

# Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology

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As Doug Moo has noted, “typology is much easier to talk about than to describe.”<sup>1</sup> Even among evangelicals, competing definitions of typology are legion. These matters are further complicated by related (and equally polarizing) issues such as the nature of biblical theology, the NT’s use of the OT, the structure of the canon, authorial intent, the relationship of the divine and human authors of Scripture, and other knotty theological and hermeneutical issues.<sup>2</sup>

Given the debate surrounding typology, even in evangelical circles, this article argues for an approach to typology that coheres with a self-consciously Reformed and evangelical understanding of the discipline of biblical theology. Our aim is to set out the essential features of a type by rooting typology in the basic presuppositions of biblical theology and in Scripture as a self-interpreting divine-human book that progressively unfolds along covenantal epochs. In other words, we are endeavoring to uncover the exegetical logic that undergirds the NT authors’ interpretation and that leads them to interpret typology as a feature of divine revelation. Understanding

that logic will reveal a great deal about how the NT authors conceived of the nature of types. Put simply, we are attempting to describe how typology in the NT “works.”

Ultimately we will argue that the exegetical logic of the NT authors demonstrates that types are historical, authorially-intended, textually rooted, tied to Scripture’s covenant structure, and undergo escalation from old covenant shadow to new covenant reality. In order to unpack this thesis we will first explain our understanding of the discipline of biblical theology. Second, we will unravel how our understanding of biblical theology both creates and constrains hermeneutical commitments with regard to the relationship between the testaments and the NT use of the OT. We will describe this approach to Scripture as biblical-theological exegesis. Third, we will consider the implications of biblical-theological exegesis for typology. Finally, we will explain how this approach to typology contrasts with “figural reading” and the attendant problems with figural readings as a subjectivist and reader-oriented approach to the relationship between texts within Scripture.

## **BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND TYPOLOGY**

Describing the use of the term “biblical theology” in contemporary biblical scholarship, D. A. Carson says, “Everyone does that which is right in his or her own eyes, and calls it biblical theology.”<sup>3</sup> Even a cursory survey of the literature proves Carson’s statement. Klink and Lockett’s recent taxonomy of biblical theology in contemporary scholarship catalogs five differing approaches to biblical theology and various schools of thought within each approach.<sup>4</sup>

Our understanding of biblical theology falls within the Vosian tradition. This approach to biblical theology sees it as a discipline that “reads the Bible on its own terms, following the Bible’s own internal contours and shape, in order to discover God’s unified plan as it is disclosed to us over time.”<sup>5</sup> Rosner’s (oft-quoted) definition focuses on these same elements:

Biblical theology may be defined as theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus.<sup>6</sup>

This definition helpfully describes biblical theology as an enterprise in exegesis that attempts to understand the Bible as a *unified and coherent whole*, with a *progressively unfolding plot* that *culminates in Jesus Christ*. Biblical theology is both *exegetical* and *theological*, involving both the inductive study of texts in their historical and literary contexts as well as the attempt to put canonical texts together according to their own redemptive-historical and literary-narrative ordering.<sup>7</sup> Biblical theology involves the endeavor to uncover how biblical authors interpreted earlier Scriptures and understood their own writings to fit with them. Ultimately, biblical theology “must not only reflect structure, storyline, corpus theology, and the like,” it must also “call a new generation to personal knowledge of the living God.”<sup>8</sup>

According to these definitions, biblical theology is more than simply tracing themes through Scripture. Doing biblical theology means attempting to understand the logic of Scripture’s unfolding drama and make sense of how each part fits into the whole. At the heart of biblical theology then is the relationship between the testaments and the issue of the use of the OT by the NT authors.<sup>9</sup>

Understanding the exegetical logic of biblical authors is of such importance that Hamilton posits that biblical theology is nothing less than understanding and embracing “the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”<sup>10</sup> By “interpretive perspective,” Hamilton means “the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place in it.”<sup>11</sup>

This focus on the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors means that biblical theology essentially emerges from exegesis. Again, as Hamilton notes, “the only access we have to the *interpretative perspective of the biblical authors* is what they wrote. Rather than try to go behind the text to get at what really happened, as though the text is mere propaganda, we are trying to understand what the biblical authors have written.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, biblical theology considers not only a text’s immediate context, but the context of the entire canon—the ultimate boundary for a text’s meaning. Only in light of later revelation and through the interpretive perspective of Christ and the apostles is the redemptive-historical significance of an OT text fully revealed. Further, biblical theology not only endeavors to *understand* the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors but seeks to *embrace* and

*imitate* it as well. Thus biblical theology is both exegetically descriptive and theologically prescriptive.

### **WHAT IS BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL EXEGESIS?**

G. K. Beale provides the following definition of a biblical-theological exegesis:

A biblical-theological approach attempts to interpret texts in 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.<sup>13</sup>

The progressive nature of redemptive-historical revelation through the canon entails that the “meaning” of a text undergoes “organic development” through the canon until it reaches its full bloom in Christ.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, this organic development is exegetically discernible and verifiable. In other words, we are seeking to discern how later biblical authors interpreted earlier ones. The goal is to understand the meaning of any given text in its immediate historical and literary context (i.e., grammatical-historical exegesis), and then determine how that meaning unfolds through the redemptive-historical narrative of Scripture, that is, in the literary context of the whole canon.<sup>15</sup> Thus, biblical-theological exegesis is not limited to grammatical-historical investigations of “meaning” in the original context but also includes the redemptive-historical and literary-canonical contexts which both develop and constrain the original meaning of a text.

The description of “biblical-theological exegesis” in the preceding section sets forth an approach to exegesis that expands grammatical-historical exegesis to include wider redemptive-historical and canonical contexts. How does such an approach fit with the notion of authorial intent? This question must be answered along three lines: (1) the “meaning” of any text is established by the intent of its human author; (2) the dual authorship of Scripture entails that texts are also embedded with “divine authorial intentions” that may surpass the intent of human authors; (3) divine authorial intent is always communicated and constrained by the intent of the human author, is progressively developed across the canon, and is therefore accessible and

exegetically discernible by contemporary readers. Let us now expand on each assertion.

