

SBJT Forum

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SBJT: How does Scripture teach the Adam-Christ typological connection?

Joshua M. Philpot: The main features of biblical typology are historical correspondence and escalation, which can be applied to persons, events, and institutions. Typology is first an attempt to analyze the relationships between texts of Scripture (where they exist) within the redemptive-historical framework of the Bible, and second, it seeks to understand and embrace the worldview of the biblical authors who wrote under divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20–21). Finally,

typological relationships arise out of the text and should not be forced onto the text. In this way, typology is distinguished from allegory in that it involves real historical realities and presupposes corresponding events.

The Bible is full of people who are identified by the standard criteria as types in one epoch (e.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Elijah), which involves a fundamentally organic relation between their counterparts in later epochs (e.g., principally Jesus, but also other prophets like Moses and John the Baptist). Let us think specifically about the Adam-Christ typological relationship in Scripture.

As an exercise in biblical theology, we must look not only at *explicit* statements of Adam-Christ in typological relation but also at the Adam-Christ relationship from the larger framework of Scripture. Biblical texts do not stand in isolation to one another, rather, “all of the individual texts of the Scriptures stand in a teleological relation to one another because they have one divine author who has brought the facts of history into teleological relation to one another” (Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 273). Yet, theological patterns are intrinsic to the Bible and should not be the creation of

the interpreter. In fact, Paul's assertion in Romans 5:14 that Adam is a "type" (*typos*) is so important because it gives warrant that Adam is a type of Christ.

Given the nature of OT patterns within the OT, we must trace Adam typology through the OT, and not as a singular type-antitype relationship as designated in the NT. This more naturally follows the traditional conception of typology, affirming the forward-leaning character of the type through the biblical covenants, which finds its ultimate *telos* in the fulfillment in the NT in Christ's person and work (cf. Col 1:15; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4; Heb 1:3).

In the OT, types are determined along the lines of repetition and correspondence, which occur at the verbal, thematic, and conceptual level. Conceptual and thematic correspondence is prevalent in Adam typology. At the verbal level, we also find repetition and historical correspondence as to the work that God gave Adam to do, outlined in Genesis 1:28. The tripartite command to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and have dominion," finds expression at key stages in the covenantal structure of the OT, informing every period of redemptive history. These connections bolster the notion that Adam and his work is picked up by later authors and that he serves as a legitimate type.

First, Genesis 1:26–28 illustrates the creation of Adam in God's image followed by the divine commands. In comparing this text with Genesis 9:1–7, we notice how the divine command is repeated to Noah in nearly identical terms as it was to Adam, showing how Noah repeats Adam's role. The commands Noah receives (be fruitful/multiply) and mandate (fill the earth) are the same as Adam received. Moreover, the extent of Noah's mandate—birds of the heavens, fish of the sea, creeping things that creep on the earth/ground—matches that of Adam. The main difference is that the pre-fall Adamic command to have "dominion" now extends to the realm of "fear" in post-fall Noahic conditions. The repetition and verbal correspondence illustrate, then, that Noah now serves creation in an Adamic-type role. As the ectype (a type between the archetype and antitype), Noah is *not* the fulfillment of Adam's mandate, which is reserved for the final Adam, rather he continues it through the establishment of the covenant. But the Adam-type pattern is now established on the conceptual level and verbal level.

Contextually, the covenant God establishes with Noah (Gen 8:20–9:17) now forms the impetus for the divine commands to a post-flood generation. Noah and his offspring must subdue the creation as image bearers like Adam

and his offspring, and they are also to multiply. Adam's disobedience severed the divine relationship between God and humans, and thus the restatement of the command in Genesis 3:15 (image bearers being fruitful and multiplying their *offspring*) is now given to Noah, while the expectation of divine fulfillment of humanity's offspring is projected into the future. Noah is Adam's offspring both physically (Gen 5:28–32) and symbolically as the seed of the woman who carries on the task of defeating the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15). Moreover, the significance of God's purposes in commanding the creation to be fruitful and multiply is seen in the inheritance of this charge to Abraham and his offspring. The same task given to Adam is now received by Abraham (Gen 17:6; 22:17), Isaac (Gen 26:22, 24), Jacob (Gen 28:3–4; 35:11), Joseph's sons (Gen 48:4, 16), and Israel (Gen 47:27; Exod 1:7, 12). The Adam-type also extends to other covenant heads. The mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28) is formalized covenantally through the three administrations of Noah, Abraham, and David.

The New Covenant is the ultimate fulfillment of the divine command (Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:22–32; cf. Luke 22:20). Like Genesis 1, following the resurrection, Jesus breathes new life into his disciples (John 20:22), and commissions them to be fruitful and multiple by filling the earth with new disciples (Matt 28:19–20). This redemptive correlative to the divine command is the fulfillment of the original mandate. The one exception is that the New Covenant mediator serves as the literal fulfillment of the divine command, the chosen Seed of Genesis 3:15 who has defeated the offspring of the serpent through his resurrection (Ps 110:6; Isa 53:10). Moreover, the image and likeness of God, which was impressed on Adam in Genesis 1:26–27 reflecting both his person and work, is ultimately realized in Jesus, the last Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45, 27) and the true image of God (John 1:18; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15).

