

**Assessment of the ability of Graeme  
Goldsworthy's epochal macro-typological biblical-  
theological hermeneutic to *let Scripture speak*.**

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**Declaration of original authorship:**

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person. It contains no material extracted in whole or part by which I have qualified or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. I also declare that any assistance received from others in terms of design, style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.

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## Abstract

Throughout his career, Graeme Goldsworthy disseminated the Robinson-Hebert schema widely. This has had a significant impact, yet also received criticism. For some, Goldsworthy opened Scripture up to them, for others, he restricted its voice. This thesis assesses to what extent his three-epoch, macro-typological biblical theology allows Scripture to be heard without distortion.

To assess this, the rationale behind Goldsworthy's method is explored. Through this process three potential issues arise and are then assessed. Firstly, his macro-typological schema shies away from details to prevent falling into allegory. This mutes the OT to some extent. It is argued that Goldsworthy's work would benefit in a shift from being Christ-centred to being Christotelic so as to let the details breathe more.

Secondly, it is asked if his three-epoch schema de-historicizes the prophets since he argues prophets mainly function to confirm types. It is found that the three epochs do function to remove the prophets from their original context and that a shift from typology as the overarching structure to progressive salvific history would be more appropriate.

Thirdly, it is shown that unity in a theme leads to singularity. Even though themes are useful for interpretation, overall unity should be found in Christ rather than any given theme.

In light of these findings the logical question to ask is if the real problem is the macro structure since this is what underpins all these issues. Is it a matter of making a shift in these three emphases or rather rejecting the model all together? Use of a macro structure is unavoidable as it is impossible to come to the text without some kind of framework. What is important is that the hermeneutical spiral is used and that exegetical priority is exhibited. However, it is also found that a great benefit of the macro structure is the way that it keeps the subjective firmly grounded in the objective, which allows the interpreter to 'preach grace' faithfully.

Thus in returning to the question of if Goldsworthy's model allows Scripture to speak, it is found that it facilitates this especially in regards to allowing one to keep God's work central. However, it would benefit from shifting from a Christ-centre to Christotelic approach, from typology to progressive revelation as the overall base, seeing unity in Christ rather than a theme and finally, further use of the hermeneutical spiral.

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# Abbreviations

## General Terms

AFES	Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Student
BT	Biblical theology
BTM	Biblical Theological Movement
CICCU	Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Chrstian Union
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
HC	Historical Criticism
KOG	Kingdom of God
MTC	Moore Theological College
MTh	Master of Theology
Ph.D	Doctor of Philosophy
SPCKA	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia (now know as SparkLit)
SH	Salvation History
ST	Systematic Theology
SUEU	Sydney University Evangelical Union
TIS	Theological Interpretation of Scripture

## Journals and series

AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
CJT	Canadian Journal of Theology
CTJ	Calvin Theological Journal
CTR	Criswell Theolgoical Review
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JTI	Journal of Theological Interpretation
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
ProEccl	Pro Ecclesia
RTR	Reformed Theological Review
SBJT	Southern Baptist journal of theology

SCJ	Stone Campbell Journal
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
TDOT	Theological dictionary of the Old Testament.
Them.	Themelios
VT	Vetus Testamentum



## Chapter one: Introduction and method

Scripture is God's communicative word for his people. It is where they hear his voice and are to respond accordingly. However, each reader comes to the text with agendas, commitments and frameworks that can be spoken into Scripture, twisting, rather than exposing its message. This is why it is necessary for readers to reflect upon their method of interpretation.

At its heart, biblical theology is simply concerned with enabling a person to read the Bible well—that is, to hear it as one coherent and meaningful voice and, as a result, apply it. On one level, this is not complicated, since even a child can read their Bible and understand its basic contents. However, just because Scripture is clear, it doesn't mean that some approaches to reading scripture are not more faithful than others.

This thesis is interested in the ability of Graeme Goldsworthy's hermeneutic to let the whole of Scripture speak truly without distortion. Many testify that his hermeneutic has opened up the Scriptures to them. For others, it has restricted its voice. Therefore, we want to explore his framework and assess how it enables one to genuinely hear the whole of God's word and apply to it the reader's lives.

This chapter seeks to introduce Goldsworthy and his work, the reason for choosing Goldsworthy as the subject of our study, and, lastly, the method to assess the ability of his hermeneutic to 'let Scripture speak'.

### Section one: Introducing Graeme Goldsworthy

Graeme Goldsworthy's imagination was captured by biblical theology (BT) when he was a student at Moore Theological College (MTC) in the 1950s. Here he was indebted to his teacher Donald Robinson, whose influence on him we will further examine in the next chapter. It had been under the influence of Gabriel Hebert, that Robinson had created a three-stage typological BT known as the Robinson-Hebert model. While Goldsworthy did not create this model, he went on to widely disseminate it and also labored to further articulate and defend its biblical rationale.

After studying at MTC, Archbishop Mowll ordained Goldsworthy into Anglican ministry in 1958.<sup>1</sup> He then went on to complete a MTh and Ph.D at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia on the relationship between wisdom literature and salvation history, before returning to MTC in 1973-1974 as a visiting lecturer in BT. This gave him the time to think through the

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<sup>1</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove: Apollos, 2012), 14.

Robinson-Hebert schema and shape a new introductory course in BT.<sup>2</sup> During this time his students urged him to write a book on the method, which resulted in the simple yet profoundly important work, *Gospel and Kingdom* (1981). Jensen says its brilliance is in its clarity, saying it was,

a book that was given to me as a teenager on a camp in 1986 and which took an afternoon to grasp. I have taught its contents to thirteen year olds. But I remember feeling that what this book was saying was so obvious that it was amazing that I hadn't seen it before. Its genius is that it moves people from a Sunday school understanding of Scripture to a mature adult understanding of Scripture by putting it all in a coherent and plausible whole.<sup>3</sup>

*Gospel and Kingdom*, and later *According to Plan*, became two accessible works with wide popular influence. Goldsworthy then served in parish ministry for three years at Yagoona in Sydney (1972-1974) before moving to Brisbane to lecture at the Queensland Bible Institute until 1981.<sup>4</sup> Again he returned to parish ministry, this time in Brisbane at St Stephen's Coorparoo from 1981-1994 before once again returning to lecture full time at MTC in 1995 where he continued until retirement.<sup>5</sup> It was during this time that he wrote most of his academic works such as *Gospel Centred hermeneutics* (2006) and *Christ centred biblical theology* (2012).