### ***Meaning, authorial intent, and interpretation***

The biblical-theological approach to exegesis assumes that the meaning of every text is established by its original author: “the meaning of a text is what the author attended to in tending to his words.”<sup>16</sup> Further, the act of interpretation must be “an attempt to reproduce an approximate understanding of [this] meaning.”<sup>17</sup> This view avers that the intent of human authors is both inviolable and accessible to contemporary readers. Interpreters do not have the freedom to revise the meaning of texts in the act of interpretation.<sup>18</sup> This idea must be qualified, however, with the notion of “open-ended authorial intentions” and “extended meaning,” by which an author may invest his words with meaning applicable in unforeseen future situations.<sup>19</sup> In other words, while later biblical authors may theologically develop the meaning of earlier texts, they never “contravene the meaning of the original Old Testament author.”<sup>20</sup> The question of “development in meaning” leads to the issue of “divine authorial intent” or *sensus plenior*.

### ***Meaning and divine authorial intent***

Scripture’s own testimony concerning itself is that it is the product of dual authorship, human and divine (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20–21).<sup>21</sup> The meaning of any text is not exclusively limited to its human author’s intent but texts are also invested with meaning by the divine author—meaning that “emerges only at the level of the whole canon.”<sup>22</sup> Biblical-theological interpretation in the NT use of the OT must allow for a “fuller meaning,” a *sensus plenior* or “divine authorial intent” that might far exceed what an original human author intended or comprehended.<sup>23</sup>

The category of “mystery,” proposed by Carson, Beale, and others, is helpful in understanding this concept.<sup>24</sup> There is a “hiddenness” to the *sensus plenior*; God’s ultimate intent in the text remains “hidden in plain view” until the coming of Christ when it is fulfilled and revealed.<sup>25</sup> The NT authors’ uses of the OT, therefore, are grounded in their Spirit-given insight into the divinely intended meaning of earlier Scripture. God’s eschatological work in Christ enables the NT authors to read the OT with new—christological—eyes.<sup>26</sup>

***Biblical-theological exegesis and sensus plenior***

So far, we have set forth two seemingly paradoxical theses: (1) the “meaning” of any text is established by the intent of its (human) author, and (2) the divine authorship of Scripture entails that God might intend a “fuller sense” that far surpasses the meaning intended or understood by human authors. These assertions raise the question of the precise relationship between the human authorial intention(s) and the *sensus plenior* or “divine authorial intent.”<sup>27</sup> Further, the notion of “divine authorial intent” or *sensus plenior* also raises the question of “validity” or exegetical verifiability. What is it that constrains this *sensus plenior* and ensures that it is not an arbitrary imposition of meaning onto the text in the name of “divine authorial intent”? Addressing Paul’s use of the OT, Carson expresses the issue pointedly:

Paul is concerned to show that the gospel he preaches has in fact actually been announced by what we now refer to as the Old Testament: the δικαιοσύνη he announces is that “to which the Law and the Prophets testify” (Rom 3:21). Unless we are to think that everything that Paul now finds in those Scriptures is grounded in nothing more than the bias effected by his own conversion, or adopt some narrow postmodern perspectivalism, it is worth asking how, methodologically speaking, Paul’s reading of Scripture differs from that of his unconverted Jewish contemporaries. How does he himself seek to warrant his Christian reading in the Scriptures themselves, and thereby convince his readers?<sup>28</sup>

The issues of hermenutical warrant and exegetical verifiability demand a more nuanced understanding of *sensus plenior*/“divine authorial intent.” A biblical-theological approach affirms that God’s intended meaning may far surpass what a human author intends, but this divine intent must be a demonstrable outgrowth of the human author’s intent and is exegetically verifiable within the bounds of the canon.<sup>29</sup> Can “divine authorial intention” or *sensus plenior* be defined in a way that better coheres with this compatibility between human and divine intent?

In their defense of a “canonical approach” to the use of the NT in the OT, Moo and Naselli argue that *sensus plenior* must be exegetically verifiable and must not divide the divine author’s intent from that of the human author:

The canonical approach decreases and may eliminate the questionable division

between the human and divine authors' intentions in a given text. This approach does not appeal to the divine author's meaning that is deliberately concealed from the human author in the process of inspiration (a *sensus occultus*); it appeals to the meaning of the text itself that takes on deeper significance as God's plan unfolds (a *sensus praegnans*). When God breathes out his words through human authors, he surely knows what the ultimate meaning of their words will be, but he has not created a double entendre or hidden a meaning in the words that we can uncover only through special revelation. The 'added meaning' that the text takes on is the product of the ultimate canonical shape . . . we can often verify the 'fuller sense' that the NT discovers in the OT by reading OT texts as the NT authors do: as part of a completed, canonical whole.<sup>30</sup>

This notion of a *sensus praegnans* also allows us to preserve the categories of "mystery" and "hiddenness"—the full divinely intended meaning of Scripture is "hidden," but has *now been revealed* in light of the entire canon and can thus be exegetically verified. Only such exegetical verifiability ultimately resolves the issue of validity in the NT use of the OT. The figures that follow help illustrate the differences between these two differing conceptions of divine authorial intent or *sensus plenior*. In the first figure, the *sensus plenior* or "divine authorial intent" takes the form of a meaning that is completely hidden from the human author (*sensus occultus*). This meaning is consistent with the human author's words, but not with his intent and is not revealed until its NT fulfillment. In the second figure, the *sensus praegnans* is not entirely foreseeable, but is nevertheless consonant with the intent of the human author, and is developed and deepened in other texts at the level of the entire canon, until it comes to fulfillment.

The biblical-theological approach therefore rejects notions of *sensus plenior* that assert a divine authorial intent completely unknown to the human author and incongruent with his meaning. The words on the page do not function semiotically as signs that may be re-assigned by the "divine author" to mean something that the human author was never really cognitive of in any meaningful sense (*sensus occultus*). Rather, OT texts have a *sensus praegnans*—a divinely hidden meaning that is deepened through redemptive-historical progression and literary-canonical development until it reaches its climax in eschatological fulfillment in Christ. This Spirit-given "fuller sense," or *sensus plenior* certainly exceeds the human author's meaning, but organically

arises from it, coheres with it, and never contravenes it.<sup>31</sup> We contend that biblical-theological exegesis helps trace the lines between OT types, their textual development, and their divinely intended fulfillment in the NT.

### **BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL EXEGESIS AND TYPOLOGY**

The above definition and defense of biblical theology and biblical-theological exegesis has significant implications for our understanding of typology. In contrast to alternative proposals such as figural reading,<sup>32</sup> interpreting the types of a text never contravenes the original meaning of a passage nor are such interpretations a product of a reader's interpretive imagination. Instead typology emerges from the interpretive logic found in the biblical-theological exegesis modeled by NT authors. Interpretation of types is an outgrowth of NT author's textual development of the significance of the persons, events, and institutions across the redemptive-historical epochs in the canon of Scripture.