In this, we see the pattern of repetition and verbal correspondence of Adam and his work within the OT and leading to the NT. The type characteristics outlined above are confirmed in that the historical Adam (person and work) is picked up in the Genesis account establishing a typological relationship, which then progresses through the covenantal structure of the Bible. Human identity—created in God's image—is thus rooted in God's creative act. If this is denied, humans are mere cosmic accidents. Since the covenants help determine hermeneutical warrant for biblical types, we might conclude that

the validity of the Adam-type is substantially greater, given the repetition of the divine commands to Adam at creation within the biblical covenants in the rest of Scripture. As the covenants unfold, so does the import of the divine commands to Adam, all contained *within the OT*.

When we turn to the NT, Adam is not called a “type” until Romans 5:14. This verse is part of a larger argument in 5:12–21 and it establishes several points: (1) Adam introduced death into the world, (2) all men die, even great men like Moses or those who did not transgress God’s command in the same way Adam did, and that (3) Adam prefigures or foreshadows Christ (“the one who was to come”) in some way. 1 Corinthians 15:20–49 also relates Adam to Christ in two separate verses (15:22: For as in *Adam* all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive; 15:45: Thus it is written, “The first man *Adam* became a living being”; the last *Adam* became a life-giving spirit). These explicit occurrences are part of several texts where Adam “the man” is referred to more implicitly:

Rom 5	References to Adam	References to Christ
5:12	“sin came into the world through one man”	
5:13	“sin ... was in the world before the law”	
5:14	“death reigned from Adam to Moses” “who was a type of the one to come”	
5:15	“many died through one man’s trespass”	“free gift of grace”
5:16	“one man’s sin” “judgment ... brought condemnation”	“unlike the free gift of grace” “free gift ... brought justification”
5:17	“one man’s trespass” “death reigned through that one man”	“abundance of grace” “free gift of righteousness reign in life”
5:18	“one trespass” “led to condemnation for all men”	“one act of righteousness” “leads to justification and life for all men”
5:19	“one man’s disobedience” “many were made sinners”	“one man’s obedience” “many will be made righteous”

5:20	“increase the trespass”	“grace abounded all the more”
5:21	“sin reigned in death”	“grace ... might reign through righteousness”
1 Cor 15		
15:21	“by a man came death”	“by a man has come ... resurrection of the dead”
15:22	“in Adam all die”	“in Christ shall all be made alive”
15:42	“what is sown is perishable”	“what is raised is imperishable”
15:43	“sown in dishonor,” “weakness”	“raised in glory,” “power”
15:44	“sown a natural body”	“raised a spiritual body”
15:45	“the first man Adam” “became a living being”	“the last Adam” “became a life-giving spirit”
15:46	“first the natural”	“then the spiritual”
15:47	“the first man was from the earth” “a man of dust”	“the second man is from heaven”
15:48	“the man of dust”	“the man of heaven”
15:49	“we have borne the image of the man of dust”	“we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven”

The significance of Romans 5 lies initially in Paul’s explicit use of the word “type” to describe the relationship between Adam and Christ, which gives explicit biblical warrant for the Adam-Christ typological relationship. Obviously, given the limitations of space, I cannot offer a full exegesis of Romans 5:12–21 or 1 Corinthians 15:20–49, but instead, I only note the correspondences between Adam and Christ in these passages.

First Corinthians 15 gives further warrant for Adam as a type of Christ. Like Romans 5, Paul assumes that his Corinthian readers have a working knowledge of Genesis 1–3. In a post-fall context, Adam’s existence and createdness dominates the pericope, and establishes a pattern of death in which no man can escape, for “in Adam all die” (15:21). But in Christ there is a message of hope, for “all shall be made alive” (15:22).

In his argument about Christ’s resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:12–58, Paul reveals that Adam is a central figure, which is affirmed in Paul’s use of “first man Adam/last man,” “living being/life-giving spirit” language. Unlike Romans 5:14, Jesus is actually called “Adam,” a strong historical association

that cannot be reduced to literary contrivance. Moreover, as the table above illustrates, there is more complexity to the analogy of Adam-Christ in this section than explicit references to Adam, of which there are only three (15:22, 45[2x]).

It is important to observe that Paul’s typological reasoning of Adam as type of Christ only works if Adam is actually a historical person. Otherwise, Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15—a high point of Paul’s soteriology, Christology, anthropology, and hamartiology—is rendered unintelligible. We might ask in following, is the basis of Christ’s advent and obedience to God’s commands an abstraction or symbolic representation? If so, then the typological relationship falls apart, the result of literary contrivance for the sake of an argument. Yet if the need for Christ’s incarnation is to remedy the effects of one man’s sin as both Romans and 1 Corinthians attest, then both the sin and person of Adam must be historical, just as the remedy for sin (Christ’s person and work) is what is needed to remedy the problem.

In taking the verbal and conceptual correspondence together, the following table demonstrates the strength of the Adam-Christ relationship.

