

New Testament Use of the Old Testament

Week 2: Intro and Jewish Background

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First Things First

- Quiz on week 1
- Discussion of introduction and chapter 1 of Beale's *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.
- Does Beale consider himself one who believes that the NT authors used the OT more or less contextually? Page 13
- What is a type? Page 14
 - An analogical correspondence among revealed truths about persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God's special revelation, which from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature and are escalated in their meaning.
 - Key elements: analogy, historical, pointing-forward, escalation, retrospection.
- What is the post-modern or reader-response view of the situation? Very pessimistic. Page = ?

NT “Non-Use” of the OT

- What books in OT are NOT referenced in NT?
- Five? **Ezra**, **Nehemiah**, **Esther**, **Ecclesiastes**, and **Song of Solomon**.
 - Nehemiah 9:15 has very similar wording to the quotation in John 6:31. I think it is the more likely referent than Exodus 6:4, 15. It is also very close to Psalm 78:24.
 - **Ezra** does appear to be missing from the NT.
 - There are some similar phrases in **Esther** 5:3-6 and 7:2 to Mark 6:23, but not enough to qualify it as a quotation or allusion. Esther is not mentioned in the NT.
 - **Ecclesiastes** 7:20 is theologically related to Romans 3:10, but Romans is not quoting it. Similar with 2 Cor. 5:10 and Eccl. 12:14; and 1 Tim. 6:7 and Eccl 5:15.
 - **Song of Solomon** is not quoted either.

NT “Non-Use” of the OT, cont.

- Five more? Judges, Ruth, Lamentations, Obadiah, or Zephaniah.
 - Judges is reflected in Acts 13:20, and possibly Heb. 11:33 is an echo of Judges 14:6-7.
 - The history of Ruth is seen in Matthew 1:3-5.
 - It does not appear there are any allusions in the NT to Lamentations, Obadiah, nor Zephaniah.
- Some add Jonah to the list although there is a sort of citation of Jonah in Matthew 12:39, 16:4; and Luke 11:29-30.
- In the end, by my count at least, there are seven Old Testament books that do not get any New Testament “air time.”

NT Use of Non-Biblical Books

- Jude 14-15 cites a prophecy of Enoch that is found in the pseudepigraphal work 1 Enoch 1:9.
- Jude 9 refers to a story about the body of Moses attributed to the apocryphal book Assumption of Moses or Testament of Moses, but this cannot be proven.
- Paul quotes Aratus in Acts 17:28, Epimenides of Crete in Titus 1:12, and Menander's comedy *Thais* in 1 Cor. 15:33. These are secular works.
- If the NT quotes a non-Biblical book, this does not mean that the book containing the quote is inspired by God, nor that even the words quoted are inspired. It might simply say something true.
 - Not all true statements are divinely inspired. Only Scripture is divinely inspired.

Types of Connection between OT and NT

- “Fulfillment” is an overly-broad term but it is commonly used so we are stuck with it.
- Predicted (prophesied) event is fulfilled = happens. Examples: Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2.
- Historical analogy. Some kind of likeness is established between something before and something later. This category is broad enough in my mind to encompass the typological (next).
- Typological fulfillment. Historical persons, institutions, or events are seen as patterns that come to fruition in Christ and the church. Examples: Adam and Christ (Rom 5), Passover Lamb and Christ, temple priests/sacrifices and Christ.
- Redemptive-historical fulfillment. I think these can fit under predicted events or analogies. This phrase seems to be oft-used when a fulfillment is not precise or the terms and conditions are changed (e.g. the New Covenant is fulfilled with the church instead of Israel).

Types of Connection between OT and NT, cont.

- Double fulfillment / fuller sense (scholars call this *sensus plenior*). A prophecy is fulfilled in the near-term *and* in the far term. Instead, I believe we should dig deeper and determine which (near or far) is meant, and if there is an analogy or “pattern fulfillment” that takes place later according to the same manner. Not “this happens in two different ways” but “this happens, and then that happens which is like this” or “this is a pattern that is true because of God’s morally ordered universe, and similar things will continue to happen throughout time.”
- Corporate / representative fulfillment. Christ as representative for the human race or the nation Israel or the king of Israel fulfills an important future role.
- Inaugurated fulfillment. A promise begins to be fulfilled in some small way, but it will be fully accomplished later. This is called “already/not yet.” I believe initial similarities are often better categorized as analogies instead of as early or pre-fulfillments.