For this reason Moo rightly notes that phrases like "typological exegesis" may be unhelpful since "typology is not an exegetical technique, nor even a hermeneutical axiom, but a broad theological construct with hermeneutical implications."<sup>33</sup> Put another way, typology is not an imposition made on the text by some external interpretive agent (reader, community, tradition, etc.) but a product of biblical-theological exegesis. It emerges from assiduously uncovering an OT text's significance furnished by the rest of the canon.

The rest of this article, then, sets forth the implications of the hermeneutical constraints delineated above for our understanding of nature of types.<sup>34</sup>

#### ***Historicity***

First, types must be rooted in history. Biblical-theological exegesis affirms Scripture's claims concerning its historicity and treats the unfolding of God's eternal plan as redemptive *history*, not literary artifice. This historical dimension to typology is critical for biblical theology given how many apostolic claims concerning the person and work of Christ are rooted in his fulfillment of the patterns of Israel's history.

In this respect, types are not mere metaphors or symbols—products of literary art.<sup>35</sup> If the Apostles' typological claims about Christ are purely allegorical, Christ is not necessarily the actual solution to any historical plight.

He does not remedy our exile from the garden nor meet Israel's need for a Davidic king. Instead he is merely a figure to whom the Apostles, via their own literary artfulness, assigned allegorical or kerygmatic significance. Put simply, if types are not historical, then Christ is not the culmination of a providentially ordained history or the fulfillment of any actual, historical promise.

The NT attests to this fact repeatedly by attributing the significance of an OT type to its historicity. The Adam-Christ typology in Romans 5, for instance, hangs on the notion that Adam is a figure of historical consequence—the federal head of the human race. Paul's typological argument is stripped of any real significance if Adam is merely metaphorical or mythological. Wherever NT authors identify a type they do so in a way that highlights its historicity (cf. 1 Cor 10:1–13). Their aim is not merely to describe Christ using theological or kerygmatic categories but to demonstrate that he is the *telos* of history, the one who fulfills Israel's expectations and resolves humanity's plight.

Dennis Johnson eloquently captures this reality:

Long before he sent his Son to bring rescue in 'the fullness of time' (Gal 4:4), [God] sovereignly designed events, institutions, and individual leaders to provide foretastes of the feast, whetting Israel's appetite for the coming Savior and salvation. Israel's *historical experiences* of blessing and judgment, weal and woe, also prepared a rich symbolic 'vocabulary,' *embedded in the dust and blood of real history*: concepts and categories pre-designed to articulate the sufficiency and complexity of Jesus' saving work.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Authorially-Intended***

Second, types are prospective and author-intended. The notion of *sensus praegnans* allows biblical interpreters to maintain that Scripture often develops the meaning of a type beyond the original intent of the author while in no way of contravening a text's original meaning. This notion undergirds how NT authors understand the relationship between type and antitype. Later biblical authors may unfurl the significance of an OT person, event, or institution but they do not retroactively *confer* typological status. As Beale explains, types are "indirect prophecy;"<sup>37</sup> they are designed and described

by God to forecast something about his redemptive work in Christ, even within their original context.

Once again, the prospective nature of types is borne out by the way NT authors speak about them. Paul, for instance, states that Israel's rebellion in the wilderness was typological (τυπικῶς) and even written down in order to instruct New Covenant Christians. As Davidson notes,

Paul is not saying that the events can now be seen to be τυπικῶς—as if they became τύποι as a result of some later occurrence or factor. Rather, Paul insists that in their very happening, they were happening τυπικῶς. The τύποι-quality of the events was inherent in their occurrence, not invented by the Pentateuchal historiographer or artificially given “typical” significance by Paul the exegete. The divine intent of the events clearly includes the τύπος-nature of the event. A providential design was operative, causing the events to happen τυπικῶς.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15:1–3 Paul understands the life, death, and third-day resurrection of the Messiah to be events fully attested to by the OT Scriptures. Clearly, Paul does not have any specific predictive prophecy in view. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find any prophecy that speaks to Jesus rising on the third day.<sup>39</sup> Instead, Paul is appealing to the prospective patterns of OT redemptive history which Jesus fulfills.<sup>40</sup> According to Paul, Jesus' death is not retroactively made to fit with Israel's Scriptures. Rather his death and resurrection are carried out “in accordance with” their prophetic expectations.

Jesus and the NT authors also attest to the prospective nature of OT types by the way they expect others to interpret Scripture. Jesus, for example, rebukes the Jews for not believing what Moses wrote of him (John 5:46–47). Paul uses “the Law of Moses and the Prophets” to convince an audience of Jesus' work as Messiah (Acts 28:23). Apollos, too, “refuted the Jews in public, showing by the [Old Testament] Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:28; cf. 9:22). These instances, which could easily be multiplied, demonstrate that the promise-fulfillment character of the Old and New Testaments is not something imposed by later Christian readers. Instead it is essential to progressive revelation. Jesus' words in John 5 and Apollos' defense of Jesus' messiahship in Acts 18 are only intelligible if the typological structures of the OT genuinely anticipate their New Covenant fulfillments.

The fact that OT types anticipate New Covenant realities does not negate that Christ often fulfilled the OT in surprising, unexpected ways. Additionally, affirming the prospective nature of OT types does not mean that interpreters prior to Pentecost could have discerned all that the OT typologically anticipated. As Paul states, even though the Law and the Prophets bore witness to Christ (Rom. 1:2; 3:21; 15:8; Gal 3:8), the gospel was a “mystery that was kept secret for long ages” (Rom 16:25–27).

As we discussed above with the notions of “mystery” and *sensus pragnaens* God’s ultimate intent for a type is “hidden” until the coming of Christ. Types, therefore, exhibit creative theological and textual development across the canon which culminates in the New Covenant. Thus, Christian interpreters after the resurrection have a privileged interpretive location in redemptive history. Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, coupled with his apostles’ ministry and the work of illumination by the Spirit, shed light on the typological structures of the OT. Certain OT types are only discernible retrospectively. This retrospection, however, does not “create” the type. The association is not reader-imposed.<sup>41</sup> Instead, this retrospection is a recognition that some OT types were “hidden in plain view”—only intelligible by the light of later revelation.<sup>42</sup>

### **Escalation**

Third, in Scripture, types are marked by significant escalation as they find their fulfillment in Christ. God’s final eschatological word is in his Son, and the Son climactically fulfills all previous revelatory types (Heb 1:1–3). There is therefore a significant “discontinuity” between the christological fulfillment and all previous instantiations of a type, thus making God’s word in Christ a “better” word.