One thing that marks Goldsworthy's career is his mixed involvement in both parish and academic endeavors. He writes at both popular and academic level, but even his academic work is markedly pastoral. For him, BT is the key to 'responsible pastoral use of the Bible'<sup>6</sup> because it allows one to properly hear Scripture as it speaks to current day situations. He distanced his BT method from modern hermeneutics, which he believed eroded the 'possession of the Bible by the people of God, the so-called people in the pews'.<sup>7</sup> BT was never taught as a 'secret key' that 'removed interpretation from the grasp of the simple minded and the theologically untrained'.<sup>8</sup> He knew this pastoral emphasis meant that the 'risks

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<sup>2</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Jensen, *Sydney Anglicans: An Apology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics and Old Testament Preaching: A Critical Analysis of Graeme Goldsworthy's Theory and Practice* (Doctorate of theology thesis. Ridley Melbourne Mission and Ministry College, 2011), 185.

<sup>5</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 185.

<sup>6</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'The Pastoral Application of Biblical Theology', in *In the Fullness of Time: Biblical Studies in Honour of Archbishop Donald Robinson* (ed. David Peterson and John Pryor; Homebush: Lancer, 1992), 302.

<sup>7</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Gospel and Revelation', in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Bucks, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 158.

of over-simplification are very great' but for Goldsworthy 'the pressing nature of the task makes such risks worth taking.'<sup>9</sup>

## **Section two: Rationale for analysis of Goldsworthy**

There are two main reasons for choosing Goldsworthy for our study: firstly, the wide impact of his hermeneutic and secondly, criticisms that have arisen in response but that have largely been left unaddressed. If his impact is significant, then logically these criticisms need to be taken seriously.

In terms of impact, Goldsworthy (along with other MTC lecturers influenced by him and Robinson) has effectively made the Robinson-Hebert model 'the distinctive mark of the training received at Moore.'<sup>10</sup> This distinctive mark on graduates has then led to further dissemination of the model through use of his material in regular parish preaching and training, distance education and leadership conferences (such as AFES and NextGen conferences). Furthermore, Goldsworthy notes that, 'The Robinson schema has not only found much acceptance here in Australia, but also in the UK, USA, Europe and in churches in Asia and Latin America.'<sup>11</sup> Also in terms of academic writings, under the influence of the Hebert-Robinson model, many of MTC's current and past faculty (e.g. Bolt, Peterson, Thompson, Webb) have published in the New Studies in Biblical theology (NSBT) series.

In recognition of his work, Goldsworthy has won awards such as the *Preaching Today's* 2006 Book of the Year award (*Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*) and the SPCKA<sup>12</sup> Australian Christian Theological Writers 2007 award for *Gospel Centred Hermeneutics*.<sup>13</sup> Truman even speaks of his method as a revolution that matches the preaching revolution of Martyn Lloyd Jones, John Stott and J. I. Packer.<sup>14</sup>

In light of this vast influence, it is important to evaluate if the method is sound. A number of concerns have been raised in recent times. The sources of such concerns have arisen from Goldsworthy himself, specific critiques on his model and also, general indirect developments in biblical theology (e.g. Theological Interpretation of Scripture proponents). Each of these will now briefly be examined.

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<sup>9</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Gospel and Kingdom', in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Bucks, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 129.

<sup>11</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> See SparkLit, formerly known as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia at <http://sparklit.org>.

<sup>13</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Carl Truman, 'A Revolutionary Balancing Act', *Them* 27/3 (2002): 2.

Firstly, concerns from Goldsworthy himself. He admits that his drive for pastoral simplicity leaves him open to risk.<sup>15</sup> He says, 'I am a person who tends to think visually. If I can represent something or some concept with a diagram I shall do it. I am well aware that this runs the risk of avoiding details that might challenge the simplicity.'<sup>16</sup> For him structures and diagrams have great explanatory power. He says, 'To be able to feel one has got hold of some way of linking the whole diverse range of Biblical documents into a coherent unity was almost overwhelming. But therein lay its danger. It would always be open to criticisms of being either simplistic or simply wrong.'<sup>17</sup>

However, Goldsworthy responds to these criticisms by openly tackling the question of reductionism, asking if it is possible that unity could be expressed without distortion.<sup>18</sup> For him, there is something necessary about reductionism and he does not perceive it to be 'inherently bad'.<sup>19</sup> For him it is valid in the way that an X-ray image is a valid representation of a body.<sup>20</sup> The key is if all the exegetical details can easily fit within the structure—something that this thesis will test.

The second source of criticism has come from direct book reviews, research papers and theses written on Goldsworthy. Perhaps most pertinent for our purposes is Andrew Reid's doctoral thesis, titled, *Evangelical Hermeneutics and Old Testament Preaching: A Critical Analysis of Graeme Goldsworthy's Theory and Practice*. Reid, a MTC graduate, is particularly important since he shows an 'in-house' analysis of the hermeneutic. Reid has no desire to undermine the achievement of Goldsworthy, but aims to make observations for a new generation to build on his approach.<sup>21</sup> To him, Goldsworthy's hermeneutic 'is a good place to start. However, it may not be the best place to finish.'<sup>22</sup> He particularly is concerned with Moore graduates from the 90s identifying themselves with BT rather than those of the 70s and 80s who identified themselves with expository preaching.<sup>23</sup> His concern is that this may open them up to Barr's scathing criticism that preaching tells us less about the Bible and more about the theology of the preacher.<sup>24</sup> The main thrust of Reid's thesis is,

that Goldsworthy's overall hermeneutic, while laudably Christocentric and attractive for its simplicity and powerful flexibility, suffers from being too dominated by systematic

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<sup>15</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 136.

<sup>16</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 299.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>24</sup> James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr., 1999), 213, quoted in Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 381-382.

theology and not sufficiently controlled by exegesis. Moreover, his approach to biblical theology lies more towards Christology controlled theological hermeneutics than biblical theology proper and lacks adequate comprehensiveness.<sup>25</sup>

Reid sees Goldsworthy's passionate pastoral nature as a 'vibrant use of both ethos and pathos' that raises the danger 'that readers are moved to an action other than for reasons of biblical truth and sound reasoning'.<sup>26</sup> Certainly Goldsworthy's apologetic fever and pastoral nature can make objectivity difficult. Furthermore, to exacerbate this he notes that the method has not undergone a great deal of scholarly scrutiny.<sup>27</sup> All this once again shows the need for research on the Robinson-Hebert model to see if such claims are indeed justified.

The last source of criticism comes indirectly. Much has changed in the scholarly world since the Robinson-Hebert model was first taught. Currently, the contemporary whole-Bible and theological exegesis movements stretch us to consider new issues in biblical theology. There has also been substantial discussion and development in evangelical redemptive-history approaches. Accordingly, we must ask what truths they might speak into the Hebert-Robinson model and what developments may be needed as a response.