Types of Connection between OT and NT, cont.

- Ethical/moral fulfillment. Commands given earlier are followed or they are filled up in God's people as they live in Christ.
- Fulfillment to obsolescence. The temple, for example, is no longer operational, but its type and pattern of operation is fulfilled in Christ's work.
- Caution about finding connections between verses if the connection is merely terms or words and not *content*.
 - *Birds* in the parable of the soils does not transfer its meaning to the birds in the parable of the mustard seed.

More About those Slippery Allusions

- Example: In Luke 1:43, Elizabeth says, “But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”
- The NIV Biblical Theological Study Bible note says: ‘**May allude** to an important Messianic psalm: “The LORD says to my lord” (Ps 110:1; cf. Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34).’
 - Interestingly the note does not capitalize the second *lord*. In Psalm 110, the NIV has it lowercase as well, with a footnote ‘or Lord’.
- My point here is that “may allude” points to the uncertainty of the allusion. I personally never thought of Elizabeth’s words “my Lord” as an allusion to Psalm 110, but I can see how someone would, and maybe now I have seen it, I will not be able to “unsee” it!
- What about other texts that have this phrase? There are three others that could fit in the New Testament: John 20:13, John 20:28, Phil. 3:8. If the allusion fits for one...

Hermeneutics

- The questions posed on p. 1 of Beale are very important.
- For this author, literalism is the way to go—or, if you prefer, originalism, or the “plain reading” of the text.
- Reader-response is out. Allegory is out. These move the meaning from the author to the reader.
 - Yes, even in Galatians 4. Paul is not interpreting Genesis allegorically. He is *creating* an allegory to help teach truth.
- I advocate for “static meaning.” The Old Testament meant something when it was written, and it means that *same* thing now. It cannot mean what it never meant. A later text cannot force a “meaning change” on an earlier text. It certainly may elucidate new implications or applications, but it cannot change the original meaning.
- Also, an OT text was understandable by its original audience. It did not have to wait until the NT came along to give it meaning (as in the Christocentric emphasis).

What is Reader-Response Hermeneutics?

- Reading is an action that conveys meaning to a text.
- Reader and text are interdependent. Meaning does not flow one way.
- Meaning can change from one person's reading to that same person's reading, and meaning can change from one person to another person's reading.
- Moderate: Meaning is incomplete until the text is read by a reader.
- Radical: The reader does not respond to meaning; the reader's response *is* the meaning.
- We contend that God invested the Biblical text with meaning, and that meaning is present whether the text gathers dust or is read by some reader. Readers can arrive at incorrect conclusions about the meaning. *Meaning is independent of the reader.*
- Reader's experiences reflected back to themselves. It is more self introspection than text inspection.

Cultural Context

- A full consideration of this is far beyond our scope. However, we should be aware of things like...
- The Ancient Near East in general
- How common pagan idolatry was
- The Patriarchal culture
- Tribal, collective (not “personal rights”), honor/shame, hot-climate culture
- Kingdom focus, not democracy
- Slavery a reality
- Very different way of thinking than modern western sensibilities
- War very often
- Living life with the basics was difficult

Can We Understand Ancient Writing?

- Do our presuppositions block us from understanding...almost everything...most everything...some? I am on the “some” end of that spectrum.
- God has given us language as part of the image of God to permit us to communicate with Him and with one another. We believe therefore we *can* understand one another when sufficient context and explanation is available.
- Language has a univocal meaning. A word, for example, means one thing in a given context. It cannot mean two different things simultaneously, otherwise communication would be impossible. Even to say, “Language is not univocal” must presuppose that language *is* univocal, or else we could not understand the saying! The principle is axiomatic to communication.
 - Double-entendre, word-plays, jokes, etc. are possible. They mean something because there is *supposed* to be one meaning to the words, but they are purposefully used to elicit another idea.

Do NT Authors Use the OT Contextually?

- I generally agree with Beale: “My position lies on the side of those who affirm that the NT uses the OT in line with its original contextual meaning” (p. 13).
- Beale says that the NT authors display varying degrees of awareness of historical and literary context. I am a little more optimistic in that I take it that the NT authors knew what they were doing, and the Spirit of God definitely knew what He was doing in breathing the text out through the human authors. I would affirm that the NT authors understood the OT’s contextual meaning even when they made analogical and typological use of the OT. To charge them with “unawareness” is a bit harsh.
- Not one-size-fits-all: there are several ways or approaches which the Spirit of God used to include the OT into the NT. Some are more contextual and some are more analogous or similar than exact. But a certain kind of use does not mean that they misunderstood the passage.