This escalation is a function of the progressive nature of special revelation. The pattern of God’s acts in the OT bears witness to a final act which will not just reflect his previous dealings with his people, but will also consummate his work with them. Since redemptive-history develops toward an eschatological goal, antitypes are not merely analogous with earlier episodes in biblical history. As Hoskins explains, “future realities anticipated by the prophets would not merely serve to repeat the past, but would be greater than the patterns or types that preceded them.”<sup>43</sup> New Covenant antitypes are the *telos* of biblical history. The New Covenant fulfills OT expectations

within the framework of inaugurated eschatology. Thus, the NT indicates that Jesus (and by implication the church) fulfills all OT expectations, leaving no further room for redemptive-historical development aside from the consummation of the kingdom.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Textual***

Fourth, types are textually rooted and developed across the canon. As Berkhof notes, “Accidental similarity between an Old and New Testament person or event does not constitute the one a type of the other. There must be some Scripture evidence that it was so designed by God.”<sup>45</sup> This means that types are rooted in the *text* of the Old and New Testaments and can be exegetically demonstrated. Any posited correspondence between persons, events, or institutions that is not rooted in Scripture imposes an extra-textual grid over Scripture’s message and thus silences Scripture’s own self-interpretation.

Thus when properly interpreting types, readers must connect the proposed type with antecedent texts rooting it in some pattern in biblical history, while also tracing its development forwards through the canon, rather than making a direct jump from a single text to fulfillment in Christ. For instance, before directly extrapolating an idea from the Psalter or the Prophets into fulfillment in Christ, it is best to see how this notion has developed in precursor texts in Scripture, that is, in previous redemptive-historical epochs. Likewise, when a hint of something greater is found in the Law, it is best to find subsequent texts within the OT, i.e., within the Psalter, Prophets, or even Wisdom literature that build and develop this notion, before tracing it through to fulfillment in Christ.

The author of Hebrews, for example, undergirds his typological argumentation with this kind of biblical-theological exegetical logic. To understand the hope of a Melchizedekian King-Priest set forth in Psalm 110, the author reaches back for the framework and categories provided in Genesis 14 and also by the Levitical priesthood. The obsolescence of the Levitical priesthood is not established by christological assertion, but by recognizing that the priesthood itself is meant to be provisional because (1) a priest-king like Melchizedek has Scriptural priority over the Levitical line, and (2) a future Melchizedekian priest-king whose work will have a finality to it is promised.

Schrock explains that this *textual* dimension of typology recognizes that types “must arise from the language, sequence, and storyline of the Bible

itself. [They] cannot be imported from an ‘extratextual hermeneutical grid,’ but must be verified by the Bible’s own language or imagery.”<sup>46</sup> This means that typology must be “tethered” to the text of Scripture.<sup>47</sup> Correspondences between events which contravene or go beyond Scriptural testimony cannot be considered types since these correspondences emerge from readers’ imaginations and not from the exegetical data. Of course, once we establish a type we may find even deeper correspondences than those noted by a NT author or stated elsewhere in the canon, but those correspondences are always tied to the *text* of Scripture. Again, as Schrock explains, “true typology” is built on the foundation of “the intratextual relationship between one historical figure in one biblical epoch and another later, (usually) greater historical figure.”<sup>48</sup>

Interpreting types is not an “imaginative” task but an exegetical one. This proposal takes seriously Scripture’s claims concerning itself and its nature as “word-act” revelation. God designs persons, events, and institutions to foreshadow the culmination of redemptive history in Christ (act) and then attests to these through his own commentary on those persons, events, and institutions in Scripture (word). Types then can only be uncovered through grammatical-historical and biblical-theological / canonical exegesis, which reveals the divine author’s intention for a text. As Beale explains:

If typology is classified as partially prophetic even from the OT human author’s viewpoint, then it can be viewed as an exegetical method. This is true because such an anticipatory aspect of an OT passage can be discerned by a historical-grammatical approach ... And ... if we assume the legitimacy of an inspired canon, then we should seek to interpret any part of that canon within its overall canonical context (given that one divine mind stands behind it all and expresses its thoughts in logical fashion) ... In this regard, typology can be called contextual exegesis within the framework of the canon since it primarily involves the interpretation and elucidation of the meaning of earlier parts of Scripture by later parts.<sup>49</sup>

Typology, therefore, is rooted in a *canonical* understanding of redemptive history. Scripture bears witness to types, and readers uncover those types through the discipline of biblical-theological exegesis and noting how a particular person, event, or institution links up with patterns and texts in redemptive history both in antecedent and subsequent Scripture.

### ***Covenantal***

Finally, types are covenantal.<sup>50</sup> As many scholars have posited throughout the history of interpretation, covenants shape the biblical storyline and provide the essential building blocks for biblical theology.<sup>51</sup> One key element of biblical-theological exegesis is to interpret texts “in light of where they are in redemptive-history, or where they are in terms of the unfolding plan of God.”<sup>52</sup> That unfolding plan moves along covenantal epochs. With each new covenant, God unfolds his eternal plan, filling out the details and developing earlier promises while bringing Israel’s eschatological hopes into sharper focus. As a result, “the Bible’s typological and covenantal structures are interdependent.”<sup>53</sup> Types (i.e., the temple, the land, etc.) are part of God’s covenants, and covenants provide the interpretive context necessary to understand a type’s significance in redemptive history.<sup>54</sup>

Put simply, any favorable characteristic or quality between an OT individual, event, or institution must not be taken as typological of Christ. Rather, OT characters, events, and institutions can be seen as typological if they are prospective and tied to covenantal and messianic structures. Vos made this same point:

The bond that holds type and antitype together must be a bond of vital continuity in the progress of redemption. Where this is ignored, and in the place of this bond are put accidental resemblances, void of inherent spiritual significance, all sorts of absurdities, will result, such as must bring the whole subject of typology into disrepute.<sup>55</sup>

Identifying the covenantal correspondence between types and antitypes is what ultimately separates a type from two events that are merely analogous to or “like” one another (cf. 2 Pet 2:1). In other words, textual correspondence and/or historical correspondence are insufficient in themselves for establishing the presence of a type.<sup>56</sup> In fact, ignoring this particular methodological control is what often leads an interpreter to domesticate the evidence in favor of seeing a types where none exist—becoming, as John Currid put says, a “hyper-typer.”<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps some examples will help illustrate what we mean by the “covenantal” nature of “types. For instance, Joseph does not function as a type of Christ merely by virtue of similarities in the narratives of their lives, nor by

virtue of their sufferings and subsequent deliverance.<sup>58</sup> Rather, within his own covenantal context, Joseph is the one who brings the covenant promises of the Abrahamic covenant to a partial (and anticipatory) resolution. Further, Joseph is also tied to a messianic structure, for Moses describes the coming Judahite prophesied in Genesis 49:8 in terms that reveal that Joseph's life as a "picture" (type) of the king-to-come.<sup>59</sup>

Second, Zechariah 4:6–10 presents Zerubbabel as the one who will bring to completion the building of the Temple. Is Zerubbabel a type of Christ? Yes, by virtue of his role as the anticipation of the eschatological David, and thus as the embodiment of hope for the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. The messianic nature of Zerubbabel's role is highlighted by the hope for a new David throughout the book of Zechariah. Further, Zerubbabel's anticipatory role as a type is underscored by the fact that the book of Zechariah ends with the hope of an eschatological and greater Temple yet to come (Zech 14:20–21).

