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Christian Morality: Jesus' Teaching on the Law

P.G. Nelson

P.G. Nelson is a writer on contemporary theological issues. His books include *Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Sexual Morality* (Whittles, 1996).

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What is the relationship between the law of God in the OT and the teaching of Jesus in the NT? This is an important practical question because in his teaching Jesus seemed to affirm some laws (e.g. 'you shall not steal') but abrogate others (e.g. 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'). So when we come to OT laws that Jesus did not explicitly discuss (e.g. the law on charging interest on loans or engaging in homosexual acts) how do we know whether he intended them to apply to Christians or not? The apostles took some of the laws to apply (e.g. the law on homosexual acts, Rom. 1:26–27 etc.), but how did they decide this, and what about all the other laws: did Jesus intend these to apply to his followers or not?

Answers to this question vary widely,¹ e.g.

- he intended all OT laws to apply (Christian Judaism)
- he intended only the moral and civil laws to apply (theonomy)
- he intended only the moral laws to apply (moral nomianism)
- he intended only laws he taught to apply (new covenant theology)
- he did not intend Christians to live by laws at all (antinomianism)

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The wide variety of answers creates a great deal of confusion, both among Christians, and in the Church's witness to the world.

My aim in this article is to try to resolve this confusion by re-examining how Jesus related his teaching to the OT, and bringing this together in a coherent and consistent way.

Status of the Law (Matthew 5:17–20)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his disciples:

¹⁷'Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfil. ¹⁸For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one

¹ See, e.g., Wayne G. Strickland (ed.), *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) [paperback edn, *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (1996)]; Jonathan Bayes and Christopher Bennett, 'The Christian and God's Law: Two Views', *Foundations*, No. 48, pp. 16–25 (2002); Christopher J.H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Leicester: IVP, 2004), Part 3.

small letter, not one little stroke, will by any means pass from the Law until all has taken place. ¹⁹Whoever therefore relaxes one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others [to do] so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does [them] and teaches [them] shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I say to you that, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Here Jesus affirms the OT ('the Law' and 'the Prophets', 17). He says that the Law will stand (a) 'until heaven and earth pass away' (18a), and (b) 'until all has taken place' (18b). He concludes that disciples should practise and teach all the commandments, even the least of them (19). Disciples are to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees (20), both in this respect ('For...'; cf. 23:23), and as in the teaching that follows (21–48).

Commentators debate the timing of (b). However, if the 'all' is taken to refer to all the prophecies in the OT, the last of which to be fulfilled is the promise of 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Is. 65:17–25), then, as the construction of verse 18 requires, (b) is synchronous with (a).²

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Interpreting the Law: the Sabbath (Mark 2:23 – 3:6)

The Pharisees repeatedly criticized Jesus for breaking the Sabbath. Mark records two such occasions.³ The first was when the disciples plucked ears of corn from a field, rubbed the ears in their hands, and then ate the corn (2:23). This violated the Law as the Pharisees interpreted it (24).⁴

Jesus answered the Pharisees by pointing out that their interpretation of the Law was more restrictive than David's (25–26)⁵ and even the Law itself (Matt. 12:5).⁶ Jesus went on to say to them:

²⁷'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath: ²⁸so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath.'

Here, Jesus affirms the teaching of the Law that the Sabbath was given for the good of men and women, that they might have rest and be refreshed (27; cf. Exod. 23:12, Deut. 6:24). He infers from this that, as Son of man, he has the authority to decide what is appropriate on the Sabbath (28). This is, by implication, whatever will do a man or woman good.

Jesus made this explicit on a subsequent occasion, when he healed a man with a withered hand (3:1–6). The Pharisees regarded this as breaking the Sabbath because the disease was not life-threatening, and treatment could have been left until the next day.⁷ Jesus asked the

² Some commentators take (b) to refer to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but this greatly strains verse 18, and makes verse 19 apply for only three years.

³ For parallels, see Matt. 12:1–14, Luke 6:1–11. For other occasions, see Luke 13:10–17, 14:1–6; John 5:1–47, 7:21–24, 9:1–41.

⁴ *Mishnah Shabbath* 7.

⁵ See 1 Sam. 21:1–6 in relation to Lev. 24:5–9.

⁶ See Num. 28:9–10.

⁷ *Mishnah Yoma* 8.6.

Pharisees who were watching, '[Is it] lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' (4).

Jesus thus interpreted the law of the Sabbath according to its *purpose*. He thereby established a principle which is helpful in the interpretation of other laws. For example, Deuteronomy 22:8a states, 'When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof'. Taken legalistically, this would mean that every type of house should have a parapet. The purpose of the parapet, however, was to make the flat roof of a house, on which people lived in summer, safe (8b). Thus, to fulfil the law, a householder need not necessarily build a parapet, but make his house safe

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according to the hazards *his* particular type of house can pose.

Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath has considerable implications for the Christian observance of it.⁸ The main one is that Christians do not have to keep it on a Saturday. The *purpose* of the law, that on every seventh day men and women might have rest and be refreshed, is fulfilled whichever day they keep.

Christian standards: higher still (Matthew 5:21–48)

Speaking to his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went on to explain further how their righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (20):

²¹'You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder; and whoever murders shall be subject to judgment."²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be subject to judgment ...

²⁷You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery."²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman intending to lust after [her] has already committed adultery with her in his heart ...

³¹It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce."³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on account of fornication, makes her commit adultery ...

³³Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but pay to the Lord your oaths."³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all ...³⁷But let your word be "Yes, yes", "No, no" ...

³⁸You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."³⁹But I say to you, do not resist evil ...

⁴³You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy."⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies'.

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⁸ A full discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

Here Jesus takes a series of laws from the OT ('You have heard that it was said to those of old') and raises their standard ('But *I* say to you').⁹ Thus:

- he extends the law against murder (Exod. 20:13) to anger (21–26)¹⁰
- he extends the law against adultery (Exod. 20:14) to lust (27–30)
- he makes the law restricting divorce (Deut. 24:1) stricter (31–32)¹¹
- he takes the law designed to prevent lying (Num. 30:2) further (33–37)
- he takes the law designed to restrain retaliation (Lev. 24:19–20) further (38–42)
- he extends the command to love one's neighbour (Lev. 19:18) to enemies (43–48)¹²

We now reach a key point. Raising the standard of these laws has a different effect on different laws. In some cases, the new standard includes the old one (e.g. if anger is wrong, murder is still wrong). In other cases, the new standard does *not* include the old one (e.g. if all retaliation is wrong, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' is now wrong). In other words, in some cases the new standard *subsumes* the old one: in other cases it *replaces* it.

We can now understand how Jesus could abrogate laws and still say that he had not come to destroy them (17–20). The laws he abrogated he abrogated by *raising* them, not destroying them.

A further example: the food laws (Mark 7:1–23)

On one occasion the Pharisees criticized Jesus for allowing his disciples to break 'the tradition of the elders' and eat without ceremonially washing

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their hands (1–5).¹³ Jesus replied by pointing out how the Pharisees reject 'the commandment of God' for the sake of their tradition (6–13). He then turned to the crowd:

¹⁴'Hear me, everyone, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing from outside a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things that come out of a man are what defile a man.'

The disciples could not understand this, and asked him to explain the parable (17). Jesus replied:¹⁴

⁹ *Egō de legō* is more naturally taken as adversative than explicative.

¹⁰ Note that Jesus is referring to *continuous* anger (*orgizomenos* not *orgistheis*), i.e. he wants disciples to deal with anger quickly (cf. 23–26, 18:15–17; Eph. 4:26–27).

¹¹ For a full exposition, see P.G. Nelson, *Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Sexual Morality*, 2nd edn (Latheronwheel, Caithness: Whittles, 1996).

¹² The gloss ('and hate your enemy') summarizes the main thrust of OT teaching (Deut. 7:1–2, 23:3–6; Psa. 139:19–22, etc.). There was, however, a requirement to help an enemy *in extremis* (Exod. 23:4–5, Prov. 25:21–22).

¹³ This tradition was based on the law for priests (Exod. 30:17–21, Lev. 22:1–9) but went far beyond it.

¹⁸Are you also without understanding? Do you not realize that whatever enters into a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹because it does not enter into his heart but into his stomach, and goes out into the sewer' (cleaning all foods).

He continued:

²⁰What comes out of a man, this defiles a man. For from inside, out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²¹covetings, evil-doings, deceit, indecency, envy, evil-speaking, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from inside and defile a man.'

Here, Mark understands Jesus to nullify, not only the tradition of hand-washing, but also the food laws of Leviticus 11 (19b). Jesus does this once again, not by destroying the Law, but by raising it. The food laws had a symbolic function: they provided a means by which the Israelites could show themselves to be God's people and distinguish themselves from other nations (Lev. 20:22–26). As such they were concerned only with *outward* purity. Jesus, however, wanted his disciples to have an *inward* purity (Matt. 5:8), and to distinguish themselves from other people by the good deeds that come from this (Matt. 5:13–16). Thus, it was by raising the OT's standard of purity that Jesus nullified the food laws (cf. Acts 10:1 – 11:18).¹⁵

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The apostles later realized that raising the OT's standard of purity nullified all the other laws designed to distinguish Jews from Gentiles, including circumcision (Acts 15:1–29, see below). OT writers had already begun to elevate the law on the latter by calling for circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16, Jer. 4:4).

The new commandment (John 13:34–35)

A further example of Jesus raising the standard of a law is the instruction he gave to his disciples on the night before his death:

³⁴A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

This commandment is an enhanced version of 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus replaces 'as yourself' by 'as I have loved you' (cf. 15:12). Jesus is asking his disciples to love each other to a new standard (cf. 13:1–17, 15:12–14, 1 John 3:16–18).

Raising the standard of other laws

How far Jesus intended to raise the standard of laws he did not explicitly discuss can only be gauged from his treatment of the laws he did discuss. For example, he did not discuss the law

¹⁴ Following most commentators, I take the words in parenthesis to be Mark's, hence the following 'And he said' to resume the quotation (compare the unbroken quotation in Matt. 15:16–20).

¹⁵ Cf. Christian Stettler, 'Purity of heart in Jesus' teaching: Mark 7:14–23 par. as an expression of Jesus' *basileia* ethics', *JTS* 55 (2004), 467–502. I am grateful to a reviewer for drawing my attention to this paper.

prohibiting homosexual acts (Lev. 18:22). His treatment of adultery in Matthew 5:27–30, however, suggests that this law should be raised to include fostering a desire to commit such acts.¹⁶ Similarly, his discussion of, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy' (Matt. 5:43–48) suggests that the laws prohibiting Israelites from charging interest on loans to fellow Israelites (Exod. 22:25, Lev. 25:35–38, Deut. 23:19–20) should be extended to loans made to anyone (cf. Luke 6:34–35).¹⁷

However, this process must be undertaken carefully. We may raise

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standards for ourselves, but cannot impose them on others. If a fellow Christian is convinced that the standard of an OT law that Jesus did not discuss should be raised less or more, we have to respect this (cf. Rom. 14:1 – 15:7).

Raising the standard of OT wisdom: laying up treasure (Matthew 6:19–21)

Jesus also elevated OT wisdom. The book of Proverbs teaches the virtue of laying up 'treasure' and not dissipating it (15:6; 21:20). Jesus accepted the wisdom of this, but took it further. He told his disciples:

¹⁹'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

What Jesus meant by 'lay up treasures in heaven' he explained on another occasion (Luke 12:13–34):

³³'Sell your possessions and give alms; provide for yourselves money bags that do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.'

He explained this further in the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1–13): 'treasure in the heavens' is the eternal hospitality of those we help (9).¹⁸

Not for everyone (Matthew 19:3–12)

When some Pharisees asked Jesus a testing question about divorce (3), he told them that there should be no divorce (4–6). The Pharisees then asked him why Moses allowed divorce (7), to which he replied, 'Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because of your hardness of heart' (8). He then pointed out, as in the Sermon on the Mount, that divorce leads to adultery (9).¹⁹

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¹⁶ For a full discussion, see Nelson, *Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Sexual Morality*.

¹⁷ P.G. Nelson, 'Jesus' teaching on money', *Foundations*, No. 50, pp. 9–14 (2003).

¹⁸ Nelson, 'Jesus' teaching on money'.

¹⁹ For a full exposition, see Nelson, *Jesus' Teaching on Divorce and Sexual Morality*, Chap. 2.

The disciples' response to the strictness of Jesus' teaching is to say, 'If such is the case of a man with [his] wife, it is not good to marry' (10).²⁰ Jesus answers them,

¹¹'Not everyone receives this word, but [only those] to whom it has been given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born so from [their] mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive [it], let him receive [it].'

What Jesus is saying is that it is not possible for everyone to accept his teaching on divorce (11a). It can only be accepted by those 'to whom it has been given' (11b). What he means by this he goes on to explain by means of an illustration ('For...', 12).²¹ He points out that some men are born eunuchs (i.e. incapable of having children), some are made eunuchs by men (i.e. by surgery), and some make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (i.e. they exercise self-restraint in their relations with women). In the same way, he implies, some couples are born able to live together for life, some can be made to do this by human pressure (family or social), and some make themselves do it for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Jesus draws a clear distinction between the standards he sets for his followers (those who want to keep his commands for the sake of the kingdom of God) and the standards that can be achieved by others (who are only born able, or can be made, to keep *some* of his commands). He evidently intended that his very high standards should be for Christians, not for the world.