### **Section three: Methodology**

To assess Goldsworthy's hermeneutic, we must first understand the rationale behind it. The next chapter is dedicated to doing precisely that. It asks what Goldsworthy's method seeks to achieve and what it seeks to protect. Through this process, three main issues arise and are identified as being potentially problematic in the quest to 'hear scripture speak'.

Chapter three will address these three issues. It will marshal evidence from Goldsworthy's books, articles and sermons and then examine these in light of both contemporary research and biblical data. After this, we can assess if any changes to his method would be desirable.

Finally, in chapter four, we will get behind these issues to the core issue that underpins them all: if macro-structures are valid methods of interpretation. Macro structures are valid in the sense that every person comes to the text with presuppositions (not as a blank slate). However, it will be argued that the hermeneutical spiral must be in place to protect this from leading to eisegesis. We will assess if Goldsworthy uses this spiral in his work. Also, under this we will examine how macro structures allow for grace driven sermons and the benefits of this. After this, chapter five will summarize the findings and make some final conclusions.

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<sup>25</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics* abstract.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5.

## Chapter two: The rationale behind Goldsworthy's Christ-centred macro typology

Before Goldsworthy's hermeneutic is assessed we must first unpack the rationale behind his method and identify potential issues that for further discussion. These will then be explored in subsequent chapters.

### Section One: The influence of the Robinson-Hebert Model on Goldsworthy

The discipline of BT dates back to the NT itself where its authors reflected on the Christ event in light of the OT (e.g. Acts 2,7,13). However, it was not until modern times that it became a distinct, formal discipline. This rise of BT must be understood against the monumental influence of historical criticism (HC). HC sought to apply an objective, scientific method to Scripture, resulting in atomization of Scripture into specialized disciplines with little regard for how they related as a unified whole. By 1945, the HC method was virtually universally accepted.<sup>28</sup> However, tired of the atomization of HC, a BT movement rose up in an attempt to find biblical unity. Thus, this new trend seen in the American BTM (Biblical Theological Movement) and to a lesser extent Child's canonical criticism tried to marry conservative views of unity and inspiration with the dominant HC methods.<sup>29</sup>

The BTM came under heavy criticism and although some believe the attacks were exaggerated, it fell into decline.<sup>30</sup> However alongside its decline, a more evangelical BT consensus was gaining momentum, which was less invested in HC and as a result had a less naturalistic view of history. While it still sought historical unity, this was a redemptive history or a 'special history', which was progressive in nature.<sup>31</sup>

After two world wars, confidence in the objectivity of HC began to waver.<sup>32</sup> In its place, whole Bible approaches became more prevalent, such as literary criticism and corresponding biblical theologies that sought unity in narrative. It also spurred a desire to return to reading scripture theologically. The *Theological interpretation of Scripture* (TIS) is one such group. Although their relationship to biblical theology is not clear, they have influenced BT fields.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 223.

<sup>29</sup> G.E. Wright is an example of a BTM scholar. See Goldsworthy, *Christ Centred*, 35-36.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Pr, 1970). Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Klink and Darian Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 74.

<sup>32</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present*, 376.

<sup>33</sup> For example, see: Daniel J. Treier, 'Biblical Theology and/or Theological Interpretation of Scripture?: Defining the Relationship.' *SJT* 61/1 (2008): 16-31.

Thus the last half a century or so has seen quite dramatic developments in the field of biblical theology.

Meanwhile, in Australia, a rather distinct biblical theology was birthed. It was developed from the 1950s to 70s at Moore Theological College (MTC) under the guidance of Donald Robinson and has come to be known as the Robinson-Hebert model. This model has firm evangelical foundations, but also significant engagement with the American Biblical theological movement (BTM). For this reason, Shiner places it loosely in the BTM.<sup>34</sup> However, while Robinson was 'always willing to appropriate the best findings of critical scholars',<sup>35</sup> he simultaneously was both 'by inheritance and conviction a conservative evangelical'.<sup>36</sup> This strong evangelical influence meant that when the BTM movement was suffering under the attacks of the mid 60s, Robinson's approach kept emerging unhindered showing it to be more in line with Reformed traditions like that of Vos.<sup>37</sup> This places him more in the realm of the 'special history' movement, rather than the BTM.<sup>38</sup> However, the ambiguity in this shows how the Robinson-Hebert model does reflect a certain 'intellectual eclecticism', which allowed for engagement with contemporary thought while keeping the whole BT enterprise 'rooted in the revelation of God himself'.<sup>39</sup> In fact, Jensen believes that even today this legacy is '(humanly speaking) the secret to the theological robustness of the Moore College education.'<sup>40</sup>

Where did this eclecticism come from? Born in 1922, Robinson's firm evangelical commitments came from being raised in a Sydney Anglican rectory and his involvement with the evangelical organizations of Crusader Union, the Sydney University Evangelical Union (SUEU) and the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU).<sup>41</sup> In fact, along with Broughton Knox, 'he was the evangelical bulwark against the powerful Anglo-Catholicism that sought to dominate the Australian Church in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.'<sup>42</sup> This strong evangelical formation made the friendship that he developed with Gabriel Hebert surprising. Hebert was an English Anglo-Catholic liberal scholar working in Adelaide. In an interview with Shiner, Robinson retells how they met at a meeting convened by Archbishop Mowll between Anglo Catholics and evangelicals.<sup>43</sup> In contrast to the other 'stiff and starchy' high churchmen,

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<sup>34</sup> Rory Shiner, 'An Appreciation of D W B Robinson's New Testament Theology', in *Donald Robinson: Selected Works* (ed. Mark D. Thompson and Peter G. Bolt; vol. 3; Camperdown: Australian Church Record, 2008), 26.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Jensen, *Sydney Anglicans*, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> Jensen, *Sydney Anglicans*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>43</sup> Shiner 'Appreciation', 28.