Thematic and Conceptual Correspondence			
	First Adam	Last Adam	Texts
1	First man/Adam	Both Second and Last man/Adam	1 Cor 15:45, 47
2	Created in God’s image = image of the earthly	Fully God’s image = image of the heavenly	Gen 1:26–28; Gen 5:1–2; John 1:18; 1 Cor 15:47–49; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15
3	God breathed the breath of life into Adam	Christ breathed the Spirit of Life into disciples	Gen 2:7; John 20:22
4	Came to life on sixth day, rest on seventh	Died on the sixth day, rests on seventh	Gen 1:26–2:3; John 18:39; Matt 28:1
5	Given a bride = physical sons	Given a bride = spiritual sons	Gen 2:22–25; 4:1, 25–26; Matt 28:18–20; Eph 5:23–32
6	Exercises dominion in the natural realm	Exercises dominion in the nature and spiritual realm	Gen 2; Luke 8:24–25; Matt 8:16; 2 Thess 2:8
6	Subdued by the serpent = loss of dominion	Rules over the serpent = exercising dominion over all things	Gen 3; Ps 8:6; 144:3; Dan 7:13–14; Eph 1:22; Col 1:16–20; Rev 12:1–9

7	Original sin	No sin	Gen 3:6, 17; Hos 6:7(?); Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22; Heb 4:15
8	Overcome by temptation	Overcame temptation	Gen 3; Matt 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13
9	Garden temptation	Garden temptation	Gen 3; John 18
10	Exiled from the Garden = never to return	Cut off from the land of the living = leads return from exile	Gen 3:22–24; Joel 2 (esp. v. 3); Isa 53:8; 55:12–13; John 5:25–29; Rev 19–20
11	Original death	Firstborn of the dead	Gen 5:5; Rom 5:12–21; 8:29; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5
12	Figural head of the rebellious human race	Head of the new creation, race of the righteous	Gen 5:1–5; Luke 3:38; Rom 2:12; Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15

In order for a genuine type to exist, it must be *textual* in its origin, *covenantal* as to its theological import, and *Christotelic* in its teleological fulfillment (this phrase comes from David Schrock). Paul's use of Adam in Romans and 1 Corinthians to show his relationship with Jesus confirms its typological character in all three constraints. What one finds in this relationship is astonishing. The textual warrant for Adam-Christ typology is just as strong as Exodus or Davidic typology. In the case of human types, Adam is unparalleled, and yet to deny the historical nature of human types is to deny (1) the perspective of the biblical authors, (2) the historical veracity of the accounts in which types appear, and (3) the nature of biblical revelation as ultimately leading toward teleological fulfillment in Jesus in the incarnation and resurrection.

Given what Scripture teaches regarding the Adam-Christ relationship, several conclusions follow, especially in regard to the important issue of Adam's historicity: (1) Adam is used typologically throughout the OT, especially in covenantal contexts (Gen 8–9; 12:1–3; Exod 4:22–23; 2 Sam 7:4–17.; Jer 31:31–34). (2) On two occasions in the NT, Adam is described as a type of Christ, the antitype (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22–49). (3) Given what types are, if Jesus is a historical person in a typological relationship with Adam, then Adam must also be a historical person. (4) There are no human type-antitype relationships in the Bible that are based upon abstractions or non-literal beings; only real human beings in history are types. If Jesus' person (inauguration) or work (death and resurrection) were presented as abstractions or symbols with no basis in history, then Adam could be

presented likewise. But as it stands, Jesus is never presented as an abstraction, nor is Adam. And thus the burden of proof falls on the skeptic and not the typological structure, which confirms the traditional interpretation of Adam and Christ as real human beings, the beginning and telos of all humanity.

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SBJT: What are Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Evangelical Approaches to Typology?

David Schrock: With the rise of canonical studies, biblical theology, and the theological interpretation of Scripture (TIS), interest in typology has risen dramatically. Numerous books, dissertations, chapters, and articles have contributed to this discussion, each further clarifying or clouding the issues.¹ In this discussion, some have sought to bring biblical typology into the larger field of semiotics and literary figuration;² others have retrieved hermeneutic practices from the early church fathers,³ while others have focused on the Bible itself.⁴ Between the former two approaches, stretch a wide-range of doctrinal convictions, thus producing various kinds of “figural readings” and intertextual options.⁵ Among the latter are those who want to restrict

typology to patterns of correspondence explicitly typed out in Scripture (typological minimalists) and others who want to milk typology for every drop of life (typological maximalists).⁶

With all of these different approaches, how can an interpreter of Scripture, let alone a busy pastor, know which hermeneutical habits to cultivate and which to discard? What are the most important features of typology

to learn and apply when reading and preaching the Bible? In short, what are the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches to typology?

To answer these questions, I will introduce and evaluate four aspects of typology currently at work among evangelical interpreters. What follows is not an exhaustive evaluation of typology, nor a comprehensive list of every contributor to this burgeoning discussion. It is certainly not an interdisciplinary discussion related to literary theory; instead, it is a discussion to help pastor-theologians who are teaching the whole counsel of God in local churches.

In this pursuit, I will consider four techniques used for identifying—or in some cases creating—typological structures in the Bible. These approaches include (1) TIS's intertextuality, (2) Richard Davidson's *TYPOS* structures, (3) Graeme Goldsworthy's macro-typology, and (4) Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's progressive covenantalism. Because these various approaches are found in various commentaries and biblical theologies, pastors should be aware of them. And thus, like "sighting-in" a rifle, this article will evaluate these approaches in order to help pastors and their congregations (and theologians too) better read Scripture on its own terms.

TIS'S INTERTEXTUALITY

For more than a decade, the TIS movement has made large gains in the academy.⁷ It has bridged the gap between biblical studies and systematic theology with various results.⁸ Following the likes of Karl Barth and Brevard Childs, adherents to TIS have sought to read Scripture as a unified whole. Likewise, many have imitated Patristic-reading practices. These are positive developments, but they also advance some less helpful interpretive habits.