Alternatively, sometimes textual and historical correspondences exist between persons, events, and institutions even when there is no typological relationship between them. For instance, in Matthew 13:32 Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which blossoms into a tree so large "that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." This description of a kingdom like a tree with birds nesting in its branches is used in the LXX to describe Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (Dan 4:12). While Jesus may very well have had Daniel 4:12 in mind, the textual correspondence forged by Jesus' description of his own kingdom with words that once described Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom in no way indicates a typological relationship between the two.

### **IS THERE A TYPE IN THIS TEXT? EXEGESIS OF TYPES CONTRASTED WITH FIGURAL READING**

Typology has always been a subject of fierce debate within the scholarly community. In recent years, however, one particularly unhealthy trend has emerged which eschews the principles of verifiability and the hermeneutical constraints that we have set forth above. As an alternative to the self-consciously methodological approach described in this article, some scholars prefer to describe the phenomenon of typology using terms such as "Figural Reading."<sup>60</sup>

The rise of the movement known as “Theological Interpretation of Scripture” (TIS) has especially provided an impetus to this perspective in recent years.<sup>61</sup> Hans Frei, in his *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, conflates the terms “typology” and “figural reading,” as referring to the premodern mode of exegesis that was used by the NT authors.<sup>62</sup> The *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of Scripture* also conflates the ideas of “typology” and “figural reading” by subsuming the latter under the entry for the former.<sup>63</sup>

However, typology and figural reading must be distinguished, for though these approaches bear some superficial similarities, they operate from different hermeneutical standpoints. Richard Hays, in his recent work on figural christology in the gospels, adopts Erich Auerbach’s definition of figural interpretation:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the *intellectus spiritualis*, of their interdependence is a spiritual act.<sup>64</sup>

Figural reading, defined in these terms, emphasizes the *reader’s* role in the act of interpretation. The reader brings together the “two poles of the figure,” drawing out resemblances between two events to articulate their significance. The act of figural reading involves making explicit the similarities between seemingly disparate events which are actually related to one another by virtue of the single divine author’s intention to signify.<sup>65</sup> It is the act of “observing and describing a significant relationship between what might otherwise appear to be unrelated entities.”<sup>66</sup>

When it comes to reading the Bible, figural interpretation sees a “surplus of meaning” in divine revelation.<sup>67</sup> Any text has the capacity to acquire additional meaning beyond its original sense, resulting in a semantic shift.<sup>68</sup> As it pertains to the NT use of the OT, this means that narrative structures in the OT are “re-appropriated”—“Christianly contextualized”—when they are read in light of Christ.<sup>69</sup> In Hays’ words, the authors of the NT effect “a retrospective hermeneutical transformation of Israel’s sacred texts.”<sup>70</sup> A “figural interpretation” is thus the result of an “imaginative” act on the part of

the interpreter. In figural reading, textual *warrant* for types is not a primary concern, because the figure/type is retrospective and activated by the reader, who reads in light of his or her experience in the community of faith.<sup>71</sup> As Seitz puts it, “the church reads the final form of Christian scripture as canon, the parts informing the whole, the whole informing the parts, according to the rule of faith.”<sup>72</sup> Thus the primary interpretive constraint is the *community* and the community’s *rule of faith*. Figuration does not stop with the canon, but continues as interpreters throughout history bring the poles of figures together in re-appropriating texts and applying them to their own contexts.<sup>73</sup>

In sum, figural interpretation adopts a form of the *sensus occultus* understanding of OT texts. In figural reading, NT authors (and by implication modern interpreters) are not uncovering OT types intended by OT authors as prospective historical events, persons, or institutions that culminate in Christ. Instead, they are creating correspondences between the OT and Christ through sanctified interpretive imagination. The OT is “Christianly contextualized”<sup>74</sup> by reading Christological correspondences *into* it—correspondences unintended by the human author.

In some ways, “figural reading” is the subjectivist counterpart to redemptive-historical typology. Proponents of “figural reading” are seeking to describe the same phenomena in the biblical text, but they do so from a radically different worldview and hermeneutical perspective. Figural reading does arise from praiseworthy motives: a desire to recover the OT as Christian Scripture and to rescue biblical interpretation from the disastrous effects of Enlightenment dogma and the rationalist assumptions of historical-criticism. The chief problem with figural reading, however, is that it fails to account for objectivity and textual warrant in interpretation, for it is rooted in postmodern assumptions concerning meaning and interpretation. Figural reading claims to follow premodern exegesis but does not adequately take into account the premodern view of inscripturated revelation as the bedrock on which exegesis must be based.<sup>75</sup> Advocates of figural reading jettison the Protestant doctrines of the perspicuity and sufficiency of Scripture and the Bible’s nature as a “self-interpreting word” (*Sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*), in favor of reader-oriented hermeneutical principles. Figural reading therefore inherently sets itself up against principles of verification. It involves using an extra-textual grid to interpret the Scriptures with external authorities as the interpretive constraints. Though some of its advocates seek to distinguish it

from allegory, it works on the same basic principles. Thus figural reading often leads to “figures” (or so-called types) which are nothing more than fanciful “figures” of the reader’s imagination, not open to any interpretive validation.