Robinson recalls how Hebert was man with a 'wonderful, wonderful brain' who 'loved talking to everyone he disagreed with', including Robinson with whom he struck up a warm friendship.<sup>44</sup>

Hebert (1886-1963) was a 'stern critic of evangelical biblical scholarship, especially as it has been represented by IVP's *New Bible Commentary* – to which Robinson has contributed a chapter on Jonah.'<sup>45</sup> He argued against its exegesis in *Fundamentalism and the Church of God*.<sup>46</sup> The increasing influence of evangelicalism bothered Hebert, yet he also found shortcomings in critical scholarship. The introduction to *The Bible from Within* says the questions raised by historical criticism (e.g. sources of JEDP) are only preliminary to 'the real study of the Bible, namely, the study of what it was that the Biblical writers actually said, the study of the Bible 'from within'.'<sup>47</sup> He was concerned to read Scripture theologically. Thus, Reid rightly notes that, dissatisfied with the vertical priority of fundamentalism and horizontal one of liberalism, BTM offered him a middle path.<sup>48</sup>

It was under Hebert's influence that Robinson developed a first year 'Special doctrine' course at MTC.<sup>49</sup> Robinson had begun teaching at MTC in 1952.<sup>50</sup> At that time there was no course that related OT and NT, so a BT course was needed to provide a framework for students.<sup>51</sup>

In particular, Shiner notes how Robinson adopted the idea from Hebert that the Bible should speak in its own terms and also Hebert's three-stage schema.<sup>52</sup> *Christ the Fulfiller* outlines his three epochs most clearly.<sup>53</sup> Hebert had a preface (Gen 1-11), Introduction (Gen 12-50) and then three epochs: the first containing the main story (exodus and Moses to pre-exilic period); the second, the prophets; and the third, Christ and the NT.<sup>54</sup> He uses the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>45</sup> Jensen, *Sydney Anglicans*, 32. See Robinson, D. W. B. 'Jonah' in *New Bible Commentary Revised* (ed. by D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer; London: Intervarsity Press, 1970), 746-751.

<sup>46</sup> See chapter 7 of A. G. Hebert, *Fundamentalism and the Church of God* (London: SCM Press, 1957), 84-98. In response to this, J. I. Packer wrote the key evangelical text, "*Fundamentalism*" and the Word of God. Shiner, 'An Appreciation of D W B Robinson's New Testament Theology', 28.

<sup>47</sup> A. G. Hebert, *The Bible from Within* (London: O.U.P., 1950), 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 113.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Robinson, 'Origins and Unresolved Tensions' in *Interpreting God's Plan: Biblical Theology and the Pastor* (ed. R. J. Gibson; Cumbria: Paternoster Pr, 1985), 6.

<sup>50</sup> Shiner, 'Appreciation', 9.

<sup>51</sup> Donald Cameron, 'Donald William Bradley Robinson: An Appreciation' in *In the Fullness of Time: Biblical Studies in Honour of Archbishop Donald Robinson* (ed. David Peterson and John Pryor; Homebush: Lancer Books, 1992), xii.

<sup>52</sup> Shiner, 'Appreciation', 29.

<sup>53</sup> Gabriel Hebert, *Christ the Fulfiller: A Study in Biblical Types* (Sydney: The Anglican Truth Society, 1957), 9-13.

<sup>54</sup> Hebert, *Christ the Fulfiller*, 9-13.



epochs typologically to explore themes such as the exodus, covenant, and God's presence.<sup>55</sup> Robinson was also influenced by Hebert's view that the kingdom of God was an important centre in this scheme, claiming that although it is a NT term, it exists in the OT as a concept of 'God reigning, and ruling, and being obeyed.'<sup>56</sup>

Reid traces the development of Hebert's work in Robinson's. He notes differences and similarities. For example, Robinson moves away from some of the messianic emphases of Hebert.<sup>57</sup> Yet he retains many elements that Reid sees as weaknesses, such as a lack of creation and wisdom literature combined with a concentration on the kingdom of God and promise and fulfillment to the exclusion of other books and corpora.<sup>58</sup> These are later carried over into Goldsworthy's work and will be examined in this thesis.

The development of this method in the 'Special doctrine' course was primarily driven by educational concern for how to teach the Bible theologically.<sup>59</sup> Robinson later developed many of these ideas in the Annual Moore College Lectures that he delivered in 1981 on the structure of the NT. For Shiner, it was the fruit of 40 years of reflection on biblical theology and was later published as *Faith's Framework*.<sup>60</sup> Cameron writes that 'Under his leadership it became one of the most appreciated and valued in the curriculum and helped to form the whole ethos of the lecturing programme.'<sup>61</sup> Even today, MTC has a first year BT course that teaches these three typological epochs. And it was this typological structure that Goldsworthy writes 'captured my imagination over fifty years ago, and that has been at the centre of my preoccupation with biblical theology ever since.'<sup>62</sup> As previously noted, while Goldsworthy did not create the Robinson-Hebert model, he is the one largely responsible for disseminating it and continuing to expose its biblical rationale. We now turn to examine how he did this.

## **Section Two: A thoroughly Christ centred approach**

Goldsworthy's adaption of the Robinson-Hebert model is unashamedly Christ-centred. He uses a two-step process that firstly moves from the text to Christ and secondly, from Christ to us. Goldsworthy says,

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<sup>55</sup> Hebert, *Christ the Fulfiller*, 8. This structure is also understood typologically in works such as; A. G. Hebert, *When Israel Comes Out of Egypt* (London: SCM, 1961). In this work, Hebert takes the exodus and traces it to the prophetic second exodus before its fulfillment in the NT.

<sup>56</sup> Gabriel Hebert, *God's Kingdom and Ours* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 113.

<sup>57</sup> These can be seen in works such as Gabriel Hebert, 'Idea of Kingship in the Old Testament', *RTR* 18/2 (June 1959): 34-45 and Gabriel Hebert, *The Throne of David* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1941).

<sup>58</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics and Old Testament Preaching: A Critical Analysis of Graeme Goldsworthy's Theory and Practice*, 181-182.

<sup>59</sup> Shiner, 'Appreciation', 27.

<sup>60</sup> Shiner, 'Appreciation', 37,41. Donald Robinson, *Faith's Framework* (Sydney: Albatros Bks, 1985).

<sup>61</sup> Cameron, 'Appreciation', xii.

<sup>62</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 23.

In order to know how any given part of the Bible relates to us, we must answer two prior questions: How does the text in question relate to Christ, and how do we relate to Christ?<sup>63</sup>

This means Christ is our only access point to hearing Scripture speak. This view is clearly evident in Goldsworthy's practice. He repeatedly begins and ends biblical analyses with reference to Christ.<sup>64</sup> In fact, he argues that the question 'What do you think of Christ?' is of vital importance for analysis on any given topic. For example, in his article, 'Biblical Theology in the Local Church and the Home', he says, 'The answer we give to the question: "what do you think of the Christ?" will inevitably reflect our understand of the unity of the Bible.'<sup>65</sup> Also, in his book *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*, he says this same question will uncover your theology of prayer.<sup>66</sup> Again in yet another article, he says it will show your theology of the Bible in general.<sup>67</sup> Goldsworthy clearly believes that all theology *must* be worked out with reference to Christ.