Civil law

Jesus said very little about the laws that should govern society. However, his answer in verse eight implies that he regarded something like the law of Moses to be appropriate for this purpose, allowing, as it does, for the hardness of men's hearts. He did, however, question the fitness of men to carry out some of its punishments (John 8:1-11).

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Jesus' attitude to Roman rule was: 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's' (Mark 12:13-17). He did, however, tell Pilate, 'You would have no authority over me at all if it was not given you from above' (John 19:11).

The apostles followed Jesus in teaching submission to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Pet. 2:13-17), except when this entails disobedience to God (Acts 5:29). Paul taught Christians to leave all punishment to God (Rom. 12:17-21), but also that governing authorities are 'God's servants' to bring punishment on wrongdoers (Rom. 13:4).

The paucity of Jesus' teaching on civil law emphasizes the extent to which his primary concern was with personal conduct.

²⁰ Lit. 'If this is the cause', referring back to v. 3, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for every cause?'

²¹ I depart from most commentators here. That Jesus is using an illustration is evident from the context. The disciples were concerned about marriage, not being a eunuch (10). At least one of them was married already (Matt. 8:14). Jesus presumably used the illustration because the three cases are particularly clear-cut for eunuchs.

Summary of the Law: love (Matthew 22:34–40)

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, a lawyer from the Pharisees asked him, 'Teacher, which [is] the great commandment in the Law?' (34–36). Jesus replied:

³⁷"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹The second [is] like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'

Here Jesus brings together two laws (Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18), in which the key word is *'āhēb* (Hebrew), *agapaō* (Greek). This describes the kind of love shown by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and by Jesus himself (John 15:13–14, 1 John 3:16–18). Jesus says that this kind of love sums up 'all the Law and the Prophets' (40).

Jesus is not seeking to *replace* 'all the Law and the Prophets' here: only to summarize them (40). The commandments in the Law still apply (Matt. 5:17–20, 19:16–22; Eph. 6:1–3), albeit in elevated form (Matt. 5:21–48). One cannot invoke 'love' to justify an action that contravenes the Law (1 John 5:2).

Another place where Jesus summarizes the Law is in the Sermon on the Mount: 'So whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets' (Matt. 7:12). This is a different way of saying, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', and it confirms the practical nature of 'love'. The 'So' points back to the teaching he gave earlier in the Sermon.

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The new covenant (Matthew 26:27–29)

Matthew tells us that at the Last Supper Jesus took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying:

²⁷'Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

Here Jesus takes up the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning a new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34). He anticipates his death on the following day, and declares that the blood he will shed will be for the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:34b). Therefore, at one stroke, his death made redundant all the practices in the Law by which worshippers sought forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:1 – 10:18). It did not, however, *destroy* them: it raised them (cf. Matt. 5:17–48). Under the new covenant, there is still a sanctuary, still a priesthood, still the shedding of blood: but the sanctuary is now in heaven (Heb. 8:1–2; 9:11, 24), the priesthood is eternal (5:1–10, 7:1–28), and the blood is effective (Acts 13:38–39, Heb. 9:1 – 10:18). The writer to the Hebrews likens the relationship between the old covenant and the new to that between a shadow and reality (10:1): there is a correspondence, but one is much better than the other (8:6).

New relationship with the Law (John 3:1–21)

When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night (1–2), Jesus said to him, 'unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (3). Nicodemus could not understand this (4), so Jesus explained, 'unless someone is born of water and [the] Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (5). Nicodemus says that he still cannot understand (9), to which Jesus replies that, as a teacher of the OT, this is something he should be able to understand (10).

This was because, in speaking about being born 'of water and the Spirit', Jesus was referring to God's promise in Ezekiel 36:25–27:

²⁵And I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your defilements, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; yea I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart

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of flesh, ²⁷and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and keep and do my judgments.

In the Ezekiel passage God promises to wash his people from their sins (25) and to put his Spirit in them to enable them to keep his law (27). God had made similar promises earlier in Jeremiah 31:31–34:

³³I will put my law inside them, and write it on their hearts ... ³⁴I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

These prophecies speak of a new relationship with the Law. No longer will God's people have to try to keep the Law in their own strength: God will give them his Spirit to enable them to do it.

Jesus goes on to explain to Nicodemus how it is possible for him to be born 'of water and the Spirit':

^{14c}And as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'

Jesus was 'lifted up' on the cross (John 12:32–33) where he shed his blood for the forgiveness of sins. He was also 'taken up' into heaven (Acts 1:9–11), from where he sends the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33, 38–39). Because of this we may look up to him on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, and look up to him in heaven for the help of his Spirit (John 7:37–39, 15:1–8).

An important question is, how does the Holy Spirit 'write' God's law on our hearts (Jer. 31:33)? Does he do this without our being taught it, or do we still need instruction? Jesus answered this question when he commissioned his disciples: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [and] *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*' (Matt. 28:19–20). This teaching formed a key part of their ministry (Acts 2:42, Eph. 4:20–24, etc.).

Dispute over the Law: the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–29)

When the first Gentiles became Christians, some Jewish Christians insisted that, to be saved, Gentiles had to be circumcised, and keep 'the law of Moses' (1, 5). To resolve this problem, the apostles and elders met in

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Jerusalem (6). They decided to tell the Gentiles:²²

²⁸'it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.'

What the Judaizers were trying to do was to impose the Law as Moses had given it, not as Jesus had taught it. The former included laws that dealt only with outward purity, which Jesus made obsolete by requiring inward purity. The apostles resisted the Judaizers' demands, except in respect of Gentile practices that Jews found particularly offensive (29). When they say that they will not burden Gentile Christians with any other requirements, they must mean, 'beyond the teaching of Jesus' (Matt. 28:20).

Except for fornication, the practices the apostles forbade were not wrong in themselves (Mark 7:14–23).²³ The apostles judged them to be wrong because they upset others (1 Cor. 8, Rom. 14:1 – 15:13). Christians may need to curtail liberties today for the sake of others.

Paul's teaching on the Law

Despite the apostles' decree, some Judaizers continued to unsettle churches. Paul wrote several letters to tackle this problem.²⁴ In these he presented arguments about 'the Law' (*ho nomos*) designed to convince his opponents. Some of his arguments are difficult to interpret because of their in-house nature, and commentators differ widely in their understanding of them. An example is his statement, 'Christ [is the] end of [the] Law' (Rom. 10:4). Some commentators take 'end' (*tēlos*) to mean 'termination', others 'fulfilment', others 'goal'.

However, Paul's teaching can be read in a way that ties in closely with

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the teaching of Jesus. Thus, Paul insisted (as Jesus did to Nicodemus) that 'a man is not justified by works of [the] Law but through faith in Jesus Christ' (Gal. 2:16, 3:10–14; Rom.

²² I have followed the generally accepted text here [see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971), 429–34].

²³ Jesus' teaching rendered 'all' foods clean (Mark 7:19b). The inclusion of fornication (Gk. *porneia*) is unexpected because Gentile Christians would learn that this is wrong from the teaching of Jesus (Mark 7:21). One early manuscript (*P⁴⁵*) omits it. If the apostles included it, they presumably did so because of the prevalence of fornication in Gentile society. They may also have been influenced by the laws foreigners were required to keep in Israel (Lev. 17–18).

²⁴ P.G. Nelson, *What is the Gospel?* (Latheronwheel, Caithness: Whittles, 1997), pp. 2–3.

3:9–26).²⁵ In this sense, Christians 'are not under [the] Law but under grace' (Rom. 6:14, Gal. 5:18). Under grace, however, they are still expected to be 'slaves to righteousness', and, by 'walking according to [the] Spirit', have 'the righteous requirement (*dikaiōma*) of the Law' fulfilled in them (Rom. 6:15 – 8:14, Gal. 5:13–26). This requirement (as Jesus had taught) excludes outward acts like circumcision (Rom. 2:25–29, Gal. 5:6 etc.), but includes commandments like 'You shall not commit adultery', 'You shall not murder', 'You shall not steal', and 'You shall not covet', which are 'summed up in this saying: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself"' (Rom. 13:8–10, Gal. 5:14). Christians are therefore (as Jesus had implied) 'under [the] law of Christ',²⁶ i.e. the Law as Christ taught it (1 Cor. 9:20–21, Gal. 6:2; cf. Matt. 7:21–27, 25:31–46).

Conclusion

Jesus' teaching on the Law provides a clear answer to the question, 'How does he want Christians to live?' He wants them, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to keep the laws in the OT, interpreted according to their purpose, and raised to the standard he set out in the Sermon on the Mount. This has the effect of extending some laws (e.g. 'You shall not murder') and replacing others by more demanding versions of them (e.g. the food laws). Paul's teaching can be interpreted in a way that is consistent with this.

I hope that this understanding of Jesus' teaching will go some way towards reconciling the different views set out in the introduction.

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<http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/>

²⁵ Lit. 'if not through faith of Christ Jesus', the sense of which is determined by what follows.

²⁶ Gk. *ennomos Christou*, lit. 'in law of Christ'. The Received Text has *Christō* ('to Christ').

Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?

Revisiting the Debate
Seventeen Years Later in
the Light of Peter Enns'
Book, *Inspiration and
Incarnation*

G.K. Beale is Kenneth T. Wessner Chair of Biblical Studies Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School and Visiting Fellow at St Edmunds College, Cambridge. He has written extensively on this and related subjects.

Seventeen years ago, I wrote an article in *Themelios* titled 'Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?',¹ which was partly in response to Richard Longenecker's work on the use of the Old Testament in the New. Much has happened since then in this field, especially among evangelical scholarship. The appearance of the recent book by Westminster Seminary professor, Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*,² represents a similar position to that of Longenecker, yet

1 'Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine From the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of the Apostles' Exegetical Method', *Themelios* 14 (1989), 89-96.

2 *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

in some significant ways goes beyond it. For this reason, I have thought it fitting to readdress the issue of my 1989 *Themelios* article in the light of Enns' recent work. While the majority of Enns' book concerns a discussion of evangelicals' views of the Old Testament and evaluation of these views, his fourth chapter is about the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, which is lengthy (over fifty pages) and based partly on an earlier article.³ Enns has written a stimulating and thought-provoking chapter, one that will cause Christians to think long and hard about what are their own views on this important issue. The purpose of this essay is to summarize Enns' view in the fourth chapter of his book and to evaluate it.

One of Enns' main points in this section is his emphasis on interpreting the Old Testament according to a 'christotelic' hermeneutic, an approach of the apostles that he believes the contemporary church should follow. I like this term 'christotelic' better than 'christocentric', since it refers more explicitly to approaching Old Testament texts not attempting to read Christ into every passage (which some wrongly construe to be a christocentric reading), but to understand that the goal of the whole Old Testament is to point to the eschatological coming of Christ. I think Enns has made a very helpful improvement on how we should refer to a Christian approach to the Old Testament. I also think that his stress on reading the Old Testament from the eschatological perspective of the New Testament age is crucial and absolutely correct. Though I am in general agreement with his approach, the way Enns often defines a 'christotelic' reading is not, in my view, as felicitous, nor are several other significant points that he makes about how the New Testament uses the Old Testament.

This essay is organized primarily around six issues pertaining to Enns' perspective on the relation of the Old Testament to the New.

Six Issues of Concern About Enns' View of the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament

First: Enns contends that there are 'odd uses' of the Old Testament in the New Testament for modern readers and that such uses occur 'often' in the New Testament (114; so also 115-16, 152 ['time and time again the New Testament authors do some odd things, by our standards, with the Old Testament']). On the other hand, Enns appears to acknowledge that there

³ Enns, 'Apostolic Hermeneutics and an Evangelical Doctrine of Scripture: Moving Beyond the Modern Impasse', *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003), 263-87.

is some 'grammatical-historical' exegesis by the apostles (e.g., 158). Other New Testament scholars have found that these so-called 'odd uses' can viably be understood also as 'grammatical-historical' exegesis. But why does Enns not acknowledge these other plausible interpretations, especially since they are not given by fundamentalists but active New Testament scholars who are publishing in the field of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, some of whom also do not affirm inerrancy? Neither does he acknowledge these other interpretative possibilities in his *Westminster Theological Journal* article on which this chapter is based. This is misleading in that he does not give the reader (whether layperson or scholar) an opportunity to judge Enns' interpretation of these purported 'odd uses' in the light of other competing interpretations.

In addition, Enns proposes that New Testament writers either use a 'grammatical-historical' exegetical method or they use a 'christotelic' approach (e.g., 158-60), the latter of which Enns says is usually not related contextually to the original intention of the Old Testament author (156-60). In this respect, he says that 'final coherence' of meaning in Christ is often not consistent with the original meaning of the Old Testament human author (160).⁴ He says that:

to read the Old Testament 'christotelically' is to read it *already knowing* that Christ is somehow the *end* to which the Old Testament story is heading (154) ...

It is the Old Testament as a whole, particularly in its grand themes, that finds its *telos*, its completion, in Christ ... What constitutes a Christian reading of the Old Testament is that it proceeds to the second reading, the eschatological, christotelic reading – and this is precisely what the apostles model for us (154).