In the end, figural reading suffers from the same problems inherent to all postmodern interpretive agendas: it muffles the voice of the author and discounts a text’s character, making the task of interpretation a subjective enterprise. Reader-activated correspondences between OT and NT reveal nothing about Scripture’s own redemptive-historical claims. As a result, figural readings of Scripture often reveal little more than an interpreter’s imaginative prowess. The true message of Scripture as developed through the promise-fulfillment structure of the covenants is bartered away for a two-dimensional interpretive freedom which licenses interpretive communities to shape and re-shape Scripture as they see fit. The result is “Theological Interpretation” which eschews the Bible’s own approach to both theology and interpretation.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has endeavored to unpack how the NT authors understood typology and the exegetical logic that informs their typological readings of the OT. We asserted that biblical-theological exegesis, an approach to Scripture that expands grammatical historical exegesis to incorporate Scripture’s canonical context, undergirds the NT authors’ “interpretive perspective” and ultimately grounds the typological assertions found throughout the NT. We have sought to argue for an approach to typology that accords with Scripture’s testimony concerning itself, the intent of both the human and the divine author, and the need for exegetical verifiability. Any view of typology which does not adequately account for these theological considerations will not fully express the rich hermeneutical legacy bequeathed to us by the prophets, the apostles, and the Lord Jesus himself.

Ultimately, understanding and replicating the exegetical logic of the NT authors is essential to biblical interpretation that both upholds biblical authority and serves the church. Faithful interpretation demands that we allow the hermeneutical assumptions and practices of Scripture’s authors to dictate our own approach to reading Scripture. Their approach to Scripture and their verdict (and not that of the modern academy) on how

well we imitated them should be our driving hermeneutical concern. As Beale puts it, “If the contemporary church cannot exegete and do theology like the apostles did, how can it feel corporately at one with them in the theological process?”<sup>76</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “Paul’s Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans,” *SBJT* 11 (2007), 81. Oswald Allis similarly warned that typology, while “interesting” and “important,” is also “very difficult; and it is easy to make mistakes, even serious mistakes, in dealing with it” (Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* [Philadelphia: P&R, 1945], 23).
- <sup>2</sup> Literature on typology and other attendant issues abounds. For a small sampling of the conversation, see Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988); Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); John Currid, “Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching,” *RTR* 53, no. 3 (1994): 115–29; W. Edward Glenny, “Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion,” *JETS* 40, no. 4 (1997): 627–38; Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); D. A. Carson, “Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul’s Understanding of the Old and the New,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism* (ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; vol. 2, WUNT 181; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 393–436; Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 2006); Douglas J. Moo, “The Problem of Senus Plenior,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 179–211; idem, “Paul’s Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans”; Peter Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Benjamin Ribbens, “A Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue,” *JTI* 5 (2011): 81–95; James Hamilton, “The Typology of David’s Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel,” *SBJT* 16 (2012): 4–25; idem, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77; David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments* (3rd ed.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010); Andrew Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul’s Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34–35* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012); G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering, eds., *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. D. Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2000), 91.
- <sup>4</sup> For a helpful primer of the various ways that the term is used in contemporary biblical scholarship, see Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). Klink and Lockett provide a useful taxonomy of various approaches to “biblical theology.” Their work, however, tends to create silos that are somewhat too tight and misrepresent certain approaches/practitioners. For instance, Klink and Lockett overlook the emphasis on literary interpretation by many practitioners of the “BT2 school,” presenting this approach as though it were exclusively focused on redemptive-history to the exclusion of literary aspects of interpretation. Furthermore, a major flaw in Klink and Lockett’s work is that they treat these various approaches to biblical theology as though they can be assessed equally, when in reality, they are comparing apples and oranges, for the differing approaches

- are marked by radically different presuppositions and epistemologies. Klink and Lockett simply evaluate each approach superficially, without consideration for the underlying epistemological commitments and presuppositions of each view. For this criticism, we are indebted to Peter J. Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology," *SBJT* 20.1 (2016), 9–33.
- 5 Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 32. Vos defines "biblical theology" as "nothing else than the exhibition of the organic progress of supernatural revelation in its historic continuity and multiformity." Geerhardus Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr.; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 15 (emphasis original). Because of the confusion surrounding the use of the term in his own day, Vos himself preferred the term "History of Special Revelation," for it "expresses with precision and an uninvincible manner what our science aims to be," but settled for the use of the term "biblical theology" because of its established usage. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1975), 12. Also self-consciously following in Vos' footsteps is G. K. Beale, who sees his work in NT biblical theology as further developing Vos' program. See G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 20. For a brief and helpful history of the use of the term, which traces the emergence of a distinctively Reformed and evangelical tradition of biblical theology to the works of Geerhardus Vos, in distinction from the post-Enlightenment practice of 'biblical theology' as pioneered by J. Gabler, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 27–34, and also Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," *WTJ* 38 (1976): 281–84. See also the excellent history and proposal by D. A. Carson, "Current Issues in Biblical Theology: A New Testament Perspective," *BBR* 5 (1995): 17–41.
  - 6 Brian Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in *NDBT* (ed. T. D. Alexander, et al; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000, 10). Treat provides another helpful definition of biblical theology: "'faith seeking understanding of the redemptive-historical and literary unity of the Bible in its own terms, concepts, and contexts'" (Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014], 35).
  - 7 See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 32–34, 82–92.
  - 8 Carson, "Current Issues in Biblical Theology," 32.
  - 9 D. A. Carson identifies the NT use of the OT as one of the three "most important" focal issues in NT theology, and avers that "the relation of the NT to the OT and in particular the use of the OT in the NT" is "the most difficult question by far" in NT theology, and that "no responsible NT theology, insofar as it sees itself part of a broader biblical theology, can proceed very far without taking [issues related to the NT use of the OT] into account." D. A. Carson, "New Testament Theology," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids; Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1997), 810–11. See also the importance given to the issue by Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 186–88; James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 62–68; and Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 11–15.
  - 10 James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 15.
  - 11 *Ibid.*
  - 12 James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven* (NSBT 32; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 21.
  - 13 G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 104n41.
  - 14 Building on Vos' metaphor (cf. Vos, "Idea of Biblical Theology," 11–15), Beale describes "biblical-theological-oriented exegesis" as "canonical, genetic-progressive (or organically developmental, as a flower develops from a seed and bud), exegetical and intertextual" (Beale, *NT Biblical Theology*, 15). Beale has since moved away from using the term "intertextual" because of its roots in postmodernism and reader-response hermeneutics. He instead prefers to use the terms "inner-biblical exegesis" and "inner-biblical allusion." See G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 39–40. A similar model of interpretation is also articulated by Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 82–100, Douglas J. Moo and Andrew David Naselli, "The Problem of the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament," in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures* (ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 734–46; D. A. Carson, "New Testament Theology," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, 811.
  - 15 See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 82–100.

