

## Beale – The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts – Justin Allison Review

The first article Roger Nicole examines the way in which the NT uses the OT. He demonstrates where there are form quotations, word for word quotations from either the MT or LXX, or something else. He also asserts that the NT writers were not negating the meaning of the OT passage, but interpreting it along the lines of a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish exegete.

In the second article, Snodgrass introduces a set of criteria for understanding the NT's use of the OT. Basically, he suggests one find the rhetorical use of the passage in the NT argument. One ought to find out how the OT passage was understood in Judaism of the time. One ought to ascertain which sort of 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish use of the OT this was following. Then one ought to determine the theological significance. It seems that this methodology could be quite helpful.

Walter C. Kaiser writes the third article, “The Single Intent of Scripture.” In it he argues against the notion that there are several meanings which are possible to a text. Instead he argues that the human author's meaning is the only meaning which is credible. Built into his methodology is the assumption that one is not using a postmodern type of literary reading. He thinks that a plain reading of the text which takes it at face value, while incorporating historical situation, will allow one to arrive at the true and singular meaning of the text, which is that of the human author.

The fourth article, “The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author's Intention” by Philip Barton Payne, argues that the real meaning lies with the intention of the divine author, what he calls the primary author. He argues that any attempt to locate the human author's original meaning tends to end up in a sort of reading one's own suppositions into the text and finding those suppositions as the meaning of the author. In this he disagrees with Walter Kaiser about where the meaning of a text is located. Payne suggests that one scientifically evaluate where each book, paragraph, and sentence places meaning by weighing how much attention is given to a specific subject (I suppose by counting words?). Then allowing that subject to be the meaning of the divine author.

The fifth article, “Divine Meaning of Scripture” by Vern Sheridan Poythress, takes seriously the distinction between meaning and significance as demonstrated by E.D. Hirsch. He seeks to explain the different possibilities in significance by means of progressive revelation. He wants to read texts in 3 progressively larger contexts. 1) Context of the book, 2) Context of the canon up to that chronological point, 3) Context of the entire Bible. This sort of canonical method is in opposition to the historical-grammatical method.

Article 6, “The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication” by R.T. France, encourages the reader to, “allow the Gospel to speak on its own terms, by putting ourselves in the place of his original readers.” To do this he encourages a background knowledge of the quotations, their situation in the OT, 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish exegetical practices, and 1<sup>st</sup> century geography and history. When one enters this world, he believes that the use of the quotations makes sense, and that the meaning of the text becomes more readily accessible.

Part 3, Did the New Testament Authors Respect the Context of the Old Testament Text?, begins with Barnabas Lindars “The Place of the Old Testament in the Formation of New Testament Theology.” He argues that the OT is used for kerygmatic, apologetic, catechetical, hortatory, and liturgical purposes. It is used in much the same way the Qumran sect used the OT – to speak to their own situation, through the lens of a particular teacher. The OT is subservient to the NT, but rushes to its aid as a way of bolstering arguments.

Chapter 8, S.V. McCasland's “Matthew Twists the Scriptures,” basically argues that Matthew was a bit too free in his rendering of OT scriptures and of Jesus words. This results in a reading that seems difficult, and sometimes changes the meaning of what the text was previously understood to mean. He does not allow for the possibility that what Matthew did was intentional, and brought on by the HS.

Richard T. Mead essentially argues along modernist lines that according to modernist schemes

of context and interpretation, the OT quotations are not used properly. His point seems generally agreed upon, yet he does not allow for the fact that there were different suppositions in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish mindset.

C.H. Dodd writes “The Old Testament in the New” as a way of affirming the use of the OT in the NT. It was appropriate for the time in which it occurred. He supposes that the NT writers depended on certain units of the OT in their formulation of the NT kerygma. Those certain chapters from the OT can be readily observed, and one may suppose that those chapters took on a significance which was special – something like a canon within a canon. Albert Sundberg, in “Response Against C.H. Dodd's View: On Testimonies”, argues that one cannot demonstrate a unified preference for certain texts of the OT. To be sure, each author (and each book) may have its most favored OT passages, but the order of these does not hold true throughout the entirety of the NT. Then, I. Howard Marshall, “Counter-Response in Favor of C.H. Dodd's View”, argues that there are orders of significance for the quotations, and they should not be examined just in terms of their frequency. Based upon this supposition he argues that indeed Dodd was right, there were certain OT books that were more heavily influential than others in the theology of the NT. He argues that Sundberg's data was bad (from a bad version of the GNT as far as quotations are concerned). He also argues that Qumran's testimonia prove that such works were in existence at the time of the NT.