This has significant implications. For example, Goldsworthy addresses the question of if every sermon must explicitly mention Christ in chapter 9 of *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. He begins by trying not to be simplistic and give an outright 'no', but rather saying, 'Perhaps I can put it another way: Why would you even want to try to preach a Christian sermon without mentioning Jesus?'<sup>68</sup> Yet by the end of the chapter he becomes more emphatic wondering 'why we even need to raise the question.'<sup>69</sup> He states:

Any sermon, then, that aims to apply the biblical text to the congregation and does so without making it crystal clear that it is in Christ alone and through Christ alone that the application is realized, is not a Christian sermon. It is at best an exercise in wishful and pietistic thinking. It is at worst demonic in its Christ-denying legalism.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 71.

<sup>64</sup> Examples include: Chapter 4 of Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Nottingham: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 31-45; Graeme Goldsworthy, 'KOG as educational curriculum' *Journal of Christian Education* 76 (1983): 39-50; Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Kingdom of God' in *NDBT* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Leicester: England, 2000), 615-620 and Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Wisdom and its Literature in Biblical-Theological Context' *SBJT* 15/3 (2011): 42-55.

<sup>65</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology in the Local Church and the Home', *SBJT* 12/4 (December 1, 2008), 37.

<sup>66</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press 2003), 182-185.

<sup>67</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Thus Says the Lord': The Dogmatic Basis of Biblical Theology', in *God Who is Rich in Mercy: Essays Presented to Dr. D. B. Knox* (ed. Peter T. O'Brien and David G. Peterson; Homebush, Australia: Lancer Books, 1986) 36.

<sup>68</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 115.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>70</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 124.

Each text must be read through Christ to be read faithfully and hear scripture speak. Goldsworthy admits that moving to Christ in every sermon can be predictable, resulting in a 'ho-hum...Jesus-bit'.<sup>71</sup> But for Goldsworthy this predictability comes from insufficient exegesis or turning to Jesus too quickly. He places the blame for this squarely on the slackness of the preacher, rather than the method.<sup>72</sup> However when Reid surveyed Goldsworthy's sermons, he argues that while his sermons are not superficial, they are 'definitely predictable'.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, if even Goldsworthy falls into this trap, it raises the question of whether the blame should actually fall on the method, not the preacher.

Predictability is not necessarily a bad thing. It may be the case that one is preaching nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). If people don't like it, it could be because the cross is foolishness to the wisdom of the wise and they need to adjust their view to see it as the power of God (1 Cor 1:18-25).

However, it could also be the case that a sermon is predictable because it takes the content of any given passage and assimilates it into one monotonous message. As it does this, the nuances of the original passage are muted or just become incidental. In this scenario, 'predictability' is much more serious than being boring and subjecting parishioners to the same 'ho hum' sermon every week.<sup>74</sup> It once again, returns to the idea of hearing scripture speak. The voice of Scripture is being muted.

Therefore, it is important to assess how an interpreter can use a Christ centred approach faithfully to read a passage as Christian, while at the same time upholding the original context of the passage. This will be addressed in chapter three. However, before answering this we must first outline the mechanics of how Goldsworthy centres each passage on Christ. This is done through the Robinson-Hebert three-stage typological schema.

### **Section Three: The theological rationale for the epochs**

Goldsworthy acknowledges there are a number of paths to move between the Testaments in order to 'get to Christ'. These show us the complexity of Scripture and include 'salvation history and eschatological consummation, type and antitype, promise and fulfillment, literal sense and fuller sense, old covenant and new covenant, law and gospel, and Israel and the church.'<sup>75</sup> However, it is important for him that we move beyond these to see how the many paths fit together in one overarching structure.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., XI.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>73</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 295.

<sup>74</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, XI.

<sup>75</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 72-73.

To determine this overarching structure Goldsworthy looks to the OT to see if it has 'some kind of internal structuring of the revealed message?'<sup>76</sup> By this he means, looking for epochs that break up the salvific historical story. He defines an epoch as a 'reference primarily to time and to notable sequences of events that distinguish a particular period of time from others.'<sup>77</sup> Establishing an epochal structure is not a simple task, because while it must highlight the developments and diversity of Scripture, it must also describe its unity. That is, the structure must show how they relate theologically, not just chronologically.<sup>78</sup>

In *Christ Centred Biblical Theology*, Goldsworthy outlines a number of themes or concepts (e.g. fall, flood, Abraham, exodus) that he believes to be central to Scripture.<sup>79</sup> He then traces how these develop across scripture, discovering a pattern. This pattern firstly describes key people or concepts in their historical reality (e.g. David or the temple). After this, they are redefined and developed in the time of the prophets (e.g. visions of a new David or new temple), and then lastly, they find fulfillment in Christ (e.g. Jesus as the new David or new temple). This is in line with the Hebert-Robinson model and can be summarized as:

Prehistory: Genesis 1-11

Epoch 1: The historical epoch beginning with Abraham and ending with Solomon

Epoch 2: Prophetic eschatology

Epoch 3: Fulfillment in Christ in the NT

The three epochs show chronological development between different times, but also theological unity. That is, each epoch *recapitulates* the one before it. This is crucial to Goldsworthy's argument. The recapitulation is meant to facilitate typology. That is, the first epoch establishes a type, the second propels it forward eschatologically and third establishes its anti-type in Christ.

It should be noted that this structure is rather unique. While typology is not unique, the use of three epochs is. In reflecting on this fact, Robinson says, 'Although not initially aware of anything in the biblical theologians quite like the three-fold division I was proposing, it was some comfort to find that Gabriel Hebert had a somewhat similar division in his *Christ the Fulfiller*, which he also set out in his chapter on 'The Bible and God's saving Purpose' in his *Fundamentalism and the church of God* in 1957.'<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 111.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>79</sup> Chs. 6-8 in Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 111-169.

<sup>80</sup> Robinson, 'Origins', 10.

Yet despite its uniqueness, Goldsworthy defends its superiority. He reflects on the different approaches admitting that there is considerable variation among them.<sup>81</sup> He gives the examples of Carl Friedrich Bahrdt, Geerhardus Vos, Edmund Clowney and Willem VanGemeren and their varying proposals.<sup>82</sup> His reflection on them is that they reflect diversity and progression in revelation but fail to show explicit unity.<sup>83</sup> It is easy for distinction to lead to separation and distortion in theology. Goldsworthy gives the example of the rigid separation found in dispensationalism.<sup>84</sup> Dispensationalism doesn't uphold Christ-centred promise and fulfillment, but rather prophecy must be fulfilled in a literal sense.<sup>85</sup>