One who disagrees with Enns' thesis can agree with his definition of a 'christotelic' reading just quoted, but not necessarily with his contention that such a reading means that 'New Testament authors were not engaging the Old Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the

⁴ On p. 153 he explicitly says 'that apostolic hermeneutics violates what is considered to be a fundamental interpretive principle: don't take things out of context'.

original context and intention of the Old Testament author' (115).

But are there other interpretative methods, besides those mentioned by Enns, to keep in mind that can show significant degrees of consistency with Old Testament contexts? Other good scholars would say that there are other viable interpretative approaches along the spectrum between these two opposite poles of '*grammatical-historical exegesis*' and '*non-contextual exegesis*'. For example, the New Testament authors may be using a *biblical-theological approach* that could be described as a canonical contextual approach. This approach is not a technical *grammatical-historical* one but takes in wider biblical contexts than merely the one being quoted, yet is not inconsistent with the quoted context.⁵ Were not the apostolic writers theologians, and can we not allow that they did not always interpret the Old Testament according to a grammatical-historical exegetical method, but theologically in ways that creatively developed Old Testament texts, yet did not contravene the meaning of the original Old Testament author? Or, could New Testament writers be permitted the liberty to use a 'typological approach', whereby historical events come to be seen as foreshadowings of events in New Testament times? Some think this is not a viable approach, while others do, the latter of whom see that underlying the approach was a philosophy of history whereby God designed earlier events to point to later events (e.g., the death of the Passover lamb was an event foreshadowing and fulfilled in Christ's death [John 19:36]). The later use grows out of the earlier narrated event and, thus, is organically or contextually related to it and its meaning; while being a progressive revelatory development of the Old Testament text, it is not inconsistent with the original context.

When one considers all these different approaches, what the New Testament writers do with the Old Testament does not seem so 'odd'.⁶ In fact, in his discussion of the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15, after Enns says that this does not reflect '*grammatical-historical exegesis*', he then proposes what I would call a quite viable biblical-theological approach.

⁵ For examples of this, see G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (NSBT; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), *passim*.

⁶ See E.E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 52-53 (on the purported allegory of Galatians 4), 66-70, 131 (on the 'following rock' of 1 Cor. 10:4, and Abraham's seed in Galatians (70-73), and S.J. Hafemann, 'The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Cor. 3:7-14', in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?*, ed. G.K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 295-309 (on the use of Exodus 32-34); etc.

This is employed by Matthew in his use of Hosea 11:1 and is not inconsistent with the original intention of the Hosea verse and which is understandable to both ancient and modern readers. Accordingly, Enns proposes that:

Matthew's use of Hosea reflects broader theological convictions. Although neither I nor anyone else can step into Matthew's head and outline precisely how he understood Hosea, the following suggestion is quite reasonable. It may be that Matthew had in mind not simply this one verse in Hosea 11, but the larger context of that chapter. There were no verse numbers in Matthew's day. Quoting one verse may have been a way of saying that part of Hosea that begins with 'out of Egypt I called my son'.

If this is true (and although this is not merely a private opinion, it is conjectural nonetheless), we may be able to trace some of Matthew's broader theological underpinnings. The son in Hosea and the son in Matthew are a study in contrasts. Israel came out of Egypt, was disobedient, deserved punishment, yet was forgiven by God (Hos. 11:8–11). Christ came out of Egypt, led a life of perfect obedience, deserved no punishment, but was crucified – the guiltless for the guilty. By presenting Jesus this way, Matthew was able to mount an argument for his readers that Jesus fulfilled the ideal that Israel was supposed to have reached but never did. Jesus is the true Israel.

Again, this is just one way of putting together Matthew's theological logic, and it is certainly up for debate. What is certain, however, is that Matthew's use of Hosea most definitely had an internal logic that was meaningful to his readers. Our obligation is to try to understand Matthew as he would have been understood by his original audience, not as we would like to understand him (134).

I would rather say, this 'internal logic' suggested by Enns also is quite understandable to modern readers, as a viable biblical–theological reading that is consistent with the original contextual understanding of Hosea 11. Thus, I like this proposal by Enns. This shows that, whether Enns realizes it

or not, in reality he is showing another interpretative approach besides grammatical–historical or non–contextual christotelic that New Testament writers could employ and which is not inconsistent with the original Old Testament context. One wonders what Enns' conclusions might be if he tried more to explore other kinds of approaches like this one before making final overall conclusions about how the New uses the Old Testament.

Second: Enns' list of 'strange' uses are not that many; indeed, he lists only eight such uses (114–42): Exodus 3:6 in Luke 20:27–40; Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15; Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2; Abraham's seed in Galatians 3:16, 29; Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26–27; Psalm 95:9–10 in Hebrews 3:7–11. Yet he claims that these unusual uses are 'such a very common dimension of the New Testament' (116). He needs to list many more texts in order to support this claim, and he needs to give representative surveys of the various interpretations of each passage in order to show the varying interpretations of these passages and whether or not some of these interpretations contest the oddity.⁷ The reader is left to trust Enns' word for it. In contrast to Enns' assessment, there is significant past scholarship⁸ and a large scale work about to be published, which argue that the dominant approach of New Testament writers was

⁷ For a listing of other purported 'odd' uses and some counter responses, see Beale, 'Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?', in *Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts*, 388–89. The same kind of responses could be given to the list adduced by Enns; e.g., see, among others, Enns' own above analysis of Hosea Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15; on 'seed' in Gal. 3:16, 29, see E.E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 66–73, and, more recently, C. John Collins, 'Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete was Paul?', *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003), 75–86; on Isa. 49:8 in 2 Cor. 6:2, see Beale, 'The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1', *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989), 550–81.

⁸ In addition to works indicated throughout this essay, see also, among a number of others, e.g., R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), S.J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel* (WUNT 81; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995), R. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), D.W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), J. Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), and D. Mathewson, *A New Heaven and New Earth* (JSNTSup 238; Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).

Fourth: Enns claims that the interpretative world of Second Temple Judaism is the primary context within which to understand the New Testament's use of the Old Testament (e.g., 116–17). The problem with this is that the Jewish interpretative world is not uniform. There are some 'wild and crazy' uses of the Old Testament, but there is also some good and sophisticated exegesis. Enns makes no acknowledgement of the two kinds of exegesis (biblical–theological and typological), that I refer to in the New Testament (above) that also is present in early Judaism. He assumes that the warp and woof of Jewish hermeneutics is not grammatical–historical or concerned with an Old Testament author's original intention or with Old Testament context (130–31). He, however, offers only a few examples that he believes support his view, again without entertaining other possible interpretative perspectives on these texts (121–31). His view, therefore, becomes a presupposition with little adduced evidence supporting it. Again, he could have listed more examples, even if he did not have the room to elaborate on them.

It is significant that elsewhere Enns does acknowledge some diversity in early Judaism:

What has become clear from these [pseudepigraphical] texts is that Judaism in the centuries following the exile was a diverse phenomenon: there are *Judaisms* but no 'Second Temple Judaism'. This is important for both Christians and Jews to keep in mind. The line from biblical Israelite religion does not run straight to either of its two heirs, Judaism or Christianity. Rather, the Second Temple evidence in general shows a number of varied and competing trajectories, all of which claim biblical precedent.¹¹

In the same article, however, Enns goes on to deduce just what he does in his book and WTJ article: that Second Temple Judaism, while diverse in other respects, reflected a common hermeneutical approach that influenced the way New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament:

The ways in which both rabbinic Judaism and the NT authors interact with their Scripture did not arise in a vacuum. Rather, both demonstrate hermeneutical methods and conclusions demonstrable

¹¹ Enns, 'Pseudepigrapha', in *Dictionary of the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. by K. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 652.

in many, many Second Temple texts ... In fact, similar hermeneutical trajectories were already set within the Hebrew Scriptures (the Chronicler's interpretation of Israel's history; Daniel's interpretation of Jeremiah's seventy years as seventy 'sevens' of years). How the rabbis and the apostles handled their Scripture must be understood within the context of earlier interpretative activity ... The Pseudepigrapha, therefore, contribute to the church's own understanding of its Bible, insofar as they outline general interpretative trajectories adopted by NT authors.¹²

In the context of the article, and especially the wider context of Enns' book and WTJ article, the main 'interpretative trajectories' influencing New Testament writers were that of non-contextual Jewish exegesis of the Old Testament and a dependence on Jewish interpretations of Old Testament history that had dubious historical claims (with respect to the latter, he cites Acts 7:53; 1 Cor. 10:4; Gal. 3:19; and Heb. 2:2). Thus, while recognizing in a number of respects that Second Temple Judaism was composed of many 'Judaisms', with regard to hermeneutics, Enns believes that there was a generally uniform non-contextual approach to Old Testament interpretation, which was the dominant influence on the New Testament approach.¹³

Enns needed to acknowledge that part of the diversity of early Judaism was that it was characterized by diverse exegetical methods or approaches. There were probably various Jewish communities that were not identical in their interpretative approach to the Old Testament (DSS, Philo, pre-AD 70 Pharisaic Palestinian Judaism, and some Jewish apocalyptic communities). Thus, it is more proper to speak of 'Judaisms' or various Jewish communities when also speaking of Jewish interpretative approaches.

For example, it would have been helpful for Enns to have shown awareness of, and briefly evaluate David Instone Brewer's work that argues that pre-AD 70 pharisaic exegesis attempted to find the 'literal' meaning of Old Testament texts, though they did not always succeed at it.¹⁴ In this

¹² *Ibid.*, 653.

¹³ The same focus is to be found in Enns, 'Biblical Interpretation, Jewish', in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edd. by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 159–65.

¹⁴ David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE*

to develop Old Testament texts in various ways that emerge out of, and are not inconsistent with the original intention of Old Testament writers.⁹

Third: Enns identifies four views of dealing with these problems (115), the last of which he espouses and which some will find difficult to accept. He says:

there are three popular options in evangelical scholarship for addressing the odd manner in which the New Testament authors use the Old Testament:

1. To argue, wherever possible, that the New Testament authors, despite appearances, were actually respecting the context of the Old Testament text they are citing. Although it may not be obvious to us, there must be some *legitimate* trigger in the Old Testament text, since no inspired writer would handle the Old Testament so irresponsibly. Careful examination will reveal that the New Testament's use of the Old Testament text is actually based in and is consistent with that Old Testament author's intention.

2. To concede that the New Testament author is not using the Old Testament text in a manner in which it was intended, but then to say that the New Testament author himself does not intend to 'interpret' the text, only 'apply' it. Since the New Testament does not intend to present us with hermeneutical models for how it handles the Old Testament, it poses no difficulty for us today.

3. To concede, on a variation of option 2, that the New Testament authors were not following the intention of the Old Testament authors, but to explain it as a function of apostolic authority. In other words, since they were inspired, they could do as they pleased. We are not inspired, so we cannot follow their lead (115).

Enns responds to these three views in the following manner:

⁹ *A Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament*, edited by G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, forthcoming), approx. 1,200 pp. (of course, Enns would not be expected to be aware of the contents of this source).

In my opinion, all three of these views – although motivated by noble concerns to protect the Bible from abuse – will not stand up to close examination. As we go through the examples in this chapter, we will comment on these views here and there, but I will state my conclusions up front:

(1) The New Testament authors were not engaging the Old Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the original context and intention of the Old Testament author.

(2) They were indeed commenting on what the text meant.¹⁰

(3) The hermeneutical attitude they embodied should be embraced and followed by the church today.

To put it succinctly, the New Testament authors were explaining what the Old Testament means *in light of Christ's coming* (115–16).

I believe, contrary to Enns', that view no. 1 can be held without embarrassment and can 'stand up to close examination', particularly when one remembers that there are other viable forms of relating the Old Testament to the New Testament than by mere 'grammatical-historical' exegesis. I would contend that it is the view that makes most sense of the data, without strained interpretations, than the other positions, including that of Enns. Again, to demonstrate the probability of his view, Enns would have to adduce many, many more examples of so-called 'non-contextual' exegesis than he has. What is especially striking is Enns' claim that 'the odd uses of the Old Testament by New Testament authors are such a very common dimension of the New Testament that it quickly becomes special pleading to argue otherwise' (116). But must not 'special pleading' remain in Enns' lap, since he does not attempt to adduce all the many examples of 'odd uses' that he claims exist? Remember, he only adduces eight examples. He could have listed other examples, even if he did not have the space to discuss them.

¹⁰ Note significantly here that Enns distinguishes 'what the text meant' from 'the original context and intention of the Old Testament author' that he mentions in his preceding point #no. 1.

respect, there may be a distinction in the interpretative approach of pre-AD 70 Judaism and that of later Judaism.¹⁵ In addition, there is a strong strain in early Jewish apocalyptic texts which reveals a contextual awareness of the Old Testament contexts from which they cite.¹⁶ Furthermore, when one thinks of Hillel's seven rules of (Jewish) interpretation, none of them show any concern to twist the meaning of Old Testament texts, but could well be compatible with a contextual interpretation of the Old Testament (e.g., none of the rules include allegory or a necessary atomistic interpretation of the Old Testament).¹⁷

In this respect, the sage assessment of Samuel Sandmel needs, at least, to be given acknowledgement. He concluded after long study of the relationship of Egyptian Judaism to Palestinian Judaism, that 'independent, parallel developments seem the better explanation than that of major dependency in either direction.'¹⁸ The first context for understanding the hermeneutical approach, as well as interpretative presuppositions, of New Testament writers is their own community (under the influence of Jesus), then the Old Testament, and then Judaism. Both are spurs from the Old Testament, rather than the New Testament, being primarily dependent on some branch of Jewish hermeneutics, though certainly in awareness of and in dialogue with sectors of Judaism.¹⁹ Also, when one looks at early Jewish

(Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 30; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992).