- <sup>16</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 262.
- <sup>17</sup> G. K. Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Use of the Old Testament in the New: A Rejoinder to Steve Moyise," *IBS* 21 (1999): 155. For a condensed, yet compelling presentation and defense of these presuppositions as they pertain to the NT use of the OT, see *ibid.*, 152–80. See also Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 201–452.
- <sup>18</sup> As Vanhoozer rightly puts it, when interpreters do not distinguish "what it meant" to the author from "what it means" to the reader, [they] risk confusing the aim of the text with their own aims and interests ... Contemporary readers who reject the meaning/significance distinction, refuse hermeneutic realism, and ignore the author's intended meaning as a goal and guide, condemn themselves to such confusion, and to interpretive narcissism besides. Bereft of intrinsic meaning, a text becomes a screen on which readers project their own images or a surface that reflects the interpreter's own face" (Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 263).
- <sup>19</sup> See Beale, "Questions of Authorial Intent," 156–58; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 261–62; E. D. Hirsch, "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984): 202–24; E. D. Hirsch, "Transhistorical Intentions and the Persistence of Allegory," *New Literary History* 25 (1994): 549–67. This is essentially a further development of Hirsch's notion of "willed types;" see E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 123–26. Very similar is Beale's notion of "cognitive peripheral vision;" see G. K. Beale, "Inaugural Lectures: The Cognitive Peripheral Vision of Biblical Authors," *WTJ* 76 (2014): 263–93.
- <sup>20</sup> G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns' Book, *Inspiration and Incarnation*," *Them* 32 no. 1 (2006): 21.
- <sup>21</sup> As Gentry and Wellum (*Kingdom through Covenant*, 83) put it, "Scripture is God's Word written, the product of God's mighty action through the Word and by the Holy Spirit whereby human authors freely wrote exactly what God intended to be written and without error." In Vanhoozer's words, Scripture is "a unified communicative act, that is ... the complex, multi-levelled speech act of a single divine author." Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," in *NDBT*, 61.
- <sup>22</sup> Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 264.
- <sup>23</sup> The classic formulation of *sensus plenior* is set forth and defended in Raymond E. Brown, *The "Sensus Plenior" of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary's University, 1955). Brown describes *sensus plenior* as "that additional deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation" (*Ibid.*, 92).
- <sup>24</sup> See D. A. Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul's Understanding of the Old and the New," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 410–34; G. K. Beale and Benjamin J. Gladd, *Hidden But Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014); and Jared Compton, "Shared Intentions? Reflections on Inspiration and Interpretation in Light of Scripture's Dual Authorship," *Them* 33 no. 3 (2008): 23–33.
- <sup>25</sup> Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," 427.
- <sup>26</sup> Carson wisely observes the emphasis in Paul on the hiddenness of the Christian meaning of the OT, saying, "To lay great emphasis on the coherence of Paul's reading of the Old Testament without simultaneously taking into account Paul's insistence on hiddenness—that strange hiddenness that corresponds both to human morally culpable blindness and to God's infinitely wise ordering of things so as to bring about the cross—not only ignores Paul's specific utterances regarding the  $\mu\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ , but misconstrues the biting edge of his understanding of typology. The result is that God himself, in his word, becomes domesticated. That is why Paul's handling of the Scriptures, as penetrating as it is, can never partake of scholarly one-upmanship. He is never saying to his Jewish peers, 'You silly twits! Can't you see that my exegesis is correct? I used to read the Bible as you still do, but I understand things better now. Can't you see I'm right?' Rather, while insisting that his exegesis of the old covenant Scriptures is true and plain and textually grounded, he marvels at God's wisdom in hiding so much in it, to bring about the unthinkable: a crucified Messiah, whose coming and mission shatters all human arrogance, including his own." Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," 432–33.
- <sup>27</sup> See Moo and Naselli, "New Testament's Use of the Old," 732–33.
- <sup>28</sup> Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," 411.

- <sup>29</sup> See Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 5; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 84–87; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 265.
- <sup>30</sup> Moo and Naselli, “New Testament’s Use of the Old,” 736.
- <sup>31</sup> Applying Hirsch’s categories of “meaning,” and “significance,” Vanhoozer rightly notes the relationship between the Spirit’s revelatory work and this “fuller meaning,” the constraint placed on it by the “original meaning,” and the extension of the original meaning through canonical development: “Does the Spirit lead the community into a fuller meaning that goes beyond ‘what it meant’? ... The Spirit is tied to the written Word as significance is tied to meaning. With regard to hermeneutics, the role of the Spirit is to serve as the Spirit of significance and thus to apply meaning, not to change it. At the same time, the Bible is concerned with its own relevance, that is, with the extension of its meaning into new contexts. Between the contexts of the author and reader stand a number of textual contexts—narrative, generic, canonical—that enable us to extend biblical meaning into the present.” Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 265.
- <sup>32</sup> See discussion below.
- <sup>33</sup> Moo, “Paul’s Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans,” 82. Beale, similarly concerned that typology not be seen as a hermeneutical imposition on Scripture, notes that typology “can be called contextual exegesis within the framework of the canon since it primarily involves the interpretation and elucidation of the meaning of earlier parts of Scripture by later parts” (Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 25).
- <sup>34</sup> Gentry and Wellum’s work on the covenants defines typology with the same features enumerated below. Our understanding of typology is heavily influenced by them. They define typology as “the study of the Old Testament salvation-historical realities or “types” (persons, events, institutions) which prefigure their intensified antitypical fulfillment aspects (inaugurated and consummated) in New Testament salvation history.” This definition usefully highlights the essential features of a biblical type. First, types are historical (“salvation historical realities”). Second, types are prospective (“prefigure”). Third, types exhibit escalation in moving from type to antitype (“intensified antitypical fulfillment”). Fourth, types are textual (“OT” and “NT salvation history”). Finally, as Wellum and Gentry imply throughout the book, types are unfolded through the covenants. They are shaped and interpreted by the covenantal structure of Scripture. In the remainder of this section, we will consider how each of these features is rooted in the exegetical logic and hermeneutical principles of biblical-theological exegesis. (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 103). See also Beale’s clunkier but perhaps more theologically loaded definition: “The study of analogical correspondences 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” (Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14). For similar approaches to typology which have also influenced our understanding see Brent Evan Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Typological Pattern: A Theological Critique of Covenant and Dispensational Theologies” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 20-68 and David Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal,” *STR* 5, no. 1 (2014):5.
- <sup>35</sup> Contrast Sparks who posits that a “theological reading of the Bible [may be performed] even when Scripture’s ostensible historical content turns out to be either wrong or fictional in some way” (Kenton L. Sparks, *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 178). See also the discussion in Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 194–95.
- <sup>36</sup> Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007], 198–99.
- <sup>37</sup> Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 17–18
- <sup>38</sup> Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 268. Likewise, in Romans 5:14 Paul refers to Adam as a “type of the one who was to come.” As Schreiner notes, “the reference to ‘the coming one’ (τοῦ μέλλοντος) should be understood from the perspective of Adam. In other words, from Adam’s standpoint in history Jesus Christ was the one to come” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 280). Thus, Adam’s federal headship is designed by God to forecast the federal work of the Messiah. Also Moo states, “the future tense is probably used because Paul is viewing Christ’s work from the perspective of Adam” (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 334). While it is not exactly right to speak of τοῦ μέλλοντος as “future tense,” Moo probably has in mind the sense of the word more than its form. I (Sam) am thankful to Brent Parker who first drew my attention to this argument in Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Typological Pattern: A Theological Critique of Covenant and Dispensational Theologies,” 20-68.