For example, it is not surprising that adopting methods of interpretation from the Patristics, who did not clearly distinguish typology from allegory, has resulted in figural methods of reading which eschew a tightly defined method for discerning biblical types.⁹ Conjoining many ancient principles of interpretation with postmodernism's penchant for intertextuality (variously defined), many in the TIS movement have freed themselves from *solely* seeking the author's intent, preferring instead an approach that looks for "imaginative correlations" in the texts of Scripture.¹⁰ Appealing to the practices of the early church, this figural approach allows for and endorses

a wide-range of meanings that may or may not have been in the mind of the original author. As Brian Daley, a Catholic theologian at Notre Dame, writes,

Within this understanding of what the Biblical text, as a continuous whole, can signify, the traditional Jewish and Christian practice of *figural interpretation* makes, I think, perfect sense: not as a replacement for the careful attempts of ancient or contemporary scholars to establish what a text may have been understood to mean in its original context, or to discover what the author's or redactor's original intent was in building the original elements into the text that we have, but rather as a way of seeing a text, or even a reported event or person, within the larger, specifically *Biblical* (and not simply the empirically verifiable) context of *telling what God does*.¹¹

Much of what is said here is fine, but by leaving authorial intent, it opens the door to create meaning outside the biblical canon. No doubt, full meaning is found only as biblical texts (written by human authors) are read in the full context of Scripture, but methodologically, it is vital to assert that meaning is discovered in the Scripture and not through some collaborative matrix between text(s) and reader(s). This is a fundamental difference between a Protestant typology, which affirms the supreme authority of the biblical text, compared to a figural method of interpretation, which functions with different doctrine of Scripture (at least, a different working relationship between canon and later communities of faith).

Perhaps this difference in approach can be explained by this observation: many leading voices in the TIS movement are Roman Catholic or sympathetic to Catholic methods of interpretation (e.g., Matthew Levering, Brian Daley, Henri de Lubac, Hans Boersma). Roman Catholicism has a fundamentally different understanding of biblical authority, which significantly impacts interpretation.¹² In keeping with their theological presuppositions, it should not be surprising that some Catholic scholars are comfortable with placing interpretive authority in the mind of the reader or the community.¹³ Catholic appeals to Tradition and the *Magisterium* reject *Sola Scriptura* and ground authority in the mind of post-apostolic authors. This does not mean advocates of figural interpretation—Catholic or otherwise—wholly deny the place of authorial intent, but it is clear they do seek to include interpretation that goes beyond the author's intent and that depends upon some

larger “magisterium.” In short, meaning that arises from the confluence of text and community is one way postmodern, reader-centered hermeneutics stand closer to Rome than Geneva.

To be clear, this does not mean Catholics do not engage in rigorous exegesis or should not be read. It means that within the polyvalent society of the TIS movement, Catholic approaches to typology combined with postmodern reading methods result in figural approaches to typology that confessional Protestants should reject.¹⁴ In the “free” and “playful” spaces of (post)modern hermeneutics,¹⁵ this appeal to the Reformation, with its regulative principles for interpretation, may seem overly confined and unfriendly, but as David Wells has argued, we must have the courage to be Protestant.¹⁶ Standing in the tradition of the Protestant Reformation, evangelical interpreters must also have the patience to be precise and the willingness to correct our methods—after all, *Semper Reformanda* is our calling card.

On this point, Russell Meek has made an important contribution in distinguishing intertextuality from intra-canonical interpretation (for him “inner-biblical exegesis” and “inner-biblical allusion”). He explains how a distinction in language has not been adequately appreciated in recent scholarship.¹⁷ While not citing the Reformation, Meek puts the Bible back under the feet of evangelical typology by stressing the need to recover an “inner-biblical” approach to Scripture that seeks to find authorial intent. Most significantly, he shows how in the history of interpretation “intertextuality as a methodological label is problematic for scholars whose hermeneutical presuppositions include authorial intent.”¹⁸ Citing Julia Kristeva, who coined the term in 1966, Meek explains that “intertextuality” has been understood to be a “network of traces” in which texts “were constructed like mosaics of other texts.”¹⁹ While intertextuality creates a matrix of meaning from reading two or more texts together; it loses the author’s original meaning, as the latter matrix overshadows the original intention(s).

Meek evaluates this approach, and makes three observations. First, “the ‘text’ in intertextuality is broken free from the constraints of the written word.” Second, “intertextuality is unconcerned with issues of determinancy or diachronic trajectory. What matters for intertextuality theorists is the ‘network of traces,’ not their origin or direction or influence.” Third, “the intertextual method is unconcerned with developing criterion for determining intertextual relationships between texts.”²⁰ Wisely, he cautions evangelicals

about the language we use and calls for more “methodological clarity.”²¹ But more important than mere labels are the actual methods employed in biblical hermeneutics.

Certainly, one can see how “intertextuality” relates to reading Scripture, as biblical authors regularly cite, allude, or echo other biblical authors. Hays has been explicit in his employment of intertextuality, and with great profit. His recent volume on the Gospels is a sublime study of the four Evangelists and their use of the OT.²² Still, Hays’ stated methodology finds its footing in literary techniques located outside the Bible. As Meek rightly discerns, his sort of intertextuality is at odds with an explicit “inner-biblical exegesis.” The problem is that without such criterion, the Bible becomes a clay tablet in the hands of interpretive potters. This may appeal to a certain kind of reader, but those committed to the primacy of Scripture and the exposition thereof should be looking for the way Scripture presents itself and not how we might re-present it in novel ways.²³

RICHARD DAVIDSON’S ‘TYPOLOGICAL STRUCTURES’

Richard Davidson’s Andrews University Seminary dissertation, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures* continues to provide fodder for Protestant interpreters. The primary strength of his work is the rigorous exegetical definition he gives to typology. Rather than tailoring literary practices from contemporary hermeneutics, Davidson confines himself to an inductive study of the Scriptures to see how *typos* is used by biblical authors.²⁴ Attending to all three interpretive horizons (textual, epochal, and canonical), he supplies a lengthy exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, Romans 5:12–21, 1 Peter 3:18–22, Hebrews 8:5 and 9:24, the five places where *typos* is used “in a hermeneutical context.”²⁵ From these careful studies, he concludes,

Five *typos* structures consistently emerged. The first is the historical structure. The remaining four structures are theological: (1) the eschatological structure; (2) the Christological-soteriological structure; (3) the ecclesiological structure; and (4) the prophetic structure.²⁶

Davidson then explains what each of these structures mean. Here is a

summary.