To expand on this point, Goldsworthy often discusses the Vos/Clowney approach as a test case to show the theological superiority of his method. Perhaps he chooses Vos and Clowney due to the similarity in their approach to his own. This effectively pronounces the differences more clearly. Influenced by Vos, Clowney advocates a 'Moses to Christ' epoch.<sup>86</sup> Goldsworthy is concerned that this separates the Mosaic covenant (and the law) from the unconditional Abrahamic covenant. In effect, this distorts our understanding of grace in the OT. Secondly, he argues it mutes the importance of David, who is important for understanding Christ. Thirdly, he argues it undermines the role of prophetic eschatology in driving the OT story to Christ.<sup>87</sup> In sum, it doesn't clearly express the theological typological relationship between the testaments.<sup>88</sup> He uses Clowney's practice to highlight this. Goldsworthy shows how his structure doesn't aid longitudinal studies and when he does use typology it focuses on people and events, 'not really using his epochal structure to understand the full typological potentials of his chosen Old Testament texts.'<sup>89</sup>

Goldsworthy's extensive argument shows a well thought through defense. Overall, he argues the key to the success of his structure is that it enables typology that unifies the testaments theologically. The question we must ask is if typology is the best method by which we might rightly articulate the interdependence of the testaments? The difficulty with assessing this is that Goldsworthy's typological structure is fairly unique in comparison to other general forms of typology. This can open up definitional confusion. Therefore, in order to assess if Goldsworthy's method is an appropriate way to explain interdependence we will now look at it in relation to other typologies to better understand it and how it functions.

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<sup>81</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 74.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>84</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 113.

<sup>85</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 76.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>87</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 168-169.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

#### **Section Four: The unique approach of Goldsworthy's epochal macro typology to eschew allegory**

Typology is difficult to define. How one defines it is largely related to how one perceives its relationship with its interpretative cousin, allegory. The importance of this cannot be minimized. In fact, Childs says, 'the problems of interpretation with which typology and allegory wrestled, even if poorly formulated, touch on the basic theological issues of the Christian faith which have not been satisfactorily resolved.'<sup>90</sup> Therefore, this section will look at broader definitions of typology in relation to Goldsworthy's unique macro-typology, particularly in relation to how they delineate themselves (or not) from allegory. This process will help us see with clarity the way Goldsworthy's typology functions.

How to read Christ in the OT has been debated since the beginning of the church. From the earliest days, it has been well documented that the Alexandrian school was more given to allegory as a bridge to do this and the Antiochene school leaned towards typology (although many from this school focused on more literal readings and showed restraint in their use of Christological readings).<sup>91</sup> Typology has been seen as Hebraic in origin and allegory as a Hellenistic alien philosophy. Intellectual authorities such as Plato would not infrequently allegorize texts (like Homer's works) to update them, help them fit with their own philosophies or make them more morally acceptable.<sup>92</sup> It involved finding more acceptable hidden meanings over the ones that appeared on the surface.<sup>93</sup> Unsurprisingly, people are concerned about applying these methods to OT interpretation and this is largely the reason for suspicion when it comes to engaging with the early church fathers. Bray however, argues that while they did use allegory, it was done only sparingly, as one device among many. He believes their practice was unique and quite unlike the Greek treatments of Homer.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, saying allegory is simply a Hellenistic alien philosophy and contrasting it to typology is not a neat a process as some may like to portray. The moment in which typology might morph into allegory is a difficult point to distinguish. For example, Justin Martyr said the red rope that Joshua gave to Rahab to tie in her window was a type of Christ's blood.<sup>95</sup> This form of typology that focuses on small and incidental details becomes very difficult to separate from allegory.

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<sup>90</sup> Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>91</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 106-107.

<sup>92</sup> Gerald Bray, 'The Church Fathers and Their Use of Scripture' in *Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 157.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>94</sup> Bray, 'The Church Fathers and Their Use of Scripture', 157.

<sup>95</sup> Erik M Heen and Philip D. W. Krey, *Hebrews*, (ed. Thomas C. Oden; Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 201.

By the end of the patristic period allegorical methods were widely used and accepted over typological ones. This is especially under the influence of Augustine who used it as one of his four interpretative methods of scripture.<sup>96</sup> It played a major role in interpretation right up until the reformation.

The Reformation brought significant changes to interpretation. Firstly, there was a move away from allegory. Calvin's commentary on Galatians 4 says allegory is a method that tortures scripture. He calls it as 'a contrivance of Satan to undermine the authority of Scripture'.<sup>97</sup> Goldsworthy argues that this is indicative of the Reformers who moved away from allegory, to a 'more consistently Christological understanding of the relationship between the Testaments'.<sup>98</sup> In the *Institutes*, Calvin devotes two chapters to the relationship between the testaments in his second book on the knowledge of God the redeemer. The first examines their similarities (2.10) and then their differences (2.11). He claims they are unified in one covenant (although different modes of dispensation).<sup>99</sup> However, the difference is that the OT is 'an image and shadow in place of the substance' and the NT 'reveals the very substance of truth as present'.<sup>100</sup> This generally fits with a typological understanding of the testaments.

However, Reid says Goldsworthy overstates the evidence of how much the Reformers used Christocentric readings, saying, 'Even the most cursory reading of the sermons of both Luther and Calvin will demonstrate that the Reformers were quite happy to apply text without any overriding Christological interpretation or the use of typology.'<sup>101</sup> Bray also argues that Calvin is more subtle than his contemporaries in regards to Christocentric readings, showing more concern with the historical as well as the theological. He explains, that Calvin broke from 'Luther's idea of "Christ in all the Scriptures"'. For him, Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the theme of the New, but that did not mean that every verse necessarily contained some hidden reference to him.'<sup>102</sup> Thus, while Goldsworthy may overstate his point it remains true that the Reformation did move away from allegory, while reviving different methods of Christocentric and literal readings, and to some extent, typology. However, during the Enlightenment, typology and other Christocentric readings then fell out of vogue.

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<sup>96</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 110.

<sup>97</sup> Jean Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1854), 135.

<sup>98</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament' in *NDBT* (ed. Brain S. Rosner and Desmond T. Alexander; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2000), 83.

<sup>99</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (ed. John T. McNeill; vol. I; Philadelphia: Westminster Pr, 1960), 429.

<sup>100</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 453.

<sup>101</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 314.

<sup>102</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 203.

In the modern period, typology remained largely ignored until Leonhard Goppelt published his dissertation, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* in 1939.<sup>103</sup> With this came renewed desires among conservative scholars to once and for all cleanly dissect it from its close ties with allegory. The main distinction between the two was seen as historical. This led to the widespread use of the definition of typology as ‘historical correspondence of real people, events or institutions’.<sup>104</sup> Also, both these historical realities must exhibit escalation.<sup>105</sup> In addition to this, some choose even further restrictions, such as only using passages where the word ‘type’ (τύπος) or its cognates are present. These restrictions prevent typology falling into allegory but have been subject to debate. There is no definitive approach.

