," *TynBul* 48 [1997]: 365; Andrew E. Steinmann, "Jesus and Possessing the Enemies' Gate [Genesis 22:17–18; 24:60]," *BSac* 174 [2017]: 17).

Gal 3:8, 13–14, 16, 29). I suggest, therefore, that Genesis 22:15–19 amounts to a direct messianic prophecy (P1).

### Summary

In Genesis 22:1–19 Yahweh tests Abraham to reveal whether he would fear God and obey the divine call, thus proving that he truly believed that Yahweh would fulfill his promise of a singular male offspring through Isaac (21:12). In response to the patriarch's obedience (22:18; cf. 26:5), Yahweh both typologically confirms (P4) (22:11–14) and directly predicts (P1) (22:15–19) that he will indeed realize what he has promised. He will do this by providing a penal substitutionary sacrifice for sinners (vv. 13–14) and by multiplying the male offspring into a massive community, which will result in the singular offspring overcoming his enemies' stronghold (v. 17) and in his being the one in whom some from all the earth's nations regard themselves blessed (v. 18).

## *Proverbs 8:22-31: Wisdom Is God's Royal Son by Whom He Creates the World*

### Overviewing the Poem

In the immediate context (C1) of Proverbs 8, personified Wisdom urges listeners to embrace the truth of her instruction (vv. 4–11), identifies her noble associations and the benefits she brings (vv. 12–21), notes her eternal origins and joyful involvement in creation (vv. 22–31), and charges her "sons" to heed her voice to experience life rather than death (vv. 32–36). This meditation on creation includes many semantic and conceptual links with Genesis 1:1–2:3 (C3).[31] Analyzing the discourse suggests that the unit divides into two parts (Prov 8:22, 23–31), both of which offer interpretive challenges.

Concerning the first part, Wisdom declares that Yahweh "possessed" (*qnh*) her before he did any acts (Prov 8:22 ESV). The verb *qnh* in Proverbs 8:22 means "to possess," whether by *acquisition* (e.g., Exod 15:16; Isa 11:11; Prov 1:5; 4:5, 7), *purchase* (e.g., Gen 47:22; 49:30; Lev 25:30; Jer 32:9), or *generation* (Gen 4:1; Deut 32:6; Ps 139:13). The NIV's "brought forth" derives from the verb's use in contexts of generation,

31. See Michael B. Shepherd, *The Text in the Middle*, StBibLit 162 (New York: Lang, 2014), 10.

but "to possess" still appears to be the base meaning of *qnh*.[32] God has always "possessed" Wisdom, which was present with him before he created anything. It was present as an underlying divine quality or function that his being generates and that is essential or organic to his nature.[33] I render Proverbs 8:22 as follows: "Yahweh possessed me, the beginning of his way, earlier than his acts from then." The phrase "the beginning of his way" stands in apposition to "me" and likely marks Wisdom as the preeminent element of his purposes (cf. Job 40:15; Col 1:15).

Second, Wisdom declares herself to be Yahweh's means for carrying out his intentions both before creation (Prov 8:23–26) and at creation (vv. 27–31). *Before creation*, Yahweh installed Wisdom as his representative (v. 23: "I was formed" [NIV] or "I was set up" [ESV]). The verb *nsk* with this meaning occurs elsewhere only in Psalm 2:6: "I have *installed* my king on Zion" (emphasis added). Solomon likely associates Wisdom's primordial exaltation in Proverbs 8:23 with the future anointed king's exaltation in Psalm 2:6 (see below). At the very least, the link probably identifies Wisdom's royal status in relation to God even before time began. Thus, the Complete Jewish Bible renders Proverbs 8:23 as "From the distant past I was enthroned."[34]

Wisdom portrays itself as God's commissioned image bearer or royal agent who has enjoyed this post "from eternity [*me'olam*] . . . from the beginning, from times before earth" (Prov 8:23, author's translation). The noun *'olam* means only "a remote time," but the close context (C1) concerns eternity past. As Seth Postell notes, "Because Wisdom precedes creation, it must be regarded as uncreated, and, as a consequence, eternal."[35]

Yahweh "brought forth" or "strengthened" (*hyl*) Wisdom before the waters, mountains, and fields (8:24–26 ESV). While interpreters debate the precise meaning of the Hebrew verb *hyl*, the text's overall flow depicts Wisdom as an eternal effect of God himself.

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32. See R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastes*, AB 18 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 72; Bruce Vawter, "Prov 8:22: Wisdom and Creation," *JBL* 99 (1980): 205–16.

33. See the discussion below on Proverbs 30:4.

34. See the rendering of the Complete Jewish Bible at www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16379/jewish/Chapter-8.htm.

35. Seth D. Postell, "Proverbs 8—The Messiah: Personification of Divine Wisdom," in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum (Chicago: Moody, 2019), 652.

Next, *at creation* Wisdom was Yahweh's constant companion (8:27–31)—present when he established the heavens (v. 27) and joyfully and faithfully (*'amon*) serving beside him when he made the earth (vv. 28–31). The noun *'amon* in verse 30 is likely a bi-form of the adjective *'emun* ("faithful") and noun *'emunah* ("faithfulness"). While some point to Song of Songs 7:1 [7:2 MT] and Jeremiah 52:15 to render *'amon* "artisan" or "craftsman" (CSB, ESV, NASB, NET, NKJV, NRSV), the meaning "faithful one" works fine in these contexts. The NIV's "I was *constantly* at his side" adequately captures the meaning.[36] At creation Wisdom constantly rejoiced before Yahweh, in his earth's soil, and with the sons of Adam (8:30–31).