- 15 Brewer's criteria for dating pre-AD 70 materials were not as clearly developed in his *Techniques and Assumptions* (11–13) as in his subsequently published *Prayer and Agriculture, Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament I* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 38–40 (see also the secondary sources cited therein by Brewer for further discussion of dating criteria).
- 16 See, e.g., G.K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1984), 12–153, and L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted* (Coniectanea Biblica; NT Series 1; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1966), 11–141; e.g., see his summaries on pp. 126 and 139, the latter of which where he makes a distinction between the contextual use of the Old Testament in apocalyptic Judaism but not in Qumran. Hartman sees the use of Daniel 7–12 in Mark 13 (and parallels) to reflect the pattern of the contextual use of the Old Testament in Jewish apocalyptic texts (*ibid.*, 145–47, 158–59, 174, 207, 235).
- 17 See E.E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 87–91, 130–32, for a convenient definition and examples. Rabbi Hillel died in AD 10.
- 18 Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 133–34.
- 19 E.g., one New Testament hermeneutical presupposition that has its roots in the

interpretation through the lens of a 'biblical – theological approach' or a 'typological approach', the exegesis does not always appear so twisted.²⁰

One may disagree with these perspectives and attempt to argue against them, but why does Enns not even acknowledge them? Enns needed to adduce not only what he thinks are examples of non-contextual Jewish exegeses, but also cases where there are straightforward attempts to understand Old Testament texts, of which there are plenty of examples.

Therefore, exegetical approaches differed in Judaism and to say that there was a generally uniform approach that was non-contextual not only does not acknowledge some of the key features of Second Temple exegesis, but it also produces an artificial reductionism and an artificial monolithic hermeneutical appearance. We may say that just as there were variegated views in Judaism on many things and not just one 'systematic theology' (e.g., on the notion of the law in relation to faith, works, and final reward), so hermeneutics was variegated. Thus, there is not one dominant pattern in Second Temple Jewish exegesis that predetermines how the New Testament authors must behave hermeneutically.

In contrast to Enns, a good argument can be made that the interpretative method of the New Testament is rooted in the Old Testament's use of the Old Testament and that various early Jewish communities, including the early Jewish-Christian community, practised an interpretative approach shaped by the Old Testament's exegetical

Old Testament is the notion of corporate solidarity or 'the one and the many,' thus the idea that Jesus the Messiah corporately represents his people as true Israel is an outgrowth of the concept that Israel's kings represented their people (e.g., Israel was punished for David's representative sin of numbering the people [1 Chron. 21:1–17]). Likewise, the New Testament writers' presupposition that they were living in the inaugurated eschatological age comes directly out of the Old Testament prophecy that the messianic age was to be an 'eschatological period' (e.g., Gen. 49:1 and 49:8–12; Num. 24:14–18; Dan. 2:28–45; Isa. 2:2–4 and 11:1–4; etc.). See further G.K. Beale, 'Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: a Rejoinder to Steve Moyise', *Irish Biblical Studies* 21 (1999), 169 and *passim* (151–80). On 'typology' as a presuppositional hermeneutical approach also rooted in the Old Testament, see Ellis, *Paul's Use of the OT*, 131, as well as Beale, 'Questions of Authorial Intent', 169.

²⁰ E.g., Enns concludes that the use of the Old Testament in the Qumran commentary on Habakkuk (1QpHab) is very non-contextual and inconsistent with the original meaning (128–31), but it may well be that when this use is seen through a 'typological' lens, the Qumran author's approach to the Old Testament may be like that in a number of New Testament texts that understand the Old Testament typologically.

method. True, they share some things with each other, but they also differ significantly. C.H. Dodd, no evangelical, contended that the greatest influence on the apostles' method was Jesus, whom Dodd contended had a very contextual approach to understanding how the Old Testament related to him and his redemptive work.²¹ In fact, even granting for the sake of argument that there was a monolithic non-contextual Jewish hermeneutic, could not Jesus, who in other ways came to break a lot of the traditional taboos of Jewish tradition, have come with an approach to biblical interpretation formed more by the Old Testament's use of the Old Testament than by that of contemporary Judaism?²²

This is not to have a 'fundamentalist' or too conservative of an approach to the Old in the New. In fact, among others, some of the leading contemporary German scholars who work in this area affirm the same *methodological approach* to the relation of Jewish exegetical procedures and that of Paul. For example, Hans Hübner writes:

In fact, it has turned out by the preliminary work to this biblical study of the New Testament, that, for example, Paul through his exegetical procedure modified quite strangely what we know as Jewish methods of interpretation. Actually, concerning Paul as an exegete, and to be precise to understand him as a Christian exegete, who understood himself as the reader inspired by the Spirit and interpreter of the scripture, the characteristic of his exegesis must be brought out. And this characteristic is not deduced just when one takes Jewish methodology as the key of understanding. Its modification by Paul is crucial for his theological acquaintance with the scriptures!

This fact is clearly recognized also in that work, which, today, is the standard work on Paul and the Old Testament, and which, therefore, has replaced Otto Michel's book in this function, namely the Mainzer *Habilitationsschrift* by Dietrich Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als*

21 Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (Digswell Place, Welwyn, Herts: James Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1952).

22 Enns would likely respond here that later Old Testament authors did not contextually interpret earlier Old Testament writings, but, again, he produces scanty evidence to substantiate this claim, focusing only on the interpretation of Jeremiah's 'seventy years' by Daniel 9 (117-20), one of the thorniest passages in all of the Old Testament to interpret!

Zeuge des Evangeliums, Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus. [Eng. trans., *The Scripture as a Witness to the Gospel: Investigations into the Use and into the Understanding of the Scriptures by Paul*]. Koch identifies divergences between the Jewish–Hellenistic and Rabbinic interpretation of scripture, on the one hand, and that of Paul, on the other hand. Therefore, he arrives at a correct methodological principle: “One is dependent, therefore, regarding the methods of interpretation of scripture which must be assumed for Paul, on conclusions from his own letters.” So also, the acquaintance of the New Testament authors with the scripture should be analyzed in the *Mesolegomena* [the following volume of Hübner’s work] first of all, independently from the Jewish methods of interpretation, and there, where it is meaningful, where it is necessary because of the understanding of the procedure of a New Testament author, the Jewish methodology will also be discussed.²³

Fifth: Enns says conservative evangelicals have a ‘hermeneutical grid’ that they ‘impose’ on the text through which to read the Old Testament in the New (156), but Enns also has his own version of a ‘christotelic’ systematic grid. The question is which ‘grid’ best explains the evidence.

Both Enns and his purported opponents – ‘conversation partners’ – use so-called modern reason to investigate the Bible. The key is which ‘hermeneutical grid’ best makes ‘reasonable’ sense of the majority of the biblical data.

Sixth: Enns comments on Jewish traditions that are reflected in the New Testament (143–51), which for the most part he implies have a precarious historical basis. He gives the impression that the New Testament is permeated with such traditions, but he gives only six examples. Without citing more examples, readers will not be persuaded that such Jewish traditions are part of the warp and woof of the New Testament. He could, at least, have listed more examples, even if he did not choose to discuss them. Most of the examples he cites are not problematic with respect to questions of historical reliability. Many of the traditions may be understood by recollecting that there was oral tradition that arose together with the

²³ Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Band 1: *Prolegomena* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990), 258–59.

written Old Testament Scripture. Some of what Judaism and the New Testament reflect may well be this, or at least prior traditions (some of which may well not be of fictitious origin but have historical roots). Alternatively they may be understood as mere interpretative expansions of the Old Testament, perhaps based on Jewish exegetical tradition.²⁴ Though Enns leaves the impression that these examples are historically problematic, the sources of such things are so speculative that it is not wise to make decisions definitively one way or another about them (e.g., to say they are definitely legend, fiction or non-historical would be a speculative conclusion).

It is too speculative for Enns to say, as in the case of Paul's reference to the 'rock that followed' in 1 Corinthians 10:4, that 'the brevity of the allusion [by Paul to the Jewish tradition about the following rock] bespeaks the fact that it must have been in wide circulation already in Paul's day'.²⁵ Although it is possible, it is not as probable as Enns maintains. The brief allusion could just as well be to Paul's biblical-theological understanding of Yahweh's identification with the 'rock' that 'walked after' Israel (as we suggest below). No argument should be based primarily on the 'brevity of the allusion'.

Enns concludes that Paul's allusion to the 'rock that followed' in 1 Corinthians 10:4 is dependent on a Jewish 'tradition' about a well that followed Israel around in the wilderness.²⁶ There is, however, only one Jewish reference to this 'tradition' that plausibly is dated around the first century AD. Even part of this reference is clouded by textual uncertainty.²⁷ Thus, it is difficult to be sure what form of the legend existed in Paul's

²⁴ Cf. R. Bauckham, 'The Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum of Pseudo-Philo and the Gospels as "Midrash"', in *Gospel Perspectives* 3, edited by R.T. France and D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 33-76.

²⁵ Enns, 'The 'Moveable Well' in 1 Cor. 10:4: an Extrabiblical Tradition in an Apostolic Text', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 6 (1996), 32.

²⁶ This section of Enns' book is based on his above article in *BBR*, 23-38.

²⁷ The lone Jewish source is Pseudo-Philo, which is dated by the majority of scholars as early as the first century AD, though there is some debate even about that (see Bauckham, 'Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum of Pseudo-Philo and the Gospels as "Midrash"', 33, and, more recently, B.N. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* [JSPSup 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 34-40). Enns adduced three texts in Pseudo-Philo that he believes together support the idea that a well-shaped rock followed Israel in the wilderness (Ps.-Philo 10:7; 11:15; 20:8); however, since 20:8 does not explicitly refer to a well or water that 'follows', only 10:7 (God 'brought forth a well of water to follow them') and 11:15 could clearly support the idea, the latter reading: 'and the water of Marah became sweet. And it [the well or the water]

time.²⁸ Furthermore, Paul does not refer to a 'well'. He may well be doing a biblical – theological exegesis of Exodus 14–17 in the light of Psalm 78:14–20 (e.g., 'he splits the rocks ... and gave them abundant drink ...

followed them in the wilderness forty years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains.' However, while some very good manuscripts (the D – group of mss. [A, K, P]) have 'it followed', the majority of manuscripts (the π – group of mss. [H, R, W, X, Y, Z, S, Ad, D, E, V, M, B, C, O, G]), which are also manuscripts of very good, indeed almost equal, authority with the D – group of manuscripts, have 'the Lord [Dominus] followed' (on which see the critical edition of the Latin text of Pseudo-Philo edited by D.J. Harrington and J. Cazeaux, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques*, Vol. I [Sources Chrétiennes series 229; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976], 124; see 53–57 for the relative values of both ms. groups). Though Harrington does not prefer 'Lord' in his English translation ('Pseudo-Philo', in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2*, ed. by J.H. Charlesworth [Garden City: Doubleday, 1985], 319), in fact, the quality of the external evidence for both readings is almost equal. It is difficult to determine the original reading. Whichever is original, the variant could have been caused possibly by an unintentional error or, more probably, an intentional one. The more difficult reading, and thus more likely original, in the light of the clear reference to the 'following well' in 10:7, would appear to be 'Lord' (a scribe with 10:7 clearly in mind would tend to want to harmonize 11:15 with 10:7, thus deleting 'Lord', so that the well or the water from the well is viewed as the subject of the 'following'). This could be debated, but our intention here is merely to point out the textual uncertainty. If 'Lord' is the correct reading, then the identification of the 'following well' in 10:7 (as well as, presumably, in 20:8) would apparently be the Lord himself in 11:15 (who, accordingly, would also be identified with 'the water' in the preceding clause of 11:15), which may have been inspired by the close identification of the rock from which water came in Exod. 17:6 with the phrase 'is the Lord among us?' in 17:7 (on which see further the next note below [n. 28] for the rationale). Put another way, if 'Lord' is original, then the 'following well' in 10:7 and the 'water' in the preceding clause of 11:15 could well be viewed as metaphorical for the 'Lord' in 11:15, which would take the legendary punch out of the evidence. At the least, even if 'Lord' is unoriginal, the variant came to represent part of the exegetical tradition that may well have been existent in Paul's day and would need to be reckoned as part of the possible background for Paul's reference in 1 Cor. 10:4. It is noteworthy to observe that the only early texts (presuming, for the sake of argument, an original 'Lord' in Pseudo-Philo 11:15 or that this reading was early) that identify the water from the rock with the divine presence is Pseudo-Philo 10:7 + 11:15 and 1 Cor. 10:4 (remembering Paul's divine identification of Christ in 1 Cor. 8:6), which could point to a link between this Jewish tradition and Paul, but in a different way than Enns contends. Unfortunately, Enns does not mention this significant textual uncertainty in his *BBR* article.