Typology

- An analogy where the later text makes use of the earlier text, a latter person with an earlier person, a latter institution with an earlier institution.
- Is a purposeful “forward looking” element built into the earlier text? Was that seen before?
- Or is there a retrospective “realization” from the standpoint of the later text?
- With all these options, I distinguish between the omniscient God and the finite author and finite readers. Of course, God had knowledge when He gave the earlier revelation that there would be later revelation coming that could be somehow connected.
- We must guard against importing foreign meanings into the OT text that were never there to begin with. Meaning is conveyed in the words, not hidden in the divine mind or whitespace.
- The word “type” or “fulfillment” formula is a common way to detect types. But it can also be in the eye of the beholder. Example: Transitive types: Moses - Joshua, Moses - Christ, therefore Joshua - Christ.

Beale's Definition of Typology (p. 14)

- Analogical correspondence
- Historicity
- Pointing-forwardness - an aspect of foreshadowing or pre-signification
- Escalation - the anti-type is somehow “bigger” than the type
- Retrospection - later reflection by the apostles caused them to realize “in retrospect” what they had experienced was “like” an Old Testament reality.
- Beale defines typology as a study of analogical correspondences...(see above)
- *And* as a method of exegesis.
- This seems suspect to this author, as close-context exegesis is required first, before typology can be determined or fit in larger-context exegesis.

Canonical Linguistic Priming

- I learned this from an article by Kyle Dunham at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. Moo proposed the idea and Beale developed it.
- Dunham introduces a quote by Moo, saying, “Some citations and allusions arise from the degree to which earlier biblical texts permeated the thinking of later biblical authors:
 - “Granted the prominence played by the Old Testament in the lives and cultural milieu of the New Testament authors, it is more than probable that they frequently used scriptural language other than as authoritative proof....New Testament writers often—without intending to provide a ‘correct’ interpretation of the Old Testament text—use Old Testament language as a vehicle of expression.”*
- Christians do this all the time. If you give someone a master key or password, you might say, “Brother, that right there is the keys to the kingdom.” You are using NT language without any real connection to its original context. You are just using the words. Much less are you suggesting that you are changing the meaning of the original text.

Canonical Linguistic Priming, cont.

- Lexical priming is when words from a prior text “prime” later writing or speech with pre-configured phrases.
- The more commonly-used or catchy the original phrase, the more likely it will be re-used like a formula in unrelated contexts.
- It relies on the word-association memory (Dunham calls this a “mental concordance”) of people who share a linguistic context, like the Bible, or a common set of authoritative documents in a field of learning.
- Dunham argues that this could explain Jeremiah 31:15 in Matthew 2:17-18, Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 in Matt. 3:17, the thirty pieces of silver statement in Zechariah 11:12-13 and Jer. 32:6-9 with Matt. 27:9-10. Matthew’s use of these OT texts does not re-signify them or change their meaning. But they were common texts part of the mental concordance of Matthew and his Jewish and Christian audience that were useful to him.

Jewish Interpretative Methods

- Are NT authors *dependent* on Jewish interpretive methods? No. They were free, under God's Spirit, to understand the text in a way not constrained by contemporary practice.
- Are they *affected* by them and did they know of them? Very likely.
- Remember: Jesus and the apostles were very *different* than their Rabbi counterparts.
 - “You have heard that it was said...but I say to you...”
 - Another example: Paul's theology was radically altered when he met Jesus on the way to Damascus. He realized that not only did the OT speak of Messiah, and that Jesus *was* that Messiah, but that there were clues in the OT and proof in the NT era that this Messiah was the Son of God.
 - Midrashic techniques missed that crucial point!

Second Temple Hermeneutics and “Literary” Interpretation

- Peshar: Two meanings
 - Peshat: the plain meaning. Normal readers and the author could access this meaning.
 - Peshar: a hidden meaning. Available only to an enlightened reader, a “teacher of righteousness.” “This is (actually means?) that.” Some suggest NT uses of the OT are like this: Acts 2:16-21 with Joel 2:28-32. This is seen to “validate” these interpretive methods.
- Midrash: Rabbinic method of interpreting, studying, and explaining the Torah. Tendency to focus on details of the text, and sometimes very creative interpretations.
 - Comparison between contemporary event/text and another text that may seem unrelated but have some point of comparison however small. The comparison yields new insight not clear in the original text and may not have been accessible to the original author.
 - Seven rules called *middot* were proposed by Rabbi Hillel in the first century B.C. to reduce abuse (see next slide).
- Allegorical