- The *historical structure* relates to historicity of persons, events, or institution that are “salvifically significant already in the OT.” (417)
- The *eschatological structure* goes beyond “similar realities.” OT types “find their fulfillment ... in the eschatological realities of the NT,” either in “the past inauguration of the eschatological kingdom at Christ’s first advent,” or “the present spiritual appropriation of the kingdom by the Church, or “the future consummation at the Parousia.” (417)
- The *Christological-soteriological structure* directs everything towards the “Christ-event.” “Christ is presented as the ultimate orientation point of the *typoi* (cultic *antitypos*) and their NT fulfillments,” and hence all types find their *raison d’être* in him. (417–18)
- The *ecclesiological structure* extends the Christological-soteriological structure into the new covenant people, delineated in three parts: “the worshiper, the corporate Christian community, and/or the sacraments of the church.” (418)
- The *prophetic structure* also has three parts: “First, the OT *typoi* ... are an advance-presentation of prefiguration of the corresponding NT reality. Second, there is revealed a design in which the OT realities were superintended by God to be prefigurative even in specific soteriologically related details. Finally, the divinely designed prefigurations involve a *devoir-être* (“must-needs-be”) quality that gives them the force of ineluctable, prospective/predictive foreshadowings of their intended NT fulfillments.” In sum, because God sovereignly ordained redemptive history, he created “types” in history to prefigure the Son. Thus, even when these typological structures are seen in retrospect, the nature of the relationship is forward-looking, to borrow a term from Greg Beale.²⁷

The importance of spelling out these structures is to remember types are set within biblical “structures.” In other words, types are not mere superficial similarities between one type and another. Much less are they impressions created in the reader’s mind when he reads overlapping texts, as in methods of figural reading. Rather, biblical types are part of (covenantal) structures found in Scripture itself; they are crystallized along the paths of biblical revelation as all Scripture makes its way from creation to Jesus and from Jesus to the new creation.

Accordingly, Davidson’s near-exhaustive exegesis and biblically grounded

definition of typological structures stands alone in a field of literature on typology. Although his somewhat-dated research is not the final word on typology, or the categorical denial of general hermeneutics, his exegetical method is superior to others that rely on the ever-changing dictates of literary studies—ancient or modern. For evangelical interpreters his method better attends to the way Scripture itself speaks of typology, as he grounds his understanding of typology in the text itself.

Moreover, in defining biblical typology as a series of “molds” that develop over the course of the Bible, Davidson observes how Scripture itself establishes a matrix or framework for typology. This formational dynamic explains the way in which typological structures begin, develop, and culminate in the biblical text. To clarify his point, Davidson employs language from Johannes E. Heyde, who speaks of types as *Vorbild* (“what leaves the impress”) and *Nachbild* (“the result of the impress”).²⁸ He explains, “We employ these German terms (*Vorbild* and *Nachbild*) ... since they indicate the direction of linear connectedness in a way that the ambiguous “pattern,” “model,” etc. are not able to do.”²⁹ Once again, German engineering is more precise than English. In this case, Davidson uses the dynamics of this *Vorbild-Nachbild* system to show how typology possesses more than two coordinates on the map to establish a relationship. Therefore, in recognizing typology in Scripture we need to attend to the typological structures and their “linear connectedness.”³⁰

Such a vision of typology requires the interpreter to place the type in the context of the whole Bible, a practice faithful interpreters do instinctively. One example of this approach to typology is seen *Progressive Covenantalism*, where the authors trace typological structures across the canon, showing how they progress, and ultimately escalate by finding their fulfillment in Christ.³¹ This approach to typology is much more faithful to the Scripture than approaches that simply aim to find superficial similarities. Thus, when the Bible is expounded and types identified, we should aim to show how these longitudinal structures develop through the canon.

GRAEME GOLDSWORTHY’S MACRO-TYPOLOGY

Graeme Goldsworthy proffers a third modern approach to typology. In his most extensive treatment on hermeneutics, he makes a case for

“macro-typology.” Macro-typology, Goldsworthy explains, does not depend upon “some literalistic presupposition,” but upon the unity and diversity of the whole Bible and God’s progressive revelation therein. After surveying how various scholars have approached the unity and diversity of Scripture, Goldsworthy makes a case for typology that follows the structural elements of biblical history and revelation. Following H. G. Reventlow, Goldsworthy divides typology into two categories—the first “focuses on the correspondence of facts, persons and events as they occur in both Testaments,” and the second understands “typology as a method of salvation history hermeneutics.”³² In the former category, “discussions often tend to highlight the explicit examples” and thus pertain to material arguments about various texts; in the latter category, attention is devoted to formal arguments and “the principles at work which enable the biblical authors to make the identifications we refer to as typological.”³³ He advocates the ability to learn from Scripture itself what these typological principles are, and thus he turns to Gabriel Hebert and Donald Robinson’s threefold division of redemptive history.³⁴