- <sup>39</sup> Stephen Dempster considers the OT typological roots of Paul's "third day" statement in "From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone: The Resurrection of Christ on "The Third Day" According to the Scriptures," *WTJ* 76 (2014): 371–409. For a slightly different approach than Dempster's, see Martin Pickup, "'On the Third Day': The Time Frame of Jesus' Death and Resurrection," *JETS* 56.3 (2013): 511–42. Pickup maintains that the significance of the "third day" motif is based on the Jewish belief that a corpse did not undergo decomposition until the third day and explains the application of Psalm 16:10 as fulfilled in Jesus, as well as the typological application of Jonah's third-day deliverance to Christ (Matt 12:40).
- <sup>40</sup> In the same vein, Treat comments on Luke 24 saying, "When Jesus said, 'thus it is written, that the Christ [Messiah] should suffer' (Luke 24:46), he was not merely proof-texting Isa 52:13–53:12 or some other elusive individual prophecy of a suffering Messiah. He was interpreting his life, death, and resurrection as the fulfillment of a pattern in the story of Israel, a pattern characterized by humiliation and exaltation, shame and glory, suffering and victory" (Treat, *The Crucified King*, 54).
- <sup>41</sup> See also Beale's comments on retropection in *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 13–25.
- <sup>42</sup> As Carson describes, this view of typology which affirms that types are prospective even if only identifiable retrospectively is "typology with teeth." Carson writes, "This 'typology with teeth,' this re-reading of Scripture by focusing on the story-line, this unveiling of material that is actually there in the text (even if it was long hidden), is precisely what makes coherent the shattering event of the cross. Unless one simultaneously preserves mystery and fulfillment, then both the sheer Godhood of God and the despoiling of human pretensions are inexcusably diluted." ("Mystery and Fulfillment, 433–34).
- <sup>43</sup> Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 20.
- <sup>44</sup> See Schrock's discussion of "retro-types" in this journal.
- <sup>45</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), 145.
- <sup>46</sup> David Schrock, "What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal," 5.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–7.
- <sup>49</sup> Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 24–25.
- <sup>50</sup> Interpreting types according to their covenantal context is particularly important when examining OT historical narrative, since it often lacks explicit theological commentary. Readers often understand the full significance of characters' actions only in light of covenant stipulations and promises laid out elsewhere in the OT. Covenantants, thus, provide the inner-biblical interpretive and theological grid needed to evaluate historical narratives. Reading OT history according to covenantal unfolding and context reveals the deeper, theological significance that often goes unstated in narrative.
- <sup>51</sup> See discussion in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 21–80; Peter Golding, *Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004).
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.
- <sup>53</sup> Schrock, "What Designates a Valid Type?," 6.
- <sup>54</sup> For a full development of this point see, Peter J. Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology," *SBJT* 20, no. 1 (2016): 9–33.
- <sup>55</sup> Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 146.
- <sup>56</sup> Hamilton affirms the same notion though with different language. He traces argues that Joseph is a type of the Messiah on the basis of textual correspondence, historical correspondence, and redemptive historical import. What Hamilton calls "redemptive historical import," we are calling covenantal correspondence. See James Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77.
- <sup>57</sup> John Currid, "Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching," *RTR* 53, no. 3 (1994): 121.
- <sup>58</sup> Samuel Cyrus Emadi, "Covenant, Typology, and the Story of Joseph: A Literary-Canonical Examination of Genesis 37–50" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 40–125.
- <sup>59</sup> See Emadi, "Covenant, Typology," 78–82.
- <sup>60</sup> See Frei, *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 1–50. Frei actually subsumes typology under "figural reading" as that which best represents the stance of the NT authors and the pre-modern church towards the Bible as "realistic narrative." *Ibid.*, 1–3. See also David C. Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," *Theology Today* 37, (1980): 27–38.
- <sup>61</sup> For a description and balanced criticism of the modern TIS movement(s), see D. A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But . . .," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives* (ed. R. Michael Allen; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 187–207. See also Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation*

- of Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Introduction: What is the Theological Interpretation of the Bible?" in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).
- <sup>62</sup> Frei, *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 1–7.
- <sup>63</sup> Daniel J. Treier, "Typology," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 825–26.
- <sup>64</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 73. Quoted in Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 2.
- <sup>65</sup> John David Dawson, "Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Christian Identity in Boyarin, Auerbach and Frei," *Modern Theology* 14, (1998): 188. Advocates of figural reading operate on a spectrum ranging from those who see divinely ordained prefiguration to those who see the figuration as purely an act of the reader. See Treier, "Typology," 826.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 32.
- <sup>68</sup> Stanley D. Walters, "Finding Christ in the Psalms," in *Go Figure! Figuration in Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Stanley D. Walters; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 38.
- <sup>69</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, "Christ in All the Scriptures? The Challenge of Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1, (2007): 100.
- <sup>70</sup> Hays, *Reading Backwards*, xv.
- <sup>71</sup> Robert W. Wall, "Jesus in the Old Testament," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2 (2008): 17–18.
- <sup>72</sup> Seitz, *Figured Out*, 81.
- <sup>73</sup> It is perhaps this emphasis on the text's figural effects outside its own context that has given rise to several studies in *Wirkungsgeschichte*, for the meanings of the text are increasingly "figured out" as the text is transposed and applied in new and varying contexts.
- <sup>74</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, "Christ in All the Scriptures? The Challenge of Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture," *JTI* 1 (2007): 100.
- <sup>75</sup> See, for instance, the persuasive critique along these lines of Hays' approach to figural reading by Thomas J. Millay, "Septuagint *Figura*: Assessing the Contribution of Richard B. Hays," *SJT* 70 (1): 93–104. Millay convincingly demonstrates that Hays' claim that his understanding and practice of figural interpretation is in continuity with the early church is not tenable in light of "the whole worldview that separates Hays from the early church fathers." *Ibid.*, 102.
- <sup>76</sup> G. K. Beale, "Positive Answer to the Question Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 404.