### Wisdom as God's Son in Proverbs 8:22-31

Solomon portrays Wisdom as a woman to entice his royal son(s) to desire her (cf. 1:8; 2:1; 4:10). Nevertheless, Wisdom's female persona is secondary to the book's message, for the royal son(s) should not only embrace but also embody Wisdom. Furthermore, in Proverbs 8:22–31 Wisdom is neither a feminine part of God nor his consort. Instead, the first-person speech ("I, me, my") mutes the feminine portrayal, thus allowing Wisdom to be both with God and of God.

Significantly, at the book's end (close context) a certain Agur son of Jakeh asks four rhetorical questions whose contents recall Yahweh's queries in Job 38 and echo Yahweh's creative acts that Proverbs 3:19–20 and 8:27–31 describe: "Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Whose hands have gathered up the wind? Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth?" (30:4). He then queries, "What is his name, and what is the name of his son? Surely you know!" John Sailhamer claims that this verse intentionally alludes to Wisdom's part in creation (8:27–31) to raise "the question of the identity of the One who is with God."[37]

More specifically, 30:1–6 is prophetic speech, making up what 30:1 terms an "inspired utterance" (NIV) or "oracle" (ESV, *massa'*). The text reinforces this through the phrase "the man's utterance"

36. Cf. Proverbs 3:19–20; see Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 417–20.

37. John Sailhamer, *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 354.

(*ne'um haggeber*), which occurs elsewhere only three times and always at the head of (messianic) predictions (see Num 24:3, 15; 2 Sam 23:1).[38] Contemporary translations consistently render 30:3b negatively, as the last of four declarations of ignorance. However, the Hebrew retains no negative in 30:3b, and the word order suggests a contrast with what precedes: "I have not learned wisdom, *but knowledge of Holy Ones I know*" (author's translation). Despite being weak and uneducated (30:2–3a), Agur received an "oracle" (30:1)—a truthful "word of God" (30:5) that supplied "knowledge of Holy Ones [*qedoshim*]" (30:3b). The plural form "Holy Ones" is unexpected as a reference to God. In Scripture its only other unambiguous use as a substantive with reference to God is in Proverbs 9:10, which captures the book's thesis at the end of the first main unit: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Yahweh, and knowledge of Holy Ones is understanding" (author's translation). Most interpreters view these examples as plurals of majesty, following the pattern of *'elohim* ("God"), so they give the plurals a singular referent, "Holy One."[39] However, these would be the only such examples in Scripture, and the singular forms *'el* (30:1) and *'eloah* (30:5) for "God" draw further attention to the plural *qedoshim*. Tracy McKenzie and Jonathan Shelton rightly note, "The occurrence of the duo at the end of verse 4 suggests a plurality in the holy ones here in verse 3."[40] Similarly, the Father and Son in 30:4 naturally point back to the "Holy One[s]" of 30:3. This link identifies a united holy nature in the distinct persons of the Father and his Son. Furthermore, the connection with 9:10 (cf. 1:7) strongly associates the relationship of the Father and Son in 30:4 to Yahweh and an eternally begotten Wisdom in 8:22–31. Targum Neofiti ties these texts together by rendering Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, with wisdom, the Son of Yahweh completed the sky and the land" (cf. Jer 10:12; Ps 104:24).[41]

38. For these links, see Tracy J. McKenzie and Jonathan Shelton, "From Proverb to Prophecy: Textual Production and Theology in Proverbs 30:1–6," *Southeastern Theological Review* 11.1 (2020): 8–11.

39. The NRSV is an exception, rendering *qedoshim* as "holy ones" in Proverbs 30:3 but not 9:10. Nevertheless, the phrase's limited use within Proverbs suggests both instances envision the same referent.

40. McKenzie and Shelton, "From Proverb to Prophecy," 13.

41. As cited in Shepherd, *Text in the Middle*, 11.

### The Wise King as God's Son in Proverbs and Beyond

Additionally, Proverbs most commonly uses the language of "sonship" with respect to the royal line, which we learn elsewhere will culminate in a king whose dominion will never end. While Proverbs never explicitly mentions the promises of 2 Samuel 7:12–16, the superscription identifies Solomon as the "son of David, king of Israel" (1:1), which places Proverbs within this historic and prophetic continuing context (C2).[42] Furthermore, Proverbs intends to train the royal "son[s]" whose wisdom is grounded in the fear of Yahweh. It is here that Solomon's allusion to Psalm 2 becomes significant. Just as Yahweh from eternity past installed his Wisdom-Son to represent him (Prov 8:23), so also Yahweh designates his messianic King his "begotten Son" (Ps 2:7, author's translation) upon his installation as King in Zion, having triumphed over his enemies (Ps 2:1–2, 6; cf. Acts 4:24–28; 13:32–33). Utilizing the complete biblical context (C3), Thomas Schreiner notes, "If Proverbs is viewed from a canonical perspective, the ideal picture of the king points to a future king—a king who fulfills the promise of the covenant with David . . . Jesus Christ."[43]

The internal witness of Proverbs suggests that those who composed and/or compiled the book portrayed Wisdom as God's eternally begotten Son and also believed that the royal son of David and of God would be Wisdom incarnate. This accords with the complete context (C3) when one considers the New Testament's description of Jesus. What "the Wisdom of God said" (Luke 11:49–51 ESV), Jesus said, thus identifying himself as Wisdom.[44] Jesus's wisdom exceeds Solomon's (Matt 12:42), and he proves it in his deeds and testifies to it in his teaching (11:2, 19; 13:54). Christ is God's wisdom who stands against foolish human speculations (Col 2:1–8) and who becomes our wisdom through his cross-victory (1 Cor 1:24, 30; cf. 2:7–8).