Goldsworthy argues for a “structure of revelation” that “involves three major stages.”³⁵ These stages are found in Israel’s (1) history, (2) prophetic eschatology, and (3) fulfillment in Christ.³⁶ More specifically, in *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, he outlines these three stages as (1) Genesis 1–1 Kings 10, (2) 1 Kings 11–Malachi, and (3) the New Testament.³⁷ Derived from Matthew’s genealogy (1:1–17), Goldsworthy makes the case that biblical types are introduced in Israel’s history, repeated in the prophets, and fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament. Only, he is quick to add, “Each successive level, however, is more than a *mere* recapitulation in that it moves the revelation to a higher level of reality.”³⁸ Leaving aside the metaphysical question of levels of *reality*,³⁹ he is right to observe the way biblical revelation escalates from creation to new creation, from Adam to Christ, from the old covenant to the new.

His macro-typology makes concrete the typological structures identified by Davidson. In one place he lists nearly twenty different “macro-types” that run through the Bible.⁴⁰ Still, I wonder if his approach to redemptive history is sufficiently precise? In other words, do the three-stages of history, prophesy, and fulfillment give us what we need to trace the formation and development of biblical types?

For Goldsworthy, macro-typology is “the underlying principle of

theological structure and biblical unity that makes possible all the various perspectives on the relationship of the Testaments.”⁴¹ As he explains, this macro-typology “goes beyond the usually identified elements of typology explicit in the New Testament application of the Old,” what corresponds to the first approach to typology categorized by Reventlow above. The strength of his macro-typology is the way it affirms the unity of Scripture, demonstrated most clearly in the way “the whole of the Old Testament” is a “testimony to the Christ.”⁴² Likewise, macro-typology demonstrates strength in the way it relates symbol-rich “epochs or stages within salvation history.”

The strength of macro-typology is the way Goldsworthy makes it something more than accidental similarities between two people or common details between two events. Typology, then, is not the comparison of two individual trees, but rather the denser (and more thorny) comparison of two thickets.⁴³ Such attention to textual context (i.e., the type in its historical context) makes any intra-canonical comparison more plausible, because there must be multiple points of contact between one type and another. This approach to typology is not fundamentally different from others who seek to place types in the context of redemptive history, but still it lacks all the precision that Scripture affords.

The weakness, therefore, of Goldsworthy’s macro-typology is its unavoidable ambiguity. While rightly observing Matthew’s threefold division of redemptive history (1:1–17), the Robinson-Hebert-Goldsworthy schema fails because Matthew’s genealogy is not intended to be the final word on the shape of OT history. More explicitly, by shaping redemptive history into three periods (Law, Prophets, Christ), he does not give due attention to the OT itself and the covenants therein. Thus, in Goldsworthy’s macro-typology, all the covenants (with Abraham, Israel, and David) are subsumed under the first period (Genesis 1–1 Kings 10). Problematically, there are clear distinction between those administrations in the OT, a fact Paul observes in Romans 5:12–14 and Galatians 3:15–18. But Goldsworthy’s schema does not consider such changes. Moreover, the threefold schema of Matthew’s genealogy does not account for other schemas in the NT (e.g., Adam–Christ in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15; old covenant–new covenant in 2 Cor 3 and Heb 8).

This weakness being observed, macro-typology, as a concept, should not be discarded. It just needs refinement. As a concept, macro-typology is a helpful tool to describe the relationship between various typological

structures (e.g., type–ectype–antitype), but what is lacking is an exegetical basis for this macro-typology. As Goldsworthy himself acknowledges, “This correspondence is *not necessarily explicitly stated in the text*, but it can nevertheless be determined on the basis of theological equivalence.”⁴⁴ Rightly, as his next paragraph indicates, Goldsworthy is responding to Christians who are “nervous about the idea of typology, because it is often confused with allegory and other kinds of fanciful spiritualizing interpretation.”⁴⁵ Unfortunately his appeal to “theological equivalence” does not resolve the problem for typological minimalists wary of “spiritualizing” the text, nor does it employ all that Scripture gives us to create a whole-Bible macro-typology. By way of comparison, we might borrow Kevin Vanhoozer’s idea of theological cartography. In making a defense of the biblical canon, Vanhoozer appeals to the concept of making theological maps that correspond to the biblical canon.⁴⁶ Overall, in identifying biblical types, we need the best tools to recreate what Scripture says; macro-types play a part in this process, but Scripture invites us to say more.

PETER GENTRY AND STEPHEN WELLMUM’S COVENANTAL ECTYPES

Fourth and finally, Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum have provided an approach to the Bible that defines itself by the progressive revelation of the biblical covenants (e.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, and New). In what they call *progressive covenantalism*, they suggest each type is organically related to one another, and stipulated by the biblical text. Accordingly, types develop progressively *through* each covenant with the covenants providing the framework for biblical types. Likewise, because all covenants find their *telos* in Christ, types reach their fulfillment and escalation in Christ and to Christ’s people. On this point they state,

As one moves from Adam or David, to the prophets, priests, and kings, across redemptive-history, to the last Adam, the true Davidic King, the great High Priest, and so on, the antitype is *always* greater than the previous types/patterns ... escalation across time does *not* occur incrementally from the original type to each ‘little’ installment and then to Christ, as if there were a straight line of increase. Rather escalation occurs fully only with the coming of Christ.⁴⁷