²⁸ The other references to a 'following well' are in the later *midrashic* and *targumic* literature, though Enns still contends that 'some form of the legend apparently did exist' earlier ('Moveable Well', 25), which is expressed with much less conviction than his conclusion about Paul's knowledge of this legendary tradition in the book:

he struck the rock so that waters gushed out') and 78:35 ('God was their rock'), the latter of which appears to identify God with the 'rock' of Psalm 78:15–16, 20.²⁹

What does Enns mean when he says that Paul is dependent on this Jewish 'tradition'? One must refer to his article on the 'Moveable Well', to which he refers the reader for further discussion. In his *BBR* article, although Enns says that he prefers to use the phrase 'exegetical tradition' or merely 'tradition' instead of either 'fable' or 'legend',³⁰ he is not uncomfortable in referring to Paul's conscious dependence on this spurious tradition of the moveable well as 'legend'. Elsewhere in his article, he uses 'legend' in place of his preferred 'tradition'. He affirms that Paul believed the legend 'was really the case' and that he was 'relaying

'I think it is beyond reasonable doubt' that 'Paul's comment be understood as another example of this tradition' (151). In this light, a more judicious assessment is that it is difficult to be sure what form of the legend existed in Paul's time. Note also some of the differences between Paul's reference and that of later Judaism: (1) he identifies the rock as the Messiah, (2) he does not use the language of a 'well' and (3) he refers to the 'rock' from which they drank as a 'spiritual rock' from which 'spiritual drink' was obtained (1 Cor. 10:4), not a literal rock, significant differences with the later Jewish legend, which appears to see a literal travelling well that 'followed' Israel. Incidentally, note also that the idea of God in association with a 'rock' that 'followed' Israel in the wilderness is not unique to the later Jewish *midrashic* literature but occurs also in Exod. 14:19 in relation to Exod. 17:5–7, where the presence of the rock from which drinking water came is also interpreted to be affirming that or is directly linked to the phrase 'the Lord is among us' in response to the people's doubt about this. In this respect, note the 'following' concept in Exod. 14:19: 'and the angel of God who had been walking before the camp of Israel, moved and walked behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.' And the presence of God continues to move between the Egyptians and the Israelites as the latter go through the sea. Note similarly that Isa. 52:12 and 58:8 allude to Exod. 14:19 and prophecy that in the new, second Exodus God would also be Israel's 'rear guard.' Thus, in light of the fact that Exod. 17:6 very closely associates God with the 'rock' (as does Psalm 78 [see below]), it does not take much ingenuity to see how Paul could posit that Christ was a 'following rock' in his pre-incarnate divine existence as the 'angel of the Lord'. Paul may be doing intratextual and intertextual exegesis, which is a form of biblical theology. Thus, Enns' attempt to say that the 'following' aspect is unique to the Jewish well legend is not correct, since both linguistically and conceptually the notion occurs in the Old Testament itself.

²⁹ As we have seen, commentators like Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 66–70, see Paul using a typological hermeneutic in 1 Cor. 10:4 and not being dependent on the Jewish legend.

³⁰ 'The 'Moveable Well', p. 29, n. 14.

information that for him was trustworthy', though, of course it was in reality, 'legendary'.³¹ In this respect, he says, 'in fact, there is no indication that in any of the examples listed [including 1 Cor. 10:4] that suggest the "legendary" material about to be introduced into these otherwise authoritative works [of the apostolic writers] were of lesser value.'³² That he believes that Paul unconsciously absorbed this legend and believed it was true nevertheless, is also clear from a question that he poses and to which he gives a positive answer:

After all, if at the very climax of redemptive history, the Holy Spirit can do no better than communicate the supreme Good News through *pedestrian and uninspired Jewish legends*, in what sense can we claim that the New Testament revelation is special, distinct, and unique? The question, however, can be put on its head: on what basis ought we to assume that Paul's understanding of the Old Testament was unique? To put it another way, is there anything about the nature of God's revelation itself that necessarily demands its uniqueness over against the environment in which that revelation is given?³³

³¹ *Ibid.*, 37. Also he says, 'the following rock, however, clearly brings him [Paul] into connection with the Palestinian legend' (following the position of H.S.J. Thackeray [*Ibid.*, 25, n. 8]). Likewise, on p. 33 Enns affirms, 'I would push this one step further, that for Paul such 'Jewish lore' actually represented his own understanding of the event;' recall here that Enns in the immediate context refers to this as legendary lore that does not correspond to historical reality.

³² *Ibid.*, 37 (why he puts legendary in quotation marks is not clear, but quotation marks are not the ordinary stylistic convention to indicate a caveat; so we take no caveat intended here). See also p. 32, where Enns says that Paul 'was simply talking about the biblical story [of the rock in the wilderness] in the only way he knows how, in accordance with the way he (and his audience as well) had received it' (i.e., we understand Enns to mean that they had received it as legend). Likewise, he quotes and disagrees with the following views of some scholars who deny that 1 Cor. 10:4 is based on legend: 'Godet makes explicit an apologetic motive by arguing that 'the most spiritual of the apostles' could hardly have 'alluded to so ridiculous a fable' ... C. Hodge comments that the presence of this tradition in 1 Cor. 10:4 would make 'the apostle responsible for this Jewish fable, and is inconsistent with his divine authority.'" Enns' point throughout the article is that dependence on legend is not inconsistent with divine authority.

³³ *Ibid.*, 35 (my italics).

Enns answers 'no' to each of these questions: the New Testament revelation was not 'unique' to its environment that believed in 'legends' (though he would certainly say that the New Testament writers believed that Christ and the God of the Old and New Testaments were respectively the true Messiah and true God, in contrast to the gods of other religions). He also assumes that divine revelation is communicated through these 'legends'. He provides a fuller answer to the above questions a little later:

To affirm that Paul's 'the rock that followed them' is an unconscious transmission of a popular exegetical tradition [= 'legend' elsewhere in his article] does not compromise revelation but boldly affirms it at its very heart. Scripture was revealed in time and space, so it bears the marks of that historical quality at various levels [including, Enns means, the level of the presence of legend].³⁴

For Enns, the New Testament is authoritative, even in those places where legend is present. Readers will have to decide whether or not Enns has made a convincing case about the influence of the moveable well legend upon Paul (I, for one, am not persuaded). However, this, for Enns, is only one example of the kind of legendary material that exists in the New Testament, and, as we have laboured to show elsewhere, also in the Old Testament (on which see further directly below).

It is important to remark that conservative commentators have not been averse to observing 'myth' or 'legend' in the Old or New Testaments. *But* when it has been observed, it has been reasonably clear to most conservative scholars that the biblical writers refer to such false traditions in order to conduct a polemic against, and repudiate false religious tradition (its gods and their titles or attributes, its way of salvation, etc.),³⁵ as well as reflecting that even pagan peoples have a perception of truth through general revelation or access to very ancient traditions, which have been integrated in flawed ways into their false religion³⁶ (Rom. 1:19–23

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 36. See also p. 32, where Enns makes the same point.

³⁵ See, among many examples in the New Testament, G.K. Beale, 'Other Religions in New Testament Theology', in *Biblical Faith and Other Religions*, ed. by D.W. Baker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 79–105.

³⁶ See, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 41, where Enns himself acknowledges something close to this possibility.

testifies to this). Likewise, biblical writers did not always directly counter ancient Near Eastern concepts, but sometimes used them in creative ways, though still revised in significant manner by special revelation, without an unconscious absorption of myth.³⁷

But Enns is saying something quite different from this: that Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4 did not distinguish his own beliefs from the false beliefs of the Jewish culture around him. I find this unlikely, especially because I am unconvinced that he has made his case that Paul is dependent on Jewish legend. In addition, I am unpersuaded of Enns' thesis at points throughout his book that God communicates truth through such full-blown myth unconsciously held by Old Testament writers, but I have elaborated on this elsewhere.³⁸

The Implications of Enns' Book for Providing Guidelines for Biblical Interpretation

What are some of the implications of Enns' views on the use of the Old Testament in the New? In commenting on the ramifications of his conclusions about the New Testament use of the Old Testament, Enns offers the following reflections about preachers, whom he obviously wants to hear what he says:

I see regularly the almost unbearable burden we place on our preachers by expecting them, in a week's time, to read a passage, determine its meaning, and then communicate it effectively. The burden of 'getting it right' can sometimes be discouraging and hinder effective ministry. I would rather think of biblical interpretation as a path we walk, a pilgrimage we take, whereby the longer we walk and take in the surrounding scenes, the more people we stop and converse with along the way, and the richer our interpretation will be (162).

³⁷ For elaboration and expansion of the ideas in this paragraph, see my review of the other chapters of Enns' book in 'Myth, History, and Inspiration: a Review Article of Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation. Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*', *JETS* 49 (2006).

³⁸ On which see my review of the other chapters of Enns' book in *JETS* 49 (2006), cited earlier, where I contend that there are hermeneutical, theological, epistemological, and logical problems with such a view.

In developing this thought further a few pages later, he says:

There do not seem to be any clear rules or guidelines to prevent us from taking this process [of biblical interpretation] too far. But again, this is why the metaphor of journey or pilgrimage is so appealing (171).

This conclusion comes on the heels of his last chapter in which he has decided that the interpretative method of the New Testament writers is not sensitive to the contextual ideas of Old Testament authors' original intentions. He thinks we should model our interpretative method on that of the New Testament (170). But, according to his view of apostolic exegesis, this means there are really 'no rules' for good interpretation, and, carried to its logical practical conclusion, it suggests that there is no method of good exegesis that ultimately can be a reasonable guard against preachers not 'getting it right'. Enns' following comment is also consistent with such a conclusion:

A christotelic coherence is not achieved by following a few simple rules of exegesis. It is to be sought after; over a long period of time, in community with other Christians, with humility and patience. Biblical interpretation is ... a path we walk rather than a fortress we defend (170).

Ultimately, the clear implication of Enns' position is that there is no interpretative approach to restrain our eisegetical tendencies. He does acknowledge that 'what helps prevent (but does not guarantee against) such flights of [interpretative] fancy is grammatical-historical exegesis' (159). However, he then significantly qualifies this by saying:

However much we might regard certain Second Temple interpretive methods and traditions as unworkable in our modern context, we still cannot simply fill the void by adopting the grammatical-historical methods as the default and exclusively normative hermeneutic for modern Christians. Why? To lift up grammatical-historical exegesis as the ultimate standard means we must either (1) distance ourselves from the christotelic hermeneutic of the apostles or (2) mount arguments showing that apostolic hermeneutics is actually grounded

in the grammatical–historical meaning of the Old Testament, and that all this talk about the Second Temple context is just nonsense that can be safely avoided (159).³⁹

Of course, by this point in the book the reader will understand why Enns says that neither of these are viable options. At the end of the day, it appears evident that for Enns the christotelic hermeneutic is accorded pride of place as the more determinative hermeneutical approach than the grammatical–historical, since the latter approach by itself ‘is not a Christian understanding in the apostolic sense’ (159). Consequently, “getting it [biblical interpretation] right” (162) (i.e., attempting to understand an Old Testament author’s authorial intention) in a particular pericope of Scripture for Enns is not the ultimate proper focus, even though, as we have seen, he still wants to affirm some kind of important, though subordinate, role for grammatical–historical exegesis.

What then does one make of Paul’s admonition to Timothy, ‘be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2:15; likewise 1 Tim. 4:15–16). James says that ‘teachers ... shall incur a stricter judgment’ (3:1) (presumably, Enns would say that the New Testament writers’ standards of ‘handling accurately the word of truth’ are different from ours). So, there *is* a great responsibility that preachers and teachers of God’s Word have. Should it be alleviated in the way that Enns advocates or by relativizing the Pauline admonitions for the modern church by affirming that they were uniquely applicable to an ancient Christian mindset? While paying attention to some of Enns’ admonitions, should not pastors be encouraged to rest on God’s grace and realize that no one has an exhaustive grasp on comprehending God’s Word, but those with the gift of teaching have the ability to grasp sufficiently, more richly, and, therefore, definitely, what God would have them convey to his people Sunday after Sunday? In this respect, it is unfortunate that the conclusions of Enns’ book have led him to such a pessimistic pedagogical and homiletical conclusion. In this regard, Enns’ book is a good example that

³⁹ The same qualification is made on p. 160, where he says that he does ‘not mean to make sweeping statements against exegetical methods or grammatical–historical exegesis. But ... we can only conclude that there must be more to Christian biblical interpretation than uncovering the original meaning of an Old Testament passage’. In context, he emphasizes the latter over the former. Likewise, on p. 154 he says

one's exegesis has practical application, an application in this case that is not a felicitous one.

To repeat, if Enns had allowed for other interpretative approaches (such as a biblical-theological approach,⁴⁰ a typological approach,⁴¹ etc.) besides the polarized 'grammatical-historical' against the 'christotelic', then he may not have been so constrained to make the kind of conclusions that he did. This problem of method is compounded by the fact, observed earlier, that Enns' discussion of examples of non-contextual exegesis in the New Testament includes only his view of each example, and he does not cite or interact with other representative views that differ from his own.

The Implications of Enns' Book for Providing Guidelines for the Doing of Biblical Theology

The significance of this discussion should not be limited to exegetical method because it also has a bearing on how to do biblical theology. This is because the use of the Old Testament in the New is commonly considered to be essential to understanding the theological relation of the testaments, which many scholars have acknowledged.⁴² If New Testament writers did

the 'grammatical-historical reading' is 'absolutely vital', but again he makes similar qualifications as above. So similarly, see p. 117.