Other New Testament texts identify Jesus as Wisdom when they declare him to be the divine Word through whom "all things were

42. So, too, Barry R. Leventhal, "Messianism in Proverbs," in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum (Chicago: Moody, 2019), 639–40.

43. Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 294.

44. Hartmut Gese, "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology: The Consistent Development of Biblical Theology," *HBT* 3 (1981): 43.

made" (John 1:1, 3, 14) and "in very nature God" who becomes human, dies a substitutionary death, and then is "exalted . . . to the highest place" (Phil 2:6–11). Perhaps the clearest parallels appear in Colossians 1:15–20. Here Paul alludes to the Wisdom-Son of Proverbs 8 and 30 when he identifies that God has brought believers "into the kingdom of the Son" (Col 1:13), who is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation" (1:15), the one who "is before all things, and in [whom] all things hold together (1:17), and the one in whom all God's "fullness" dwells (1:19).

#### Summary

As Yahweh's eternally begotten Son, Wisdom was the beginning of God's way, which manifests itself both in Yahweh's appointing Wisdom as his representative even before creation and by Wisdom's serving joyfully and faithfully beside Yahweh at creation. Alongside the Father, the Wisdom-Son was one of the Holy Ones, which implies the Father and Son enjoyed a unified nature but were distinct in person. As Son, Wisdom incarnate would represent the Father by reigning as the messianic King, fulfilling the promises to David and standing greater than Solomon as the bestower of wisdom on future children of God. Thus, Proverbs 8:22–31 magnifies Jesus through a blend of principles 5 (Jesus as Yahweh) and 6 (Jesus as Ethical Ideal).

### *Isaiah 42:1-9: The Servant-Person Will Give Justice and Bring Light to the World*

#### An Overview of Isaiah 42:1-4

Inspecting Isaiah 42:1–9 (close context) reveals that these verses provide a direct messianic prediction (P1) in that they communicate the servant-person will faithfully give justice to the nations and be empowered by Yahweh as a covenant for the people and light for the nations. After identifying the world's folly in pursuing idolatry (41:21–29), Yahweh advances his servant as the remedy—one who will care for the wounded and the weak and faithfully give justice to the nations. Yahweh upholds and delights in his servant, who is endowed by God's Spirit (42:1). Yahweh then highlights both the nature and certainty of the justice that the servant will bring. He will give justice "to the nations" (42:1d), and he will do so "in faithfulness" (42:3c). His pattern of justice will be neither

self-advancing and assertive (42:1d) nor dismissive and abusive (42:3ab). And he will persevere until his task is accomplished—establishing justice throughout the earth and satisfying the longing coastlands with his law (42:4). The Lord of creation (42:5) commits to empower his servant as a covenant for people and a light for nations (42:6–7), all for the sake of his own name and purpose (42:8–9).

Significantly, 42:10–17 rings out that Yahweh will accomplish the very things he calls his servant to fulfill: the coastlands will sing his praise (42:10, 12; cf. 42:4) as he leads the blind (42:16; cf. 42:7), shines light into darkness (42:16; cf. 42:6), and receives the worship he is due (42:17; cf. 42:8). These links suggest that the servant of 42:1–9 is closely associated with Yahweh and serves as the very means by which God fulfills his restoring work.

### Isaiah's King, Servant, and Anointed Conqueror

Isaiah 42:1–9 is the first of four Servant Songs (cf. 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12), which, along with many other texts from Isaiah, Christians have long believed anticipate an eschatological king, servant, and anointed conqueror who will reign in righteousness over a righteous community (11:1–9; 32:1–8), save the Lord's multiethnic people by providing them righteousness (49:6; 53:11; 54:14, 17), and effect righteousness by overcoming opposition, delivering the wounded and bound, and inaugurating the new creation (59:21; 61:1–3; 63:1–6).[45] Yahweh chooses his servant (42:1; 49:7), empowers him with his Spirit (42:1; cf. 11:2; 59:21; 61:1) and word (49:2; 50:4), and declares him righteous (50:8–9; 53:11). Bearing no guilt (50:5, 8–9; 53:9) and triumphing through struggle and abuse (42:4; 49:4, 7; 50:6–7; 53:3, 7–8), this servant will instruct and give justice to the nations (42:1, 3–4; cf. 9:7; 11:3–4), sustain the weary by his teaching (42:3; 50:4), be highly exalted and praised by kings (49:7; 52:13, 15), and restore Israel and save many from the world (49:6; 53:11). He will accomplish this by serving as a vicarious, atoning sacrifice (53:4–6, 10–12) and as a covenant for people and light for nations (42:6–7; 49:6, 8; 55:3; cf. 54:10; 60:3) in order to herald the good news (52:7; cf. 61:1), heal the disabled (42:7;