Beale then writes an article, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7. He argues that Paul's use of Isaiah is where the idea of reconciliation comes from. More specifically, the concept is developed out of Isaiah, and not present in Isaiah. This is a small distinction, but important for understanding his article. Paul was introducing something new, but using a text which seems to lend itself to the development.

David Secombe, in “Luke and Isaiah”, concludes that “there is a presumption in favour of Luke's awareness of their [Isaiah quotations] context and wider meaning within Isaiah as a whole.” He thinks that most of his major theological categories are drawn from Isaiah. It was also useful in his convincing those from synagogues that Jesus really fit the pattern of the promised one.

G.K. Beale writes that against Lindars the OT is the guide and the servant of the NT. So the OT is viewed from the lens of Christ, but also gives better focus to the Christ event. He concludes that Revelation uses parts of the OT as literary prototypes, further develops OT themes, Universalizes things from the OT that were particular to Israel (like the exodus plagues), he also demonstrates indirect fulfillments, inverted uses of the OT, and usage of the OT style of language. In this way he demonstrates his aforementioned presupposition to be true.

Chapter 16, Morna D. Hooker's “Beyond the Things That Are Written?”, deals with Paul's use of Exodus 34, in 2 Corinthians. She claims it is a *midrash pesher* though she does not adequately define that term. She concludes that Paul's use of the text of Exodus was by the book for someone in his time, looking back from the point of Christ – using 1<sup>st</sup> century practices. She argues that Paul was thinking in terms of unveiling a meaning, similar to the fashion in which those at Qumran did. In fact, in his writing he uses this sort of terminology, so the reader should not be surprised.

Scott J. Hafemann's “The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3:7-14”, chapter 17, seems to be a test case for the sort of method that Snodgrass laid out in chapter 2. He examines the background of the OT text, and its meaning. Then he locates the OT text within the NT text – ascertaining how it is used rhetorically, and what sort of 1<sup>st</sup> century exegesis is taking place. Then he determines its theological significance.

David L. Baker's “Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament” takes seriously the Semitic understanding of History as cyclical. As such, he proposes that typology be understood as patterns. It is a historical way of viewing relationships between events. One can look backward at an event and say, oh this is like that past event. One can also look forward to a new Eden, as in Isaiah.

Chapter 20, “The Acts of God” by Francis Foulkes, begins with reiterating that typology sees history as repeating patterns. Then he asserts that in the OT, there is the hope that events will repeat

themselves on a grander scale. Finally, he suggests reading the OT in the light of the fulfillment of Christ. Hermetneutically, this method is usually rejected by OT scholars. But, he means that one should allow for the events of the OT to be repeated on a grander scale in Christ. This seems a plausible method.

The editor asks the question, can one use the exegetical practices of the NT today? Rirchard Longnecker responds “no”. He demonstrates familiarity with 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish exegetical practices, and affirms that one ought to expect the NT writers to use the same methods. Yet, he thinks that one ought not use an out-dated model of hermeneutics when interpreting Scripture in the here and now. On the other hand, G.K. Beale suggests that one can use the practices of the NT writers. He affirms that the NT exegetical practices were contextual, and did not run rampant with typology. Then he attacks the idea that historical-grammatical methods always produce an epistemologically valid interpretation. He suggests that one must be careful in ascertaining when the NT writers were being normative and when they were being descriptive in their hermenteutical model.

Overall, this book is highly useful to anyone beginning to explore the question of how the OT was used in the NT. Some background knowledge is expected, so this book is probably most useful for 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate students and above. The way the editors include essays from differing perspectives allows the work to be relevant to those on both sides of the issues. Yet, because of the ordering of the editor and his personal writing on certain topics, one can see where Beale lies on the hermeneutical scale. This work gives insight into the exegetical practices of the NT writers, how they used the OT, whether their use was “correct” in their time, and whether one could rightly use their method in the current time. The weakness of this book is that some of the arguments are repeated in successive essays, which made it feel like a plodding read. The book also seems to have solicited mainly evangelical contributors, which limits the perspective of scholarship presented in the text (though I think this was by choice). Since the editor had choice over placement of his own essays, it seemed like he chose to place them as the “last word” on a few issues. This can come off as a bit macrocephalous.