The Seven Rules or Middot of Hillel

- Lesser to greater: if something is true of the lesser, it is true of the greater (or minor to major).
- Analogy because of similar catch-phrase. You can transfer principles from one to the other.
- Construct principle from single verse. Then when similar phrasing is found in another verse, the principle can be applied to them too. Exodus 21:26-27 applies to any permanent injury, not just an eye or tooth.
- Construct principle from two verses. Similar to above, but requires the parent principle to be built from two verses instead of one.
- General and specific. Interpretation can move from general to specific, or from specific to general, or general-specific-general. Exodus 21:2 speaks of Hebrew slaves in general, followed by specifics in verses 3-5 that limit the general rule to those cases.
- As found in another place. Use a clearer parallel passage to interpret a less clear one. The texts must have points of general similarity, not necessarily word-for-word similarity. Deut. 21:17 and Exodus 13:2 to clarify that the older brother always gets twice what each younger brother receives. Also Lev. 11 (no flying things) and more detailed Deut. 14:19 about winged creatures being impure.
- Meaning of a word found in immediate context. Surrounding context can be used rather than going to other texts. Numbers 6:4 speaks of the fruit of the vine. What exactly does that entail? See verse 3.

Point of the Seven Middot

- Be aware in your study of the NT use of the OT whether the NT author may be using a text in one of these ways. The rabbinic methods may have shaped how NT-era believers understood OT texts.
- It could just be that a plain reading shows those thought-patterns are present in the OT text, and the same thought patterns can be legitimately re-used because they are logically simple. For example:
 - Lesser to greater: Deut. 25:4 & 1 Cor. 9:9; Luke 11:13. Note also Matt. 6:28-29; John 10:34-36; Rom. 5:15-21.
 - Analogy with catch-phrase: “I will be your God, and you will be my people” is a repeated phrase throughout the Old and New Testaments, signifying a covenant with God. Anywhere the phrase is used, we need to be aware of that same covenant significance.
 - General and specific: In Romans 13:8-10 Paul writes several specific laws of the OT, and then generalizes them with one: “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Primary Sources for Jewish Interpretation

- Septuagint = LXX = Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible
- OT Apocrypha = 14 or 15 books “hidden”
- Pseudepigrapha = Jewish writings with false authorship designation 200 BC to 600 AD
- Qumran = Dead Sea Scrolls
- Philo, a Jewish philosopher alive at the time of Jesus and Paul; wrote extensively.
- Josephus, a Jewish historian
- Targums = Aramaic translation of OT, with interpretive paraphrase
- Rabbinic literature = Mishnah + Tosefta + Babylonian Talmuds + Midrashic writings
- Beale lists many resources to help you find out more info on the above source material.

Primary Sources for Early Christian Literature

- Beale lists many sources on p. 122ff.
- Including these authors: Clement of Alexandrian, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Amphiloque of Iconium, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster, Didymus of Alexandria, Philo.

Beale's Chapter 6 Can Be Overemphasized

- The goal is to provide us with resources to know how to find out how Jewish writers understood Old Testament texts. This is interesting, but...
- Jewish writers were not always faithful believers in the true God. Their interpretation therefore may be suspect.
- These Jewish writers were not interpreting the New Testament, and most would not accept the New Testament nor the deity of Christ, nor the fact that He was Messiah.
- So, while they can provide interesting data, the problem is that this information is not and should not be considered “determinative” in the NT use of the OT by *other* (NT) authors. The NT author may even be *contrasting* the truth with the Jewish understanding.
- But note on p. 105 the types of questions that Beale has us ask of these sources. They are helpful to think through.

Homework for Next Week

- Read Beale chapters 2-3. Be prepared to discuss in class.
- Find and classify the OT quotations / allusions in the next chunk of chapters in your assigned NT section. Turn in your work to receive instructor comment and grade for the week.
- You are NOT allowed to use AI at all. Use BI - Bible Intelligence. Or HI - Human Intelligence!

Homework for Next Week: Project Step 2

- Now that you have selected an OT quotation used in the NT to analyze, the next assignment is to write at least one page explaining the meaning of the text in its OT context.
- Again, you are not allowed to use AI. Work with your Bible, Bible study software, read the context, and tell me what it means.