One example of a scholar who grapples with these restrictions is Greidanus. Typology is one of his multiplex paths, but he is concerned to restrict it to prevent *typologizing*, which he says is a short step away from allegorizing.<sup>106</sup> For him, only limited texts are valid for typological use, and preaching Christ from every text (as Goldsworthy believes we should) inevitably leads to typologizing.<sup>107</sup> How then can one tell what texts can use typology? To distinguish this Greidanus says one needs a good definition of typology based on history (of which he gives a similar one to the one given above). Then he gives a list of restrictions to use under this definition, including, the need to start with literary-historical interpretation, not looking in the details but the central message and looking for points of contrast and escalation.<sup>108</sup>

Greidanus argues that if every text is used typologically, this will result in allegory. What then do we make of Goldsworthy’s assertion that we read Christ typologically into every text? This is an especially pertinent question since Goldsworthy is so emphatically and explicitly negative towards allegorical approaches in contrast to typology; the two of which he sees as clearly distinct.<sup>109</sup> So does he fall into allegory, as Greidanus predicts, while so fiercely defending against it?

Goldsworthy’s typology separates itself from allegory in a unique and different way. He still maintains the historical distinction but instead of just looking for correspondence between

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<sup>103</sup> Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

<sup>104</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 77.

<sup>105</sup> Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology?*, 77.

<sup>106</sup> Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 97.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 227-228.

<sup>109</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 67-68.



people, events and institutions, he looks for them across all three epochs of revelation.<sup>110</sup> This follows Robinson who says, true types are those, ‘which appear first in the narratives, and then re-appear in the prophetic hopes of God’s future salvation, and are duly taken up in the New Testaments fulfillment.’<sup>111</sup> As a result, incidental details are firmly grounded in a main theme in the wider historical background. Only through this process can any OT text point to Christ legitimately. This is vastly different from how the church fathers read Christ into incidental details which Robinson saw as ‘not unedifying’ but ‘arbitrary and gratuitous’.<sup>112</sup> Here we see ‘history’ refers to the main salvific storyline of the OT. Goldsworthy is concerned with this story providing legitimate types rather than grappling with questions of how narrative connects to history proper.

Returning to the question of whether Goldsworthy falls into allegory by relating every text to Christ, we see that, interestingly, the macro epochal structure and definition of history means his method is *more* restrictive than Greidanus’ and others who take the more narrow definition of the typology. In fact, it is so restrictive that Reid questions if it is practical. Firstly, he notes that in Goldsworthy’s sermons not even Goldsworthy moves through the macro-structure explicitly (only rarely).<sup>113</sup> Secondly, that it makes it difficult to know what to do with ‘more periphery’ passages in his structure.<sup>114</sup> Lastly, Reid believes it is impractical because at times Goldsworthy ends up breaking his own rules and slipping into allegory regardless.<sup>115</sup>

Reid’s observations are important. Two main issues are raised.

1. Is it too restrictive? Goldsworthy is working on a macro scale—that is, he works with themes, not details. This is to prevent typologizing, which he argues comes from doing typology with ‘details’ rather than themes. However, we must ask, are the details important for interpretation? Why are they there? What do we do with ‘incidental’ information outside main typological themes? The role of such ‘details’ will be examined in the next chapter.
2. Do the restrictions really prevent allegory? Goldsworthy doesn’t allegorize the details, but does he allegorize on a larger scale? In particular, if one understands the prophets as simply confirming types and separate from the historical epoch, does this dehistoricize them? This will also be addressed in chapter three.

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<sup>110</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 111.

<sup>111</sup> Robinson, ‘Origins’, 11.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 293.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-233.

In order to see if Goldsworthy is successful in preventing allegory or not, we must firstly define what allegory is. At its most basic, allegory is derived,

from a Greek verb meaning 'to speak in public' compounded with the adjective *allos* meaning 'other'. Ancient definitions all ring the changes on the same theme: allegory is 'to mean something other than what one says'.<sup>116</sup>

In this light, Goldsworthy's aversion to allegory is understandable since it can make scripture say something other than what it says. As Louth writes, 'Allegory, then, seems to be a way of evading the address of God to man in the Scriptures, a way of adulterating the purity of divine revelation with human opinions and conjecture.'<sup>117</sup> However, the past few decades have seen new developments in understanding allegory that begin to challenge this assumption.<sup>118</sup> It is not seen as a way to make a text say anything, but one that in the broadest sense of 'figurative' has some kind of connection to the original passage.

Firstly, the sharp historical distinction between allegory and typology has been challenged. One example is Seitz who struggles with a neat dissection between the two. For him, 'history' is the 'achievement of biblical witness in its final literary form'.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, he does not feel the need to grapple with a deep divide between the plain reading (historical) with the fuller one (allegorical or typological).<sup>120</sup> He argues that,

from a wide variety of directions, the sharp distinction between typology and allegory has been shown to be overdrawn, overly optimistic in respect of integration with historical-critical methods, and false in its handling of distinction in the history of the Bible's reception in church, synagogue, and culture, especially in the early period. To avoid this confusion and preserve as unprejudiced that dimension of modern historical reading capable of useful incorporation, I have favored the term *figural*.<sup>121</sup>

Seitz argues that this figural reading is that which is 'once more keenly available in the church's handing of the "literal sense," before such a sense was conflated with the "historical sense."' <sup>122</sup> His main point is that it is unhelpful to pit the 'literal reading' and the 'spiritual meaning' against one another. In a like manner, Barr points out that the 'literal' sense is not always simple to

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<sup>116</sup> Frances Young 'Allegory and the Ethics of Reading' in *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies* (Ed. Francis Watson. London: SCM Press, 1993), 111.

<sup>117</sup> Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: an Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 98.

<sup>118</sup> Brevard Childs, 'Allegory and Typology', in *The Bible as Christian Scripture: the Work of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. Christopher R. Seitz and Kent Harold Richards, Society of Biblical Literature; Atlanta, 2013), 304.

<sup>119</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 9.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>122</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 47.

define or separate from the spiritual one. For him, allegory does connect in some way to the literal sense. He says,

'If the allegorical in one respect sought to depart from the literal sense, in another sense allegory depends upon literality and works in harmony with the literary details: every detail of scripture as it stands comes from God and has a meaning, and so the literal form provide the hints and indications which enable us to know what the allegorical meaning is. Acceptance of an allegorical meaning does not necessarily imply that the literal sense is evaded.'<sup>123</sup>

Therefore, Childs argues the focus should rather be on *how exactly* allegory might refer to a text.<sup>124</sup> Understanding this will help us to uncover legitimate interpretations rather than solely focusing on dissecting it from typology.