Typological escalation, then, does not move with an ever-upward progression. Rather, they follow the topography of Israel's covenant history. Moreover, true types always have "ectypes," what Wellum and Gentry call "little installments." In other words, standing between the historical type and the eschatological antitype is a series of "ectypes" that repeat an earlier type and further adumbrate a later type. For instance, standing between Melchizedek and Jesus is king David who acts often like a priest. These ectypes, therefore, submit to, mediate, and extend promises and stipulations from their respective covenants. Biblical types, then, are best seen in their covenantal context and are unpacked by the Bible's ongoing covenantal development.⁴⁸

Therefore, as Gentry and Wellum have argued, the covenants form the backbone of redemptive history.⁴⁹ And like the spine, with its accompanying skeletal system, so too the covenants form, to mix metaphors, a topographical landscape that progresses with each epoch in redemptive history as demarcated by the covenants. To say it differently, the covenants form the various epochs, with their own gracious promises and legal stipulations. Hence, the kind of macro-typology that is needed should stand not upon the outline of one passage of Scripture, as in Goldsworthy's use of Matthew 1:1–17, but on the more precise (and particular) terrain of the Bible's covenant history. This takes more work, but also pays closer attention to the intra-canonical structures of the Bible itself.

A FINAL WORD OF PROTEST (ANTISM)

In evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of these current approaches to typology, we arrive at a more precise way of reading Scripture. Following the habits of the Protestant Reformers, we happily bind ourselves to the Bible and consider any form of intertextuality that invites the reader to make connections outside the text a form of allegory that distorts meaning. Therefore, pastors (and theologians) should be cautious of any interpretive methods that conceive of typology as an indistinct method of intertextuality. In the halls of academia, such approaches may seem erudite and attractive, but in the church God's people need to know plainly what Scripture means.

Typology, therefore, must not be a code word for some fanciful method of interpretation; rather, it must be something we can show our people from the text itself.

For the church, the efforts of Davidson, Goldsworthy, and Gentry and Wellum are far more serviceable. First, biblical typology is more than just discovering similarities in the text. As Davidson describes it, types are found in various structures that develop throughout the canon. Likewise, Graeme Goldsworthy has identified numerous macro-types in the Bible. These canonical pathways help Christians read the Bible with eyes illumined to the way persons, events, and institutions develop in redemptive history. Still, such awareness needs further precision based upon the unfolding plotline of Scripture, what Gentry and Wellum have identified as progressive covenantalism. For them, typology mirrors the covenants in Scripture such that a series of ectypes stands between the first and final types. Accordingly, their observations improve Davidson's typological structures and Goldsworthy's macro-types. Altogether, these three approaches enhance our understanding of Scripture, the nature of typology, and the way in which types develop across the canon.

In the end, by guarding against approaches that locate meaning in the mind of the interpreter and by committing ourselves to a grammatical-historical-canonical method of interpretation that considers authorial intent across the covenants and the canon, we can see how typology arises in Scripture itself. Types are not something creative readers introduce to the text; they are instead something God himself has woven into redemptive history. Careful Bible readers must identify what God has said in order to understand the Bible and God's saving purposes in Christ.

Ultimately, the pastor's goal is not to impress his congregation with never-before-seen types. Rather, we must faithfully expound the word of God and where necessary show how any person, event, or institution anticipates and adumbrates the coming Messiah. In this way, we do not add meaning to the text. Instead, we see all that is there in the text by help from the Holy Spirit and through wise practices of biblical exegesis. Indeed, this is the way of the Protestant Reformers and the way in which the church of Christ is built, as we help our people see Christ in all the Scriptures (John 5:39), according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3–4).