- ⁴⁰ There is not space to elaborate on a definition of this here. Suffice it to say, that a biblical-theological approach attempts to interpret texts in the light of their broader literary context, their broader redemptive-historical epoch of which they are a part, and to interpret earlier texts from earlier epochs, attempting to explain them in the light of progressive revelation to which earlier scriptural authors would not have had access. So, one aspect of biblical theology is the reading of texts in an intra-textual and inter-textual manner in a way not ultimately distorting their original meaning, though perhaps creatively developing it. As noted earlier, I believe that an example of such an approach can be found in, among other places, my recent book, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, as well as Enns' comments above on how Matthew might have understood Hosea 11:1.
- ⁴¹ For the different definitions of such an approach and literature discussing it, see Beale, *The Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 313-71, 387-404 (my own view is aligned with the articles therein by G.P. Hugenberger, F. Foulkes, and my own last article in the volume).
- ⁴² E.g. see G. Hasel, *Current Issues in NT Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); D.L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of Some Modern Solutions to the Theological Problem of The Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977); G. Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (London: SCM, 1986). So also R. Longenecker, "Who is the Prophet talking About?" Some

not interpret Old Testament passages *in some manner* commensurate to the original meaning, then a hiatus remains between the way they understood the Old Testament and its theology and the way Old Testament authors understood their own writings, both exegetically *and* theologically. Geerhardus Vos, the great biblical-theological icon of the old Princeton – Westminster tradition, affirmed that at the heart of biblical theology is ‘the organic progress ... from seed – form to the attainment of full growth’ and that ‘in the seed form the minimum of indispensable knowledge was already present’ for the revelation later in the Old Testament and subsequently in the New.⁴³ While the later progressive revelatory apple tree might appear different from its earlier biblical seed form, Vos would maintain that they are, nevertheless organically linked and that, ultimately, the latter develops naturally from the former, just as happens in nature between seeds and their later organic developments.

Enns’ perspective cuts the cords of this organic revelation, so that later biblical writers do not develop the original ideas of earlier biblical writers. At best, he can posit that broad Old Testament themes are picked up by New Testament writers. Even in this respect, however, he cannot see such themes to be rooted in a collection of Old Testament texts, since he does not believe that the early Christian writers could perceive the original thematic intention of Old Testament texts, even apparently collections of such texts. Indeed, we may ask, in what sense a New Testament author would perceive an Old Testament theme if it were not present and perceivable in several texts throughout the Old Testament? Accordingly, it seems that it would be difficult for Enns to say that broad themes from the Old Testament are relatable to the New.

Consequently, it appears that Enns’ approach on the Old in the New will necessitate developing a new approach to biblical theology, which will be quite different methodologically from that of Vos and other similar approaches. Indeed, it would appear that biblical theology as conceived over the past century in conservative scholarly circles is now outmoded, if Enns’ perspective is correct.

Reflections on the New Testament’s Use of the Old’, *Themelios* 13 (1987), 1.

⁴³ Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 7.

Conclusion

Enns answers the question 'did Jesus and the apostles preach the right doctrine from the wrong texts?' with a resounding 'yes', and he says that God's people today should do the same. I have given reasons why I disagree with this assessment.

I have written this review article in some depth because the book is designed primarily to address a more popular audience, as well as, (though only secondarily), a scholarly readership.⁴⁴ I have wanted to elaborate on Enns' views because the issues are significant for Christian faith, and popular readers may not have the requisite tools and background to evaluate the thorny issues that Enns' book addresses. I have also written this review for a scholarly evangelical audience, since the book appears to be secondarily intended for them⁴⁵ and, I suspect, that there will be different evaluations of Enns' book by such an audience.⁴⁶

Many of Enns' assumptions are wide-ranging and debatable, the primary evidence of Judaism and the New Testament selective, as well as the secondary sources he cites,⁴⁷ so that it is hard to do justice in evaluating this fourth chapter of his book in a brief manner.

Enns' perspectives on the use of the Old Testament in the New

⁴⁴ Note where Enns indicates his purpose in addressing a more popular audience (e.g., 13, 15, 168), though these statements do not exclude a scholarly audience.

⁴⁵ E.g., the publishers distributed complimentary copies to biblical scholars at the recent November, 2005 Institute for Biblical Research Meeting.

⁴⁶ Indeed, I have already read reviews that differ in their evaluation of the book: e.g., see the positive reviews of M. Eschlebach in *JETS* 48 (2005), 811–12, T. Longman, 'Divine and Human Qualities of the Old Testament', *Modern Reformation* 14 (2005), 33–34, M. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas), *Denver Journal. An Online Review of Current Biblical and Theological Studies* 8 (2005), and Susan Wise Bauer, 'Messy Revelation', *Books and Culture* (May/June 2006), 8–9, and the negative reviews by D.A. Carson, 'Three More Books on the Bible: A Critical Review', *Trinity Journal* 27 NS (2006), 1–62, B.C. Ferry in *New Horizons* (October, 2005), 23–24, the latter of which appears to be a review by a Presbyterian pastor and P. Helm, http://www.reformation21.org/Life/Shelf_Life/Shelf_Life/181?vobId=2938&pm=434.

⁴⁷ Enns does cite bibliography for 'further reading' at the end of his chapter on the Old Testament in the New Testament (with very brief abstracts), but he does not engage them evaluatively in the body of his chapter (indeed, very few of the nineteen sources listed, clearly offer contrasting views of the biblical texts that he discusses). This often leaves readers with the impression that Enns' perspective and evidence for his arguments is the primary or only viable perspective or evidence. The only way readers would learn otherwise is by doing some research and reading in secondary literature.

Testament are, no doubt, generally representative of others, including scholars within the evangelical academic guild. So, I am grateful for Enns' further elaboration and development of this approach, even though I have registered disagreement with it. As we all interact with varying perspectives we are bound to examine our own views in more depth, which is a healthy enterprise, for which I am also thankful to Enns for inspiring me to do. I have been sharpened by reading and interacting with this part of his stimulating book.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ I am grateful to several scholars for reading and commenting on this article. I am especially indebted to Peter Spsychalla, my doctoral student, for reading and proofing this article, and particularly for discussing and for obtaining for me the critical edition of the Latin text of Pseudo – Philo referred to in note 28, concerning the textual variant in Pseudo – Philo 11:15. Spsychalla is presently working on a dissertation on the Old Testament and Jewish background of 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Eusebius's Quest for the Historical Jesus: Historicity and Kerygma in the First Book of the Ecclesiastical History

Jonathan Armstrong is a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a PhD candidate in the Historical Theology programme at Fordham University in New York

Over a century after the first publication of Albert Schweitzer's classic text in 1906, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, the enterprise to resurrect Jesus from his ecclesiastical entombment lives anew – to emancipate him who rent the chains of Hades from the prison of the apostolic kerygma. The attention paid to the New York Times best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, illustrates the resurgence of popular interest in the historical Jesus. Scholarship on the historical Jesus remains notoriously divergent, and yet, in the absence of consensus, the centrality of methodology has become apparent.¹ Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 263–339 AD), known today as the Father of Church History, was one of the

¹ John Dominick Crossan notes: 'Historical Jesus research is becoming something of a scholarly bad joke. There were always historians who said it could not be done because of historical problems. There were always theologians who said it should not be done because of theological objections. And there were always scholars who said the former when they meant the latter. Those, however, were negative indignities. What is happening now is rather a positive one. It is the number of competent and even eminent scholars producing pictures of Jesus at wide variance with one another. ... The problem of multiple and discordant conclusions forces us back to questions of theory and method' (*The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991], xxvii–xxviii).

first authors in antiquity with no claim of either firsthand witness or oral tradition to write an account of the life of Jesus. *The Ecclesiastical History* commences, as one would imagine, with a portrait of the founder of Christianity. Although the details he recounts contribute almost nothing to our contemporary store of information, an investigation of the historiography Eusebius employed in this unique reconstruction could perhaps prove instructive for the contemporary quest. As we will discover, in the historiography of Eusebius, the historical Jesus cannot be reconstructed from extra-scriptural testimony alone, for the true nature of Christ can be comprehended only through divine revelation. Nevertheless, Eusebius appeals to extra-canonical evidence in order to confirm the factual accuracy of the gospel accounts.

The academic estimations of Eusebius's chronicle as a font of historical fact are varied, and his works are often accused of being too apologetic to be of historical value. Robert Grant charged Eusebius with the most egregious oversights and distortions:

In ancient and modern times Eusebius of Caesarea has found severe critics of his historical reliability, but there is a question whether or not these critics have gone as far as they should go. It seems highly probable that under the influence of his apologetic purposes Eusebius suppressed, neglected, or falsified a good deal of the historical information available to him.²

A few years later, at the conclusion of an insightful analysis of the thematic tensions in *The Ecclesiastical History*, Grant advocated a less acerbic judgement: 'And whether or not one agrees with every detail of the portrait of Eusebius that begins to emerge, it is at least a picture of a human being, neither a saint nor intentionally a scoundrel'³ More recently, Timothy D. Barnes has attempted to restore Eusebius's reputation as a serious historian, rather than merely an apologist for imperial Christianity.⁴

² 'Eusebius and His Church History', in *Understanding the Sacred Text* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1972), 235. Grant also claimed that Eusebius was inordinately influenced by his patron, Constantine the Great: 'Pro-Constantinian bias is responsible for much of Eusebius' falsification of facts' ('The Case against Eusebius: or, Did the Father of Church History Write History?' in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 12 [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975], 416).

³ *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 164.

⁴ In defence of the integrity of the bishop of Caesarea, Barnes contends that the

Because of the controversy over the accuracy of Eusebius's historical narratives, students of ancient Christianity must scrupulously analyze the theological commentary that Eusebius incorporates into his *oeuvre*. Before commencing his account of the life of Jesus, Eusebius inserts a theological prolegomenon, and one detects in this introduction clear echoes of his classic apologetic motifs. In this four-chapter preface preceding the nine-chapter narrative of the earthly existence of the Lord, Eusebius reworks, in abbreviated fashion, the essential thesis of his cumbersome treatises, the *Preparation for the Gospel* and the *Proof of the Gospel*.⁵ These multi-volume tomes comprise a comprehensive argument for Christianity as the true successor to the faith of the Jewish Patriarchs. In the ideological economy then current, antiquity equalled authenticity, and Christianity had much to gain from the claim that the dispensation of the incarnation was anticipated even from the primeval period. As one commentator notes:

The characterization of the patriarchs as the precursors, exemplars, and prophets of Christianity enables Eusebius to distinguish Christianity from both Judaism and other Greco-Roman religions while allowing him to claim unsurpassed antiquity for what its opponents saw as a new religion.⁶

alleged contradictions in Eusebius's magnum opus are inauthentic ('Some Inconsistencies in Eusebius', *Journal of Theological Studies* 35 [1984]: 474). Addressing the accusation that Eusebius wrote from the standpoint of a religio-political polemicist, Barnes asserts: 'He did not compose his major works under the influence of Constantine, nor was he primarily an apologist who wrote to defend the Christian faith at a time of danger. As Eusebius grew to manhood, the peaceful triumph of Christianity seemed already assured: Eusebius began as a scholar, made himself into a historian, and turned to apologetics only under the pressure of circumstances' (*Constantine and Eusebius* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981], 104).

- ⁵ Eusebius was not the first church father to enlist the discipline of history into the service of apologetics. Tertullian had employed history for polemical purposes a century earlier (Mark S. Burrows, 'Christianity in the Roman Forum: Tertullian and the Apologetic Use of History', in *The Christian and Judaic Invention of History* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990], 75). Glenn Chesnut argues that Eusebius was all but forced to turn to apologetics, for in antiquity there was no ideal of nonreligious historiography, and Eusebius could not accept the classical authors' notion of the operation of fate and lesser deities (*The First Christian Histories* [Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1977], 60).
- ⁶ Eugene V. Gallagher, 'Eusebius the Apologist: The Evidence of the *Preparation* and the *Proof*', in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 26 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 254.

Interpreted insightfully as a response to Porphyry, the *Preparatio Evangelica* attempts to answer the accusation that Christianity was innovative and therefore illegitimate.⁷ In this book, Eusebius exhibits an astonishing mastery of philosophical literature and cites a barrage of pagan authors, reproducing their opinions fluently but without interruption for page after oppressive page. His thesis underneath this labyrinth of references is the same one that he presents in the preface to *The Ecclesiastical History*. That is, the fallen condition of humanity required an era of ethical formation before the transforming proclamation of the gospel could be comprehended and embraced. Once human nature had reached its nadir, the pre-incarnate Christ intervened and, via appearances and theophanies, initiated a period of preparation for the redemption that was soon to be achieved. This preliminary movement found its fullest expression in the moral code of Moses, Eusebius avers:

At that crisis, when nearly all mankind had been submerged by a vast surfeit of wickedness ... the first-begotten and first-created Wisdom of God, the pre-existent Word Himself in His measureless love for mankind showed Himself, now by a vision of angels to His subjects, now in person as God's saving power to one or two of God's beloved servants of old. ... When these [servants] in turn had sown the seeds of true religion in numbers of men, a whole nation, sprung from the ancient Hebrews and devoted to true religion, arose in the world. On these – a mass of men still tied and bound by ancient habits – he bestowed, through the prophet Moses, images and symbols of a mystical sabbath and of circumcision, and instruction in other spiritual principles. ... Their Law became famous and like a fragrant breeze penetrated to every corner of the world.⁸

For Eusebius, the prehistory of Christianity is the history of the pre-incarnate Christ. One is thus immediately alerted to the apologetic orientation of Eusebius's presentation of the historical of Jesus.