45. See J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 13–16.

53:5; cf. 61:1), free captives (42:7; 49:9; cf. 61:1), generate a context of security and justice (42:3; cf. 4:6; 9:7; 11:6–9; 61:2), and create lives that evidence the new creation (53:11; cf. 4:2–4; 61:3), all for God's glory (42:8; 49:3; cf. 11:9; 61:3). At least six key conceptual connections working along all three interpretive contexts indicate that Isaiah's portraits of king, servant, and anointed conqueror throughout the book all refer to the same person:

1. Yahweh endows this figure with his Spirit and the word (Isa 11:1–2, 4; 42:1; 49:1–3; 50:4; 59:21; 61:1–3).
2. Righteousness distinguishes both the person (Isa 9:7; 50:8; 53:11; 61:10) and his work (11:4; 53:11; 54:17; 61:3).
3. The prophet equates the individual with the Davidic descendant who would be God's Son and reign forever over God's kingdom (Isa 9:6–7; 55:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:14).
4. Operating as a signal or banner to which the nations will gather (Isa 11:10, 12; 49:22; 62:10), this person will reign over and redeem a global people (Isa 11:6–12; 19:23–25), extend revelation and salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa 42:1–4; 49:6; 52:13–53:12; 55:3–5), and deliver a multiethnic remnant (Isa 56:6–8; 66:19–20)—all of whom Yahweh will centralize in a restored Zion that will stretch across the new creation (Isa 2:2–4; 11:6–9; 54:2–3; 55:5; 59:20; 60:1–22; 62:11–12; 65:17–18, 25; 66:20–22).
5. The person is human yet truly God. He is both David's descendant (Isa 11:1) and the source from which David came (11:10)—"Immanuel [God with us]" (7:14) and the "mighty God" (9:6). While bearing human form and ancestry (52:13; 53:2) and experiencing human suffering (49:7; 50:6; 52:14), he was sinless and righteous (50:5, 8–9; 53:9, 11) and the very "arm of Yahweh" (53:1), who is endowed with Yahweh's garments of salvation (11:5; 59:17; 61:10) and through whom Yahweh delivers and conquers (51:9; 52:10; 59:16; 63:5).
6. The New Testament clearly associates Jesus with the king (e.g., Matt 1:23; 4:15–16; Rom 15:12), servant (Matt 8:17; 12:18–20; Acts 8:32; 13:34; 26:22–23; 1 Pet 2:22–25), and anointed conqueror (Luke 4:18–19).

## Isaiah's Messianic Hope in the Servant-Person

Recognizably, some, like the Ethiopian eunuch, have wondered whether the servant of the Servant Songs refers to Isaiah himself: "Who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" (Acts 8:34). Yahweh refers to the prophet as "my servant" in Isaiah 20:3, and Isaiah may be "his servant" in 44:26 (ESV). The autobiographical, first-person speech in the second and third Servant Songs (49:1–6; 50:1–9; cf. 61:1–3, 10–11; 63:1–6) certainly could also point in this direction, but it does not explain the biographical portrayal of the servant in third person in 42:1–9 and 52:13–53:12.[46] Moreover, the prophet appears to include himself among those for whom the servant's atoning death works (53:6), and no one who is merely human has sprinkled many nations with atoning blood (52:15) and served to see God's "salvation . . . reach to the ends of the earth" (49:6).

The term "servant" occurs twenty times in Isaiah 40–53, always in the singular. Some of these instances clearly refer to the collective and rebellious nation of Israel (42:19, 22; 43:8, 10). But this chosen servant does not need to fear, for the Lord will strengthen him (41:8–10) and pour out his Spirit on his offspring, making them blossom in new creation (44:1–5). With predictive certainty, as if already accomplished, God has forgiven his servant's sins and redeemed him. He will confirm this coming redemption by raising up Cyrus to return Israel from Babylon to the land (44:21–28; 48:17–20).

Many texts, including 41:8–10, support reading the "servant" in 42:1–4 as corporate Israel. The LXX made this view explicit by including "Jacob" and "Israel" before "servant" and "chosen," respectively, thus reversing the order found in 41:8 but identifying the same referent—the nation. However, the following reasons lead me to see the eight instances of "servant" in the Servant Songs (42:1; 49:3, 5–7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11) (C1) as direct prophecies (P1) of the singular eschatological messiah of whom the earlier and later parts of the book speak.[47]

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46. G. P. Hugenberger, "The Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant Songs' of Isaiah: A Second Moses Figure," in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 113.

47. Cf. Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord," 108–11; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Identity and Mission of the 'Servant of the Lord,'" in *The Gospel according to Isaiah 53: Encountering*

1. The Lord gives his servant as "a covenant for the people and a light for the gentiles" (42:6; cf. 49:8). The singular "people" contrasts with the plural "gentiles" and refers to collective Israel. The servant here is not the people but represents them, and his covenant-mediating sacrifice will be for them and on behalf of the broader nations (cf. 55:3–5).
2. Isaiah 49:3 and 6 explicitly distinguish the servant-person named Israel from the servant-people also named Israel. Yahweh gives the former a mission to restore the latter and also to save peoples to the ends of the earth.
3. The chosen servant of Isaiah 49:1–13 is the one Yahweh redeems, whom kings worship, and who is "despised and abhorred by the nation" (49:7; cf. 50:6; 52:15; 53:3).
4. Unlike the nation of Israel (Isa 1:4; 42:18–25; 43:8–13; 46:12; 59:2; 64:7), within Isaiah (C1), the servant-person is righteous (50:8; 53:11) and guiltless (50:9), having not rebelled (50:5) and done no violence or deceit (53:9). Indeed, he can operate as "an offering for guilt" (53:10 ESV), which Leviticus 5:15, 18 declare had to be "without defect." None in the nation could save (Isa 59:16), so Yahweh would act by raising up the messiah who stands distinct from the nation of Israel, just like the servant from our passage in question (cf. 42:6; 53:6).
5. In Isaiah 53:1 the prophet queries, "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (cf. John 12:38; Rom 10:16). In the close context (C1), the "arm of the Lord" is none other than the "servant" (Isa 53:10, 12), whom God reveals to an unbelieving people (53:1) and to believing outsiders (52:13; cf. Rom 15:21). Later Yahweh asserts, "All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people" (Isa 65:2; cf. Rom 10:20), and this people is none other than corporate Israel, whom, therefore, we cannot equate with the servant.
6. This servant was "cut off," and Yahweh "punished" him "for the transgression of my people" (Isa 53:8). The stress here is on

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*the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012), 89–92.

penal substitution, with God's just wrath falling on the substitute rather than on the sinners. A collective servant does not die on behalf of itself and still live, but the servant-person does just this and brings righteousness and life to the many (53:11).[48]

7. The nation Israel was incapable of fulfilling the demands of worldwide justice and restoration for the weak within Isaiah 42:1–4. Israel's inability to accomplish such a task suggests that an individual messianic figure rather than the nation is the servant from verse 1.

### The New Testament Identifies Isaiah's Servant-Person as the Christ

Matthew notes how Jesus's healing ministry fulfills Isaiah's assertion: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases" (Matt 8:17 ESV; cf. Isa 53:4). Peter, too, after noting how "Christ suffered for you," cited Isaiah 53:7–9, stressing how Jesus never sinned or retaliated under abuse as he bore our sins and brought healing (1 Pet 2:21–25). When the Jews rejected Messiah Jesus (John 12:38; Rom 10:16) and the gentiles received him (Rom 15:21), they fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 52:15–53:1).

More specifically with respect to Isaiah 42:1–9, Yahweh marked Jesus as his promised "chosen" one (Luke 9:35; cf. 23:35), and Jesus identifies himself with Isaiah's Spirit-empowered agent of God's good news who would give sight to the blind (Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18–19; cf. Isa 42:1, 7; 61:1–2). Matthew freely translates the Hebrew text of Isaiah 42:1–4 in its entirety, declaring that Jesus willingly healed those who followed him "to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah" (Matt 12:17–21). While one could posit that Matthew treats Jesus as ultimate Israel (via typology or *sensus plenior*) or portrays Jesus's healings as a second fulfillment after the nation of Israel's prior acts (whatever those would be),[49] my argument above clarifies that Isaiah (and Matthew) would have seen Jesus's person and work *directly fulfilling* the earlier predictions (P1). Drawing together Isaiah's images of the hoped-for king

48. Thomas D. Petter, "The Meaning of Substitutionary Righteousness in Isa. 53:11: A Summary of the Evidence," *TJ* 32 (2011): 165–89.

49. For example, Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 43.

and servant (Isa 9:2; 42:7; 49:6), Zechariah highlighted how Jesus would "give light to those who sit in darkness" (Luke 1:79 ESV). Similarly, Simeon stressed that Jesus was "a light for revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:32; cf. Isa 42:6; Acts 26:23). Jesus claimed that he was "the light of the world" (John 8:12), and Paul asserted that Jesus brought "the message of light to his own people and to the gentiles" (Acts 26:23; cf. Isa 42:7; 49:6)—a mission he continued in Christ (Acts 13:46–47; 26:18). Without exception, the New Testament identifies the individual of Isaiah's Servant Songs as Jesus.

### Summary

Isaiah directly predicted a messiah who would be king, servant, and anointed conqueror (P1). Isaiah 42:1–9 speaks of a servant-person who would right every wrong, heal the hurting, proclaim God's law, and mediate a covenant that would bring saving light to many, resulting in blind eyes seeing and bound lives being freed. Jesus realizes Isaiah's hopes and ours.

## Conclusion

Scripture bears an overarching unity and Christocentric framework, which we grow to appreciate only when God grants us spiritual sight and discloses to us the revealed mystery of the gospel through Jesus's saving work (Rom 16:25–26; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:6). Christian interpreters are uniquely qualified to allow the Bible to speak in accordance with its own contours, structures, language, and flow. Doing so should disclose both an overall consistent message concerning Christ and varied organic (i.e., natural, unforced) salvation-historical and literary-canonical connections between the parts, all of which directly or indirectly relate to Christ, in whom "all things hold together" (Col 1:17).

As Christians, we must approach the Old Testament through Christ and for Christ, using a multi-orbed approach that assesses Scripture's close, continuing, and complete contexts (C1–3) and considers in what way(s) the Old Testament magnifies Jesus. I propose seven possible ways: (P1) direct messianic predictions; (P2) the salvation-historical story and trajectories; (P3) similarities and contrasts between the old and new ages, creations, and covenants; (P4) typology; (P5) Yahweh's

identity and activity; (P6) ethical ideals; and (P7) obedience to the law. Interpreting in the light of all three contexts, I identify Christ through typology and direct messianic prediction in Genesis 22:1–19, through Yahweh's identity and ethical ideals in Proverbs 8:22–31, and through direct messianic prediction in Isaiah 42:1–4.

# REJOINDER

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

I thank my fellow contributors for thoughtfully engaging my approach to Christ in the Old Testament. The five views in this book include both substantive and less significant differences. I will briefly engage the other contributors and then synthesize my approach's key distinctions.

Goldingay asserts that focusing on Christ in the First Testament implies a perspective that God does not matter (212). In contrast, Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6), and "whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (5:23). Additionally, Goldingay's denial that Luke 24:45–47 speaks of a unified Old Testament message centering on Jesus and global missions may result more from Goldingay's own hermeneutic than Luke's meaning. Only by ignoring my arguments can Goldingay assert that I do not supply "signposts" for showing how the Old Testament points to Christ (213). Goldingay also maintains that antitypes create and point to types, not the other way around (213–14). However, Adam "was a type *of the one who was to come*" (Rom 5:14 ESV, emphasis added), indicating that the type was present before the antitype arrived. Lastly, because hyperbole illuminates truth (unlike exaggeration, which misleads), Goldingay's claim that Peter hyperbolically stated that "all the prophets" spoke of Christ (Acts 3:18) would still mean that the prophets as a whole clearly spoke of Jesus's death, which is more than Goldingay concedes. Paul interpreted the First Testament materials through Jesus (1 Cor 2:2; 2 Cor 3:14), and Goldingay would serve himself and the church if he did the same.

I agree with Longman that knowing a character's thoughts or

feelings is impossible (219) *unless* Scripture discloses them. Jesus said that Abraham "saw" his day "and was glad" (John 8:56), so we can expect to find textual clues of this. Longman claims that my conviction that Abraham understood the predictive significance of Isaac's sacrifice is "far from certain" (218). One hundred percent agreement is not expected in a *five views* book, and we assess valid interpretation on the basis of arguments, not certainty. Nevertheless, Longman is correct that "the story of the binding of Isaac has a typological significance to Christ's sacrifice" regardless of "whether or not Abraham had a sense" of this (219). As for Proverbs 8:22–31, Longman confronts my "daring" assertion that "the first-person speech . . . mutes the feminine portrayal" of Wisdom in the passage (220). My point here was *not* to deny that the text portrays Wisdom as a lady but instead to stress (1) that it does so as a rhetorical move to effect godliness, and (2) that 30:4 portrays *this same Wisdom* as God's *Son*. If I am correct that God's "son" in 30:4 is Wisdom, then I am on solid ground to see the final editor associating Wisdom with God's Son in Proverbs 8. The link is made even more explicit if the plural "Holy One[s]" in 30:3 and in the thesis of 9:10 indeed refer to God and Wisdom. Significantly, Jesus occasionally used feminine imagery of himself (e.g., Matt 23:37), and he even associates his own ministry with Lady Wisdom, who is "proved right by her deeds" (11:19). Whether the whole book seeks to train royal sons is secondary to my main argument regarding the link between Proverbs 30:4 and 8:22–31. Longman never addresses this argument! As for Isaiah 42:1–4, Longman asserts that "no one was reading Isaiah 42 . . . at the time of Jesus" in the way I have. He fails to account for Simeon who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" and who identified Jesus as fulfilling *Isaiah's* hope for a global Savior (Luke 2:25, 32). Simeon grasped what Jesus's disciples failed to get but should have from the prophets' clear testimony (Luke 24:25–26).

Dharamraj asserts that my messianic readings are often "beyond the scope of the Common Reader" (224). True! But they are not beyond the scope of Christians who interpret Scripture in light of itself and like Jesus and the apostles did. These Christians are the Ideal Readers (1 Cor 2:13–14; 2 Cor 3:14) who agree with Jesus that Moses wrote of him (John 5:46). Against Dharamraj, I never stated that Jesus is the only fish in the Old Testament sea. Other themes, characters, and motifs

exist. Nevertheless, we must affirm that Jesus is in the Old Testament and that he came to fulfill it all (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:44). Lastly, I do not separate Genesis 22:1–19 from its immediate context, but I do claim that this text significantly develops the book's messianic "seed" theme. My interpretations may be "esoteric" due more to present scholarly bias than to unfaithfulness, for my method results in a highly textually based interpretation with conclusions that align with those of the biblical authors themselves.

I agree with Carter that Scripture's "primary and literal sense" is God's authorial intent as gleaned from the close, continuing, and complete contexts (232). Regarding Proverbs 8:22–31, I see no reason why David, Solomon, and Agur could not first have rightly spoken of the divine Son and why Proverbs' editor(s) could not have identified such and then brought the varied God-guided perspectives together to form a more composite picture. This is how progressive revelation works. I am suggesting that the final editor saw complementary intentions in the varied sources and drew them together in a way that allowed all those sources to enjoy enhanced meaning in the book's final form. Now that God has closed the canon, however, the only meaning of the various passages is the divine author's composite one.

Jesus said that his Bible testifies about him (John 5:39). My Redemptive-Historical, Christocentric approach reads the Old Testament through and for Christ, considering every passage in the light of its close, continuing, and complete contexts. The approach distinguishes itself from the others by claiming that Christians can rightly understand how the Old Testament *itself* anticipates Christ and the world's saving hope (Rom 16:25–26; cf. Luke 24:45–47). This is made possible only through Christ (2 Cor 3:14), the aid of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:13–14), and careful exegesis and theology (2 Tim 2:15). But Jesus is part of the Old Testament's meaning (against Goldingay), seen in the first reading (against Longman), linked with the Old Testament authors' intention (against Dharamraj), and evident apart from a deeper meaning dependent on the New Testament itself (against Carter).

Rather than wiping out sinners after Adam's fall, God mercifully revealed himself and his will in a book. From one perspective, every word of the Old Testament testifies to Christ because every word is blood bought. With this, we can see and celebrate Jesus at least through

(1) direct messianic predictions, (2) salvation-historical trajectories, (3) similarities and contrasts, (4) typology, (5) Yahweh's identity and activity, (6) ethical ideals, and (7) living out the law of love. The Old Testament's human authors searched intently to learn about the Christ and his time, and God revealed to them that their Spirit-led interpretations would serve Christians even more than themselves (1 Pet 1:10–12).

# RESPONSE TO CRAIG A. CARTER
## (THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC APPROACH)

JASON S. DEROUCHIE

I am grateful to Dr. Carter for clearly synthesizing the hermeneutics and practice of an orthodox approach to theological interpretation of Scripture. As with my first reading of his *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*,[1] I found myself affirming many of his claims, appreciating most of his critiques and cautions, and aligning with many of his conclusions. This is especially true regarding his comments about Scripture's nature. Carter and I agree that "the nature of Scripture itself [as God's revealed word] dictates how it must be interpreted" (245) and that the spiritual truths that shape the whole of Scripture require spiritual people (i.e., believers) to spiritually discern the text's meaning (see esp. 1 Cor 2:14). These convictions ground why I assert that we must read the Old Testament *through* Christ, as regenerated believers, in order to properly grasp the fulness of all God intended in the Old Testament. I further affirm that the Old Testament testifies to Christ, that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, that the New Testament authors were not reading Jesus into the Old Testament text, and that the text's "literal sense is the divine author's intended meaning as communicated through the human author's words" (243). Despite this substantial agreement, our approaches differ concerning the proper interpretive steps a reader should employ for rightly seeing Christ in the Old Testament.

1. Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

## Evaluating Carter's Interpretive Steps for Readers

Carter opens his essay by affirming five ways that he believes premodern interpreters faithfully saw Christ in the Old Testament. Of these five, I can immediately affirm in whole propositions 1, 2, and 4: (1) that Christ fulfills direct Old Testament prophecy, (2) that numerous Old Testament types elucidate Christ, and (4) that Jesus is the renewed Israel of God whose life and ministry recapitulate much of the nation's history, succeeding where they had failed. I must qualify, however, propositions 3 and 5.

Proposition 3 asserts, "We can interpret the Old Testament according to the fourfold sense, as containing a christological or spiritual sense that is an extension or expansion of the literal sense" (240). By "the fourfold sense," Carter refers to the patristic hermeneutic of seeing four levels of meaning in every biblical text. Alongside a text's "literal sense" (level 1), the text also bears a "spiritual or christological sense" that God intends us to grasp through the text's figures (the "allegorical sense," level 2), ethical implications (the "tropological sense," level 3), and future trajectories (the "anagogical sense," level 4). We are thus "talking about layers of meaning in a text, not about conflicting meanings being attributed to the same text" (253).

Among other things, I appreciate that the Great Tradition stresses that a Christian approach to Scripture must be christological and that all Scripture is unified around a redemptive movement from promise to fulfillment in Jesus Christ. I also agree with Carter that Scripture's unity demands that it be noncontradictory, that it interpret itself, and that Jesus's role at its center should guide and limit how we interpret major themes.

Nevertheless, I question whether one could faithfully identify a fourfold sense within every Old Testament text. Moreover, and more to the point of this response, I am concerned that Carter consistently treats the "spiritual sense" as something foreign to the Old Testament text itself. For example, he claims that this spiritual sense is only "clear in hindsight" as part of the deeper christological meaning, that it stands as "the expanded literal sense of the Old Testament," and that one can only identify it "under the hermeneutical control of New Testament Christology" (265). Hence, we need *not* justify through Old Testament exegetical and theological wrestling the "spiritual sense" we identify.

All three case studies are representative of Carter's claims. For Carter, Genesis 22:1–19 anticipates Christ only as "a *canonical expansion* of the literal sense" (259, emphasis added). Similarly, Carter lets the New Testament govern his interpretation of Proverbs 8:22–31 and regards "the christological interpretation of the fathers . . . as a legitimate *extension* of the literal sense" (261, emphasis added). Finally, Carter affirms that only "the New Testament apostles, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were able to see that in Jesus Christ the Isaianic text was fulfilled" (265). In contrast, I assert that Old Testament authors intentionally wrote of messianic realities, which frequently makes the "spiritual" and "literal" senses one and the same.

Much of Carter's basis for distinguishing the "literal" and the "spiritual" senses appears to derive from his interpretation of 1 Peter 1:10–12, a text he believes stresses that "the Old Testament prophets did not understand fully everything they were inspired to write" (244). He further lumps Abraham with Caiaphas (John 11:50–52) as those who "spoke more truly than they knew, which is a pattern in the prophets according to Peter" (258). But Peter never claimed that the Old Testament prophets were ignorant of the full meaning when he wrote,

> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time[2] the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you. (1 Pet 1:10–12 ESV)

The text emphasizes that the Old Testament prophets were those who "searched and inquired carefully" about the messiah and his coming, apparently *from the biblical text.* Yes, "they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21), but their prophecies were Spirit-led *interpretations*

2. In contrast to the NIV and CSB, I believe the ESV is correct in identifying that the Old Testament prophets inquired about both "what person or time" (similarly, see NRSV, NET, NASB). Peter always uses the Greek *tis* as a pronoun and *poios* as an adjective, which would result in a translation like "what-person or what circumstances." See G. D. Kilpatrick, "Peter 1.11: TINA 'H POION KAIRON," *NovT* 28 (1986): 91–92; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 19.