- 1 For a full bibliography on typology, see Aubrey Sequeira and Sam Emadi, "Biblical-Theological Exegesis and the Nature of Typology," *SBJT* 21.1 (2017): 29n2. For a taxonomy of approaches to typology, Benjamin Ribbens, "A Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue," *JTI* 5 (2011): 81–95.
- 2 A good example of this is Richard Hays, who explicitly mentions the influence of Erich Auerbach in the introductory prolegomena to his most recent book, *The Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 1–14. Auerbach, a Jewish scholar who escaped Nazi Germany, is an important figure in literary theory, whose definition of "figural interpretation" continues to influence literary and biblical scholars. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 73. For a brief critique of Auerbach's method as being too ambiguous, see Kenneth L. Schenck, "Shadows and Realities," in *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts* (ed. B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 83–84.
- 3 Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (trans. Dom Wulstan Hibberd; Westminster, MD: Newman, 1960) is a pioneer in this field. His work has been followed more recently by scholars like Hans Boersma, Matthew Levering, Matthew Bates, etc.
- 4 Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); cf. Russell Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion": The Ethics of Methodology," *Biblica* 95.1 (2014): 280–91.
- 5 See Oropeza and Moyise, *Exploring Intertextuality*.
- 6 For a survey of maximalists and minimalists, see David Schrock, "A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ's Priesthood and Covenant Mediation with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 30–34.
- 7 Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).
- 8 For an appreciative critique, 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.
- 9 Kevin Vanhooser, "Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock: Biblical Interpretation Earthed, Typed, and Transfigured," in *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (eds., Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 215; Daniélou shows the way in which various Patristics engaged in typology and allegory, but importantly he concludes that allegory and typology "are in reality two distinct approaches, artificially put side by side" (*From Shadows to Reality*, 64).
- 10 This language is that of Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 161. He argues that "for Paul, original intention is not a primary hermeneutical concern" (156). Instead, because, as Hays puts it, "Scripture is construed metaphorically ... it [Scripture] signifies far more than it says" (154). This, in turn, permits him to say of Paul "he creates novel interpretations" (155). Understandably, Hays puts brakes on this liberated way to read Scripture, but the fact remains, meaning is no longer constrained by the author—divine or human—but by the matrix of text(s) and reader(s).
- 11 "In Many and Various Ways": Towards a Theology of Theological Exegesis," in *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering,; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 27.
- 12 E.g., Gregg Allison, *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014) makes an explicit distinction between Protestant and Catholic methods of interpretation when he classifies Protestant interpretation as a "grammatical-(redemptive)-historical-typological" approach and Roman Catholic methodology as "literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical" (i.e., the fourfold sense of Scripture) (31–32). Later, he goes further, saying evangelical theology "distrust[s] ... the fourfold meaning of Scripture." He writes, "This Catholic approach is grounded on the nature-grace interdependence: the words of Scripture ... contain hidden meanings that are capable of communicating grace. Historically, Martin Luther ... rejected it because the method, as practiced in the Catholic Church, so emphasized the spiritual sense—the allegorical, moral (tropological), and anagogical meanings—that the literal sense was overlooked or dismissed" (106). Surely, this black-and-white distinction misses the nuances of current discussions, but it must be remembered that if theological presuppositions mean anything, Protestant methods of interpretation are fundamentally different than those employed by Catholic scholars.
- 13 Matthew Levering's *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2008) goes so far as to redefine history in order to bring Christians into "an ongoing participation in God's active providence, both metaphysically and Christologically-pneumatologically" (1). The impact of exegesis is to conjoin the horizon of the ancient text with the modern reader and his or

- her “participatory tools—doctrines and practices” (2). This is fundamentally different than a Protestant approach to Scripture, which locates authority and meaning in the final revelation of God’s inspired Word, not in any fusion of Scripture and (modern) tradition.
- ¹⁴ While recent trends have sought to conflate Evangelicals and Catholics together, on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, we should reaffirm our distinctively Protestant and Reformed reading of Scripture. As Vanhoozer states, “I submit that that the Reformers put this Pauline and patristic practice of finding Christ in the Old Testament on surer ground by providing a better theological warrant” (“Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock,” 217).
- ¹⁵ Freedom is a key concept governing Richard Hays approach to typology (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 154–56). While he takes his freedom to expound Scripture, this same principle has led many other modern interpreters away from Scripture.
- ¹⁶ David F. Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).
- ¹⁷ Russell Meek, “Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion”: The Ethics of Methodology,” *Biblica* 95.1 (2014): 280–91.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 283–84.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, esp. 290–91.
- ²² Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Four Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).
- ²³ For a defense of authorial intent, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 74–82, 201–80. The intention of this article is not to prove authorial intent, but to elucidate a way of reading Scripture that affirms the rich, thickness of its typological structures, without the need for incorporating extra-biblical meaning into the text.
- ²⁴ Citing the need for an exegetical approach to typology, Davidson writes, “Even the more complete studies of Goppelt and Müller ... make only passing reference to many NT occurrences or *typos* and cognates” (*Typology in Scripture* 115).
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 415.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 416.
- ²⁷ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012) 14–15.
- ²⁸ Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 115–28.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.
- ³⁰ This “linear connectedness” is developed further in my article, “From Beelines to Plotlines: Typology That Follows the Covenantal Topography of Scripture,” *SBJT* 21.1 (2017):35-36
- ³¹ Stephen Wellum and Brent Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).
- ³² Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 246–47. Cf. Harold G. Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 18–31.
- ³³ Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 246–47.
- ³⁴ Coming later in his corpus of writing, Goldsworthy unpacks the Hebert-Robinson schema in his *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 24–27.
- ³⁵ Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 247.
- ³⁶ While introduced in his discussion about typology in *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, Goldsworthy’s most extensive exploration of this approach is in *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*. Hence, I will spend the rest of my time engaging that book.
- ³⁷ Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 26.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ³⁹ Thankfully he defines his terms; the next sentence defines what he means by reality: “Thus the structures within the history of Israel give way to the prophetic eschatological perspective of the Day of the Lord, and this, in turn, gives way to the ultimate reality as fulfilled in Christ” (*ibid.*). I can appreciate Goldsworthy’s Christocentric view of reality (cf. Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 248–57); Jesus is the substance, all other types are shadows. Still, I question if “reality” is the best word. Were the prophets lacking some metaphysical real-ness? Better, in my estimation, to speak like Paul who saw reality in a mirror dimly (1 Cor 13:12). The problem is not metaphysical, but epistemological. The language of “ultimate reality” veers

towards a metaphysical statement. Hence, we should look for other ways of expressing typology.

⁴⁰ Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 253–56.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 248.

⁴³ This is similar to the idea advanced by Geerhardus Vos, who described the necessity of discerning the historical types symbolism before proceeding to identify type and antitype. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; reprint Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 144–46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 295–305.

⁴⁷ Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 106.

⁴⁸ Cf. David Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal,” *STR* 5, no. 1 (2014): 12–18.

⁴⁹ “The biblical covenants form the backbone of the metanarrative of Scripture, and apart from understanding each biblical covenant in its historical context and then in its relation to the fulfillment of all of the covenants in Christ, we will ultimately misunderstand the overall message of the Bible” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 21n2, 138, 295).