Starling looks at Paul's example in Galatians 4:21-5:1 to show Paul used allegory in a way that tied it to its literal sense, not arbitrarily. Here he says Paul's use of allegory,

is still grounded in the phenomena and themes of the source-text, constrained by the singularity of the biblical grand narrative and its climax in Christ, and located within the one church comprised of all who belong to him.<sup>125</sup>

That is, Starling argues convincingly that Galatians picks up on main themes in the original Genesis (and Isaiah) passage and treats them in context of the overall Christotelic story of scripture.<sup>126</sup> For Paul, allegory is not just importing anything into the details of a passage. Likewise, Childs believes that 'allegory' is not simply used to avoid textual difficulties, but used within the rule of faith.<sup>127</sup> For him, when we look at patristic research we find that the hermeneutic of the Antiochenes is not a precursor of modern historical-critical approach, but rather they resist allegory that ignores textual coherence—'that is to say, which distorted the overarching framework (its *theoria*) and failed to grasp its true subject matter, its *hypothesis*.'<sup>128</sup> It is used in context of the Bible's metanarrative, Christotelic fulfillment and also systematic doctrine. It is not just importing any meaning into the text.

The above observations have been based on a broad use of the term 'allegory', that is, as 'figurative meaning'. Taken in this broad sense, allegory not only overlaps with typology but it can be argued that typology is a subset of allegory. Starling writes,

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<sup>123</sup> James Barr, 'Allegory and Typology' in *Bible and interpretation: the Collected Essays of James Barr* (ed. by John Barton. Vol. 2 of 3. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013), 305.

<sup>124</sup> Childs, 'Allegory and Typology', 304.

<sup>125</sup> David Starling, 'Justifying Allegory: Scripture, Rhetoric, and Reason in Galatians 4:21-5:1', *JTI* 9/2 (2015), 244.

<sup>126</sup> Starling, 'Justifying Allegory', 244-245.

<sup>127</sup> Childs, 'Allegory and Typology', 305.

<sup>128</sup> Childs, 'Allegory and Typology', 305.

In Paul's time ἀλληγορέω had not yet come to be used as a technical term for a particular form of interpretation that finds deeper, timeless meanings hidden behind the details of an ancient narrative. Rather, the verb (and its cognate noun ἀλληγορία) could be used to refer to any interpretive strategy that finds figurative elements within a text, or, more commonly, to any mode of speech or writing that makes use of figurative expression. If this broader definition of allegory as figural reading or writing is followed, then "typology" is best regarded not as the opposite of allegory but as a subspecies of it.<sup>129</sup>

In conclusion, we can see the helpfulness of moving away from pitting allegory against typology. A better approach looks at figural readings and how they might be tied to a text legitimately. Figural readings must in some way be connected to their textual, biblical theological and doctrinal contexts.

We now return to our original questions: (1) Is Goldsworthy's typology too restrictive; and (2) does he really prevent allegory? In answer to the second question, we have seen that it is difficult to answer since Goldsworthy has oversimplified the divide between typology and allegory. Seeing one as historical and the other as non-historical distorts the real issue of how exactly allegory relates to a text. However, it will be important to consider how he connects his interpretation to the original passage. Again, both these questions will be explored in subsequent sections.

### **Section Five: Goldsworthy's movement from macro structure to a central theme**

We have seen Goldsworthy works on a macro level with themes rather than details. However, he then takes this structural unity one step further. For him, theological unity means typological themes should be summarized into *one* central theme. Additionally, this central theme must be concrete. For him, themes like 'God' are too abstract. They must be clothed with the specific content of Scripture.<sup>130</sup>

To uncover this concrete, main story he traces the incarnation (more broadly, God dwelling with us) through salvation history in chapter three of *Christ Centred Biblical Theology*. His data uncovers the main theme of Scripture as *God's people in God's place under God's rule*.<sup>131</sup>

For Goldsworthy, this Kingdom of God (KOG) schema permeates the entirety of Scripture. Its pattern was established in creation and the concept never fundamentally changes

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<sup>129</sup> Sterling, 'Justifying Allegory', 228.

<sup>130</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 75.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

after that. Although it develops through revelation, the three basic elements remain.<sup>132</sup> Thus the pattern from creation is seen to establish all the essential relationships that structure the universe from there forward.<sup>133</sup>

Further evidence of the centrality of the KOG theme is that it was the central theme of Jesus' teaching. There are over 120 references to it in the Gospels, which he believes, are placed in the context of fulfillment.<sup>134</sup> Some dispute this saying that the concept is not in (or significant in) the OT, but Goldsworthy says the fact alone that Jesus announces it without explaining the term shows that Jesus spoke to 'an already existing idea in the minds of the Jews.'<sup>135</sup> More fundamentally, he argues it is prominent in the OT as a concept not as a title, stating that this shows the unreliability of word studies.<sup>136</sup>

In *According to Plan*, which is his longest attempt at a biblical theology, Goldsworthy traces the development of the KOG through the whole Bible. He traces the kingdom under the headings of God, mankind, and world, and writes up developments of these themes in a table at the end of each chapter. Thus this table collates the developments of the theme through Scripture's main storyline.

A crucial development in the theme is the central role Jesus plays. In regards to Jesus, Goldsworthy says, 'He is true God, true human being, and true world in which God meets his people'<sup>137</sup> That is, *he is* God and God's people and God's place. Again, we see that Jesus does not just fulfill the kingdom of God, but embodies it. It collapses into him before expanding out again to refer to the wider church. This emphasis on Jesus as embodiment of the KOG is found in a number of key works.<sup>138</sup> This means the KOG theme becomes critically tied to Goldsworthy's understanding of unity.

Fortescue believes this statement oversteps the biblical evidence, since Jesus never explicitly says *he is* the KOG.<sup>139</sup> He argues that 'to collapse the whole Kingdom of God triad (and thereby the whole Old Testament) into Christ is to ignore the truths about the character of God, humanity and creation, and the relationships between these three, that are revealed in

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<sup>132</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 95.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>134</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 50.

<sup>135</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 73.

<sup>136</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 50.

<sup>137</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 208.

<sup>138</sup> For example, in *Gospel Centred Hermeneutics* Goldsworthy says, 'Thus it can be seen that Jesus gathers up in his being all the dimensions of reality, in that he is God, he is humanity and he is created order.' Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred*, 250.

<sup>139</sup> Nigel Fortescue, "These are the Scriptures that Testify about Me": A Critical Appraisal of Graeme Goldsworthy's Approach to Old Testament Preaching (Forth year project: Moore Theological College, 2002), 30.

the Old Testament.’<sup>140</sup> This is an example of concern that Goldsworthy’s Christ-centred approach might be muting the discrete voice of the OT. This topic will be addressed in the next chapter.

However, the main general issue that has been raised is that a central theme is too reductionist. A central theme naturally elevates certain aspects of Scripture over others. Goldsworthy