⁷ Mark M. Smith, 'A Hidden Use of Porphyry's History of Philosophy in Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 502. In the pithy synopsis of Barnes, Porphyry had argued that 'Christians were apostates from Hellenism to Judaism' (*Constantine and Eusebius*, 179).

⁸ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.2.21–23 (*The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, trans. G. A. Williamson [Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1965], 39). Perhaps Eusebius acquired his theory from Paul (see Gal. 3:25 – 4:5).

The modern scholar – intensely conscious of the critical criteria for historicity – cannot avoid noticing that Eusebius approaches his account of the life of Jesus with the presupposition of the divinity of the person of Christ. 'The nature of Christ is twofold', Eusebius declares, 'it is like the head of the body in that He is recognized as God, and comparable to the feet in that for our salvation He put on manhood as frail as our own'.⁹ At first it would seem that Eusebius's christological statement was crafted to deliver an antecedent probability to the validity of Jesus' message and miracles.¹⁰ In the words of Eusebius, seeing the Son of God in human history has always required 'pure eyes'.¹¹ One therefore concludes that Eusebius's quest was certainly coloured by the *kerygma*. However, one also notes that Eusebius specifically affirms that his principal aim in appealing to orthodox christology was not licence for credulity but a defence against the contention that the recentness of the appearance of Christ revealed a fatal flaw in the Christian religion. Eusebius avers at the end of his preface to the life of Jesus:

This must suffice as [an] introduction to my story proper: it was necessary in order to guard against any inclination to think of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as novel, because of the date of His sojourn in the flesh.¹²

After his thoroughgoing theological prolegomenon, one would assume that Eusebius's portrait of Jesus would be nothing but an uncritical recitation of the gospel tradition. It is therefore surprising to discover that he does not mention any of the miracles of Jesus, the crucifixion, or the resurrection except in citations from extra-scriptural sources.¹³ Eusebius indeed affirms the essentials of the apostolic preaching, but never from the gospels alone. In this way, he evidences an

⁹ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.1.7–1.2.1 (Williamson, 33).

¹⁰ However, elsewhere Eusebius had contended that the interpretation of Jesus' incredible displays of power as signs of his divinity required no theological prolegomenon. Eusebius deduces: "If therefore, as [Josephus] attests of him, he was a doer of wonderful works ... it is clear, that he possessed something excellent beyond the rest of mankind" (*Theoph.*, 5.45 [*On the Theophania*, trans. Samuel Lee (Cambridge: University Press, 1843), 331]; see also *Dem. Evan.*, 3.41).

¹¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.2.6 (Williamson, 35).

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.4.1 (Williamson, 45).

¹³ Eusebius mentions the crucifixion and resurrection in two passages in book one of *The Ecclesiastical History* – once in the *Testimonium Flavium* (*ibid.*, 1.11.7) and

acute awareness of the religious persuasion of the authors whose works he incorporates into his reconstruction of the life of Jesus.¹⁴ In his only citation from the book of Acts, he is careful to indicate that Luke was an ecclesiastical writer, and he refers to him as 'our own Luke' [*hēmin ho Loukos*].¹⁵ He attempts to bolster the credibility of the clergyman Julius Africanus and avers that he was 'no ordinary historian'.¹⁶ Eusebius introduces his reader to Josephus early in the account, and the space dividing references to the 'most famous of Hebrew historians' is never more than a few paragraphs.¹⁷ Josephus proves to be Eusebius's principal source, and Eusebius copies almost ten times more material from the *Antiquities of the Jews* and the *Jewish War* than from sacred Scripture.¹⁸ Certainly, the comprehensiveness of Josephus's works have rendered his testimony invaluable for both ancient and modern scholars. Nevertheless, it was not a mere absence of alternative sources that so recommended Josephus's writings to Eusebius. Of particular interest to Eusebius was Josephus's impeccable accuracy – a quality which won him approval from the eminent critics, King Agrippa and Emperor Titus.¹⁹

Eusebius orchestrates his account to accommodate the testimony of Josephus, if at all possible, even when this necessitates an involved

once in a quotation from the correspondence of Jesus and Agbarus, the Prince of Edessa (*ibid.*, 1.13.20).

- ¹⁴ Once the preface to book one is over, Eusebius quotes Acts and the epistles merely three times (*ibid.*, 1.5.3, 1.12.2, 1.12.4) and the gospels only once (*ibid.*, 1.8.16).
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.5.3 (*The Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton [London: William Heinemann, 1926], 1:46–47).
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.6.2 (Williamson, 51).
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.5.3 (Williamson, 49).
- ¹⁸ In the Loeb Classical Library edition of *The Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Lake and Oulton, counting from the commencement of the main narrative (1.5.1) until the conclusion of the life of Jesus (1.13.22), Eusebius quotes a total of 126 Greek words from Scripture and 1,092 from Josephus. Aside from Scripture and Josephus, Eusebius also draws from Julius Africanus concerning the discrepancies between the Matthean and Lukan genealogies (*ibid.*, 1.7.2–16, see also 1.6.2), and from the supposed correspondence of Jesus and Agbarus (*ibid.*, 1.13.6–21).
- ¹⁹ Eusebius quotes Josephus' claim that his histories were superior to those of a certain Justus of Tiberias: 'I had no such apprehensions as yourself with regard to what I myself had written: I submitted the work to the emperors themselves, when the events had hardly passed out of sight. For, conscious that I had observed absolute truthfulness in my account, I expected to receive testimony to my accuracy, and was not disappointed. I also submitted my history to many others, some of whom had actually seen service in the war, including King Agrippa and several of his relations. For the Emperor Titus was so anxious that from my work

exposition of peripheral material. In his narrative of the birth of Christ, for example, Eusebius positions the account chronologically by recounting that the census under Quirinius was administered during the same year.²⁰ Given a number of considerations, it would seem obvious that Eusebius is patterning his story after Luke's gospel. The Evangelist and Eusebius both appeal to the same historical data in order to introduce the same narrative. However, instead of acknowledging his sacred source, Eusebius draws attention to the fact that a passage from *The Antiquities of the Jews* confirms perfectly the parenthetical comment of Acts 5:37 concerning Judas of Galilee. He was the notorious rebel who spearheaded an uprising against the Romans in response to the perceived injustice of the census. In as far as Eusebius's purpose in relating the details of the census was to communicate the chronology of Jesus' birth, the evidence from Josephus is entirely extraneous. Yet, it may be surmised that Eusebius considered the excursus important because it confirmed the integrity of the second volume of Luke–Acts and therefore also intimated the veracity of the first volume.²¹

In the infancy narrative, Eusebius attempts to interweave the testimony of Josephus to confirm the gospel accounts, but succeeds only in distracting his reader from the seamless unfolding of the story. Relying chiefly on Matthew, and this time owning his debt to the 'sacred gospel record', Eusebius tells the story of the birth of Jesus, the visit of the Magi, and the flight of the holy family to Egypt all in a single paragraph.²² He then devotes the next five paragraphs to the details of the horrific death of Herod the Great, an episode documented not just once but twice by Josephus. Eusebius faithfully, but banally, copies out both of these parallel passages.²³ He frames the dual quotations with comments reminding his reader that Herod had provoked this divine judgement in his desperate attempt to exterminate the infant Christ. This section of Eusebius's history is disproportionately focused upon incidental evidence drawn from

alone should men derive their knowledge of the events, that he wrote with his own hand an order for its publication, while King Agrippa wrote sixty-two letters testifying to the truthfulness of my account' (*Hist. Eccl.*, 3.10.8–11 [Williamson, 123]; see also Josephus, *Vita*, 367).

²⁰ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.5.2. See also: Luke 2:1–2 and 3:1 – famously the only datable text in all of the four gospels.

²¹ Alanna Nobbs, 'Acts and Subsequent Ecclesiastical Histories', in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 160.

²² *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.8.2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1.8.5–8, 1.8.9–15; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 17.168–70; *Jewish War*, 1.656–60, 662.

Josephus, for the chapter is almost entirely consumed with Herod's wasting disease and eventual demise. Eusebius's insistence on incorporating every possible collaborating text from Josephus nearly overwhelms the advancement of his own narrative.

In calculating the chronological span of the public ministry of Christ, Eusebius acknowledges his dependence upon the Evangelist and determines that Jesus' baptism occurred approximately fifteen years after Tiberius had become Caesar. Luke 3:2 states that John began his own ministry of baptism 'in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas'.²⁴ In Eusebius's tortured reading of this verse, the Evangelist states that Jesus commenced preaching while Annas held the office of high priest and was crucified under the administration Caiaphas. Eusebius again seeks confirmation from Josephus, not to furnish independent information concerning Jesus' preaching among the Jewish people, but surprisingly to enumerate the four high priests who were elected after Annas and before Caiaphas.²⁵ For some reason, convinced that the high priest's term expired annually, Eusebius estimates that Jesus ministered for a corresponding period of four years. He cites Josephus in order to enhance the account of the Evangelist, yet he is silently indebted to the tradition of sacred Scripture for an entire constellation of assumptions, not the least of which is that the historical Jesus engaged in public ministry in the first place. The bishop of Caesarea delights to note the confirmatory witness of Josephus: 'The Gospel named Caiaphas as high priest in the year of the Savior's passion, and so the time of Christ's teaching accords with this evidence'.²⁶

In his abbreviated account of John the Baptist, Eusebius accentuates the corroborating role of his citations from Josephus: 'the same writer acknowledges that John was a man of unimpeachable virtue, and a baptist, confirming the description of him contained in the gospel narrative'.²⁷ The accuracy of Josephus's witness to John the Baptist is not notably contested by modern scholars, and Robert E. Van Voorst notes: 'that Josephus can write sympathetically about a controversial figure like John the Baptizer indicates that he could write a neutral description about

²⁴ The above Scripture is quoted from the RSV. See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.10.1–2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.10.4–5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.10.6 (*The Church History: A New Translation with Commentary*, trans. Paul L. Maier [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1999], 44). For a concise explanation of Eusebius's error in chronology, see the helpful footnote in Maier's translation.

²⁷ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.11.3 (Williamson, 63).

Jesus as well'.²⁸ After quoting Josephus on the beheading of John the Baptist, Eusebius inserts the endlessly controverted *Testimonium Flavianum*, the classic extra-biblical documentation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus:

At this time appeared Jesus, a very gifted man – if indeed it is right to call him a man; for he was a worker of miracles, a teacher of such men as listened with pleasure to the truth, and he won over many of the Jews and many of Gentile origin as well. This was the Christ; and when at the instigation of our leading men he had been condemned to the cross by Pilate, those who had loved him at the first did not cease to do so; for on the third day he appeared to them alive again, the inspired prophets having foretold this and countless other wonderful things about him. Even now the group of people called Christians after him has not died out.²⁹

Eusebius is the first author in antiquity to cite this passage, and his passion for this text is quite evident, for he quotes it three times in all and always in the context of defending the historicity of the gospels.³⁰ Opinions concerning the authenticity of the *Testimonium* vary from complete acceptance to complete rejection. John Michael Wallace-Hadrill argues for Eusebius's scholarly integrity:

It is in any case exceedingly improbable that Eusebius himself is to be held responsible for the alteration of Josephus' text, as some have held him to be. If he had perpetrated what would be one of the cleverest frauds of literary history, can we believe that he would have treated his own fraud in the almost casual manner of quoting the *Testimonium* differently on three occasions?³¹

²⁸ *Jesus Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 98.

²⁹ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.11.7–8 (Williamson, 63–64); see Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63.

³⁰ *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.11.7–8; *Dem. Evan.*, 3.5; *Theoph.*, 5.44. No author referred to this paragraph for nearly a century after Eusebius. When the text finally did reemerge, it appeared in Jerome's *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 13.5–6, a work that derived a significant amount of its information from Eusebius.