(v. 20), such that they viewed the meaning of their texts as organically connected to the previous ones. The biblical writers were "taught by the Spirit," but this happened as they were rightly "explaining spiritual realities" gained both from the Old Testament and the Spirit's recollection of Jesus's teaching (1 Cor 2:13; cf. Luke 24:27).[3] We should, therefore, expect that often the "literal sense" *is* the "spiritual" or "christological sense." A deep wrestling with the Old Testament text itself will reveal what the New Testament authors themselves saw *in their biblical text.*

Carter writes as though God spoke at various levels but that the human authors never intentionally did this. In contrast, I propose that "the human authors regularly wrote at two or more different levels at the same time and on purpose."[4] This is the whole essence of typology, which I believe is always divinely predictive and usually intentionally so on the part of the human author. What this means is that I can faithfully speak God's word (1 Pet 4:11) and guard against error (2 Pet 3:16; cf. Jas 3:1) only when I rightly handle Scripture (2 Tim 2:15), proving my christological reading by reasoned argument from the Old Testament itself (Acts 17:11; 19:8; 28:23) and not by simply finding deeper levels of meaning verified by New Testament claims. The New Testament provides both the answer key and the algorithm to our Old Testament interpretation, but the interpreter must still work the problem (i.e., interpret the OT text in context and through Christ's resurrection) in order to see how they arrive where they do. Carter's failure to seek Old Testament warrant for Scripture's "spiritual sense" runs at least two risks: (1) treating the New Testament authors as those who interpret Old Testament texts by the Spirit in ways divorced from their original contexts, and (2) affirming any orthodox christological interpretation of Scripture, regardless of whether right doctrine is drawn from wrong texts.

Additionally, I have reservations about Carter's proposition 5: "The Son himself speaks in the Old Testament, which we can see by using

3. Jesus promised that the Spirit of truth would teach the apostles by bearing witness to Christ, recalling his teaching, and guiding them to truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13–15); they would in turn bear witness to Jesus and relay this message to the masses as the true word of God (John 15:27; 17:17; cf. 1 Cor 14:37; Titus 1:3). The result is the New Testament, which captures "the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people" (Jude 3). As with Yahweh's old covenant prophets through whom God spoke (Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:21), Paul's words were nothing less than the interpretation of "spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words" (1 Cor 2:13).

4. Using the wording of my doctoral research fellow Brian Verrett.

prosopological exegesis to understand texts where the Father speaks to the Son and the Son replies or where the Messiah speaks" (240). I affirm that "the Son himself speaks in the Old Testament," but I am not convinced that our awareness of this comes through what Matthew Bates tags "a reading technique whereby an interpreter seeks to overcome a real or perceived ambiguity regarding the identity of the speakers or addressees (or both) . . . by assigning nontrivial *proposa* (i.e., nontrivial vis-à-vis the 'plain sense' of the text) to the speakers or addressees (or both) in order to make sense of the text."[5] I question this claim not only because the pattern of Palestinian Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew Scripture prior to AD 70 appears to have been highly governed by the biblical context[6] but also, and more importantly, because I see strong evidence in the Old Testament itself for the claims the New Testament authors are making. One is almost always able to recognize the messianic thrust of an Old Testament passage by reading it in the light of the whole book, by accounting for informing theology in antecedent Scripture and in the flow of redemptive history, and by affirming the reality of predictive prophecy. Rather than requiring a special "reading technique," what one needs is to observe carefully, understand rightly, and evaluate fairly what is there, reading every passage in light of the close, continuing, and canonical contexts.[7]

## Conclusion

Carter affirms that "the Bible is *literally* about Jesus Christ" (265, emphasis original). However, he appears to see "the expanded literal sense of the Old Testament text" that "bears witness" to Christ as only possible

5. Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 218. Carter points to Bates's work as "a good treatment of prosopological exegesis" (240n4), and Carter builds off Bates's definition in *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 192–201.

6. David Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE*, TSAJ 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

7. For a helpful evaluation of prosopological exegesis with similar conclusions, see Peter J. Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," *SBJT* 23.2 (2019): 105–22. For a helpful critique of Theological Interpretation of Scripture as a movement with conclusions that Carter mostly affirms, see D. A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, but . . . ," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 187–207; cf. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 248–51.

"under the hermeneutical control of New Testament Christology" (265). I see Jesus more organically in the Old Testament itself than Carter does, making his view more open to critique than mine that one is forcing the Old Testament text to say certain things. "Through Christ" I am now able to read the old covenant materials as a pointer to the glories of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:14 ESV). Through Jesus's resurrection, the Old Testament's message now becomes more fully understood (Rom 11:25–26). But what this usually means is that I am now empowered, as a spiritual man, to read the spiritual text as both God *and* the human author intended. That is, my reading of the Old Testament itself within its close and continuing contexts allows me to rightly grasp what the Old Testament prophets themselves saw and meant, and the canonical context confirms this reading and adds greater clarity to the person and time of the Messiah's work.