³¹ 'Eusebius of Caesarea and the *Testimonium Flavianum* (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. 63f.)', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 25 (1974): 361–62. K. A. Olson, on the other hand, contends that the text was entirely composed either by Eusebius or another Christian author ('Eusebius and the *Testimonium Flavianum*', *Catholic Biblical*

However, for the purpose of this article, whether this passage is authentic, partially authentic, or entirely fabricated is not of central importance. From the perspective of Eusebius, the unique virtue of the *Testimonium* was not that it delivered any new information concerning the historical Jesus, but that it had been written by a Jewish historian and therefore could not be accused of the contamination of a Christian bias.³² Eusebius informs his reader that his objective in providing this quotation was not to establish the historicity of an otherwise unattested tradition, but to affirm the essential correctness of the evangelists:

When a historian sprung from the Hebrews themselves has furnished in his own writing an almost contemporary record of John the Baptist and our Saviour too, what excuse is there left for not condemning the shameless dishonesty of those who forged the *Memoranda* blackening them both?³³

The spurious historical account of the life of Jesus to which Eusebius alludes in the above quotation – also known as the *Acts of Pilate* – was a work of imperial propaganda that denied the divinity and resurrection of Jesus.³⁴ Posing as an official document commissioned by Pilate and published as a textbook for students during the Great Persecution (ca. 303–11 AD), the *Acts of Pilate* was designed to undermine the credibility

Quarterly 61 [1999]: 322). John P. Meier maintains a compromise position, arguing that the paragraph is essentially authentic with only minor interpolations ('Jesus in Josephus: A Modest Proposal', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 [1990]: 90; see also N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], 439). Origen states that Josephus did not accept Jesus as the Messiah and thus most scholars conclude that he was not aware of the *Testimonium* as cited by Eusebius (*Contr. Cels.*, 1.47). However, as N.T. Wright argues, Josephus's reference to Jesus as *ho christos* (the Christ) could be interpreted not as a personal confession but merely as a title to identify the Jesus of whom he writes as the figure of Christian faith (*Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63 [*Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII–XX*, trans. Louis H. Feldman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 9:50]; *The New Testament and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992], 354).

32 Doron Mendels, 'The Sources of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius: The Case of Josephus', in *L'Histoire de l'église des premiers siècles* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2001), 203.

33 *Hist. Eccl.*, 1.11.9 (Williamson, 64).

34 G.W.H. Lampe, 'The Trial of Jesus in the *Acta Pilati*', in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), 175.

of the records of the evangelists.³⁵ It appears, in fact, that the *Acts of Pilate* was precisely the counter-tradition against which Eusebius positioned his reconstruction of the life of Jesus. In the attempt to counteract the infuriating slander of Emperor Maximin and his associates, Eusebius writes:

They actually forged *Memoranda* of Pilate and our Saviour, full of every kind of blasphemy against Christ. These, with the approval of their superior, they sent to every district under his command, announcing in edicts that they were to be publicly displayed in every place, whether hamlet or city, for all to see, and that they should be given to children by their teachers instead of lessons, to study and learn by heart.³⁶

The *Acts of Pilate* advocated a portrait of Jesus that was diametrically opposed to the gospel tradition. In the attempt to arbitrate between these conflicting christologies, Eusebius investigates the historicity of their supporting records, never assuming to recalculate the theological implications of the historical data. Upon the discovery that the *Memoranda* incorrectly claimed that Pilate became prefect over Judea in the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, instead of in the twelfth year as Josephus records, Eusebius immediately dismissed the *Acts of Pilate* as a vicious forgery.³⁷

We are now adequately prepared to draw a preliminary conclusion. We have witnessed that the elements of the apostolic *kerygma* are either entirely absent or minimally present in Eusebius's portrait of the historical Jesus. Not one word from any of Jesus' aphorisms is ever repeated, and

³⁵ See the insightful article by Xavier Leveils, 'La polémique anti-chrétienne des *Acts de Pilate*', *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 79 (1999): 311

³⁶ *Hist. Eccl.*, 9.5.1 (Williamson, 361). Eusebius recounts that the campaign was insidiously successful (*ibid.*, 9.7.1).

³⁷ Eusebius explains: '[Josephus] writes that Pontius Pilate was given the administration of Judea in the twelfth year of Tiberius ... and that Pilate remained in office ten whole years, almost until Tiberius's death. This clearly proves that the recently published *Acts of Pilate* are forgeries, since they claim that the crime of the Savior's death occurred in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, which was the seventh year of his reign, a time when Pilate was not yet in charge of Judea. Josephus clearly states that it was in the *twelfth* year of his reign that Tiberius appointed Pilate procurator of Judea' (*Hist. Eccl.*, 1.9.2-4 [Maier, 60]).

there is no reference at all to the virgin birth or his burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Conspicuously missing is any mention of Jesus' miracles, for Eusebius expounds upon their historical veracity and theological significance elsewhere in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* and in the *Theophania*.³⁸ In both of the above works, Eusebius draws his argument for the miracles of Jesus to a climax with the quotation of the *Testimonium Flavianum*.³⁹ Josephus serves as a confirmatory voice for the witness of the apostles in *The Ecclesiastical History*, rather than as an independent source from which to reconstruct the life of the historical Jesus. Although the writings of Josephus could add academic credibility to the narrative, for Eusebius, no evidence beyond the apostolic kerygma was necessary to prove the truth of the gospel. The apostolic preaching is in and of itself a convincing demonstration of the authenticity of Jesus' miracles and resurrection. As Eusebius reasons this is because it is inconceivably improbable that the disciples would have unanimously died for an unambiguous lie. In one justly famous passage he drafts an imaginary statement of purpose for the conspiring and consciously fraudulent apostolic circle in order to illustrate the ludicrousness of the supposition:

Let us now make this our business. We will tell the same falsehoods, and invent stories that will benefit nobody, neither ourselves, nor those we deceive, nor him who is deified by our lies. And we will extend our lies not only to men of our own race, but go forth to all men, and fill the whole world with our fabrications about him. ... For what could be finer than to make both gods and men our enemies for no reason at all, and to have no enjoyment of any kind, to have no profit of our dear ones, to make no money, to have no hope of anything good at all, but just to be deceived and to deceive without aim or object? ... Now is all this plausible? Does such an account have the ring of truth? Can any one persuade himself that poor and unlettered men could make up such stories, and form a conspiracy to invade the Roman Empire? Or that human nature, whose

³⁸ See especially *Dem. Evan.*, 3.4–5; *Theoph.*, 5.41–45. In *The Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius alludes to the fact that Jesus performed miracles, though he never indicates their circumstances or nature (1.11.7, 1.13.1, 1.13.20).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.5; *Theoph.*, 5.44.

characteristic element is self-preservation, would ever be able for the sake of nothing at all to undergo a voluntary death?⁴⁰

The present author would submit therefore, that at least for Eusebius, the attempt to rediscover the true spirit of the founder of Christianity, apart from the interpreted tradition of the gospels, is an ultimately futile endeavour. In his own words, Eusebius confesses: 'I think then it has been well said: "One must put complete confidence in the disciples of Jesus, or none at all".'⁴¹ Eusebius's efforts to incorporate extra-scriptural sources into his account of the historical Jesus more often divert the reader's attention from the main thrust of the narrative, and his rare references to the evangelists are all that establish a coherent storyline and sequence of events. However, the uniqueness of the gospels as apostolic testimonies does not discourage Eusebius from attempting to demonstrate the historicity of the New Testament from extra-canonical documents. The secular history of Josephus proves Johannine sacred theology, at least in the mind of the apologist and antiquarian Eusebius.⁴² In contrast to the best-selling authors of the current historical Jesus literature, it would appear that Eusebius, the author of the first historical Jesus, in no way intended to challenge the monopoly of the apostles.

⁴⁰ *Dem. Evan.*, 3.5 (*The Proof of the Gospel*, trans. W. J. Ferrar [New York: Macmillan, 1920; repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981], 1:132–33).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.5 (Ferrar 1:140). He then adds: 'And if we are to distrust these men, we must distrust all writers' (*ibid.*, [Ferrar, 1:140–41]).

⁴² My former mentor at Fordham University, Avery Cardinal Dulles, comments astutely: 'The adventures of non-Catholic biblical criticism over the past century make it evident that he who rejects the Christ of faith will soon end up by reducing the Jesus of history to a pale figure without religious significance. Conversely, he who makes light of the flesh-and-blood Jesus of history in the name of a more spiritual faith will end up prostrating himself before a timeless myth. If we are true to the Gospels, we shall insist on retaining both fact and interpretation, both history and faith' (*Apologetics and Biblical Christ* [Westminster: The Newman Press, 1964], 40–41).

The Last Word: Gender, Grace and a Greek Conjunction

Robbie F. Castleman

TThere are certain subjects in my writing that I avoid like the plague. As a woman, I have avoided writing or publicly speaking out much on 'the women's issue'. This is not because it doesn't concern me, but because I don't want to end up in 'women's studies' or on a panel rehashing old arguments. My academic degrees are in biblical studies and trinitarian theology and I like to teach New Testament hermeneutics from a trinitarian, covenantal, quasi-VanHoozerian framework and have little patience for one more argument about Paul's use of *kephalē* in the fifth chapter of Ephesians.

However, (you knew this was coming!) lately I have been considering the implications of Paul's precise language in Galatians 3:28. They hinge on the change of a conjunction and speak to 'the women's issue' in an interesting way. The Greek sequence of *oude, oude, kai* in Galatians 3:28 is telling – 'In Christ, there is neither Jew *nor* Greek, there is neither slave *nor* free, there is neither male *and* female.' This distinction is not reflected in some translations, but it is significant to appreciate the reality that Paul keenly recognized. Like Jesus, Paul rooted his hermeneutics in pre-fall origins: 'it was not so from the beginning'). Prior to the fall, there are no ethnic or socio-economic distinctions in the human family, but there is 'male and female' created by him and bearing the *imago Dei*. Gender distinction. Equality and compatibility are not manifestations of fallenness, but part of God's very good creation both in the beginning and in Christ eternally.

I think this *oude, oude, kai* reality should be increasingly manifest in the life of the church. Our identity in Christ, and our suitability to serve the church have nothing to do with our racial, socio-economic or gender identities. The thrice repeated, 'there cannot be' (οὐκ ἐνί) is determinative of all three distinctive couplets. Paul, however, makes the point that

gender distinction is a created identity maintained and fully redeemed in Christ to bear together the image of God in the work and mission of the church. Both egalitarians and complementarians can probably find a way to use Paul's sentence for their own benefit, and this is precisely where I get tired of the argument that wages over my feminine head.

I have often thought how the man born blind (John 9) must have felt when yet one more rabbi and his disciples hovered over his head (I might be blind, but I can hear!) to make him the *foci* of yet another theological debate about 'who sinned.' It is easy to forget that theology matters to, and actually affects, real people. It's easy to wage a war over words or pronouns and never honestly ask what is being said about over half the people that have ever populated our planet. For some, it can be a triumphant rush to see oneself as a defender of biblical inerrancy, to be one of the important few who stand fast on biblical authority (and yet gloss over in a variety of ways the counter-cultural advocacy for and inclusion of women in the ministry of Jesus and Paul). I am weary of hearing the point and counter point of *kephalē*, *authentēin*, Junia, and the dispute over *anthropos* that a first semester Greek student should have settled. I want Jesus to come by, spit in the mud, treat me like a person in whom God is at work, and end the debate that rages over my life as though I were unaffected by the argument. Paul's careful tri-fold οὐκ ἐνὶ levels the field and his *oude, oude, kai* tells me that, like my brother, I am not invisible and my gendered personhood in Christ matters. Our equality in Christ Jesus is not a thing to be grasped at, fought over, proven and made the standard-bearer of our rights for women or for men. That is not if we are talking about the Kingdom of God and our partnership in the gospel.

To have the mind of Christ, to think like Jesus, to be like Jesus and to engage in ministry like Jesus does not mean to fight for ones' own right to exercise one's own gifts. What it means is to notice and open doors for the exercise of another's gifts for the benefit of the church and the good of the world. To have the mind of Christ means to be a self-emptying person for the sake of the other. When taken seriously, *kenotic* theology is bound to be unpopular because, as Paul clearly shows throughout the Philippian epistle, all must lose in order for Christ to truly win. Paul challenged the church in Philippi, and in particular Euodia and Syntyche, to count it all rubbish, to count it all loss like he had learned to do. This may be particularly costly for women in the evangelical church today. As a

trinitarian theologian I staunchly affirm that God's self-revealed identity as Father and Son and Spirit are non-negotiable terms. I also assert that gender-accurate translation regarding the human family honours the Lord, the text and the church. (Holding these two ideas together in one's life and discipline is akin to being a womb-to-tomb pro-life advocate. One is rendered politically homeless in the United States, but it does foster a watchfulness for the Kingdom to come.)

What would a community of faith (or a marriage!) look like if it gave itself to Paul's *kenotic* mandate for ecclesial life and really reflected the *οὐκ ἐν* and *οὐδε, οὐδε, kai* pattern of Pauline scripture? What would happen if people championed each other's gifts? Worked for the other's benefit? Heralded each other's opportunity? What would the excellence of our ministry look like if we stewarded our invitations as surprising privileges instead of negotiated rights? What would happen if our language reflected all whom God intended to hear and obey? We might make Paul's joy complete, become a community of real saints, be filled with the Spirit, look like Jesus and bless the Father's heart! We might be able to get on with the mission of the church in the world if we stopped arguing over our own turf!

For many brothers and sisters who think there is too much to lose in risky *kenosis*, the gospel has a resounding reply to such fears. How dare we evangelicals, who defend the foolishness and weakness of the cross, and explain the humiliation of the incarnation better than anyone, consistently forget or intentionally eliminate the implications of kenotic theology in the turf wars that consume 'the women's issue'? Brothers protect their power and sisters want their share. Then either nothing changes or things get worse because no one is willing to risk the challenge of faith: to die to ourselves that we might truly live *in Christ*.

I am grateful that the benediction my husband and I chose for our wedding has also been the commitment of our marriage. I think it reflects Paul's longing for Philippi, the churches in Galatia and God's hope for the body of Christ. I commend it as both the starting point and the end result of our current conversation.

'May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' *Romans 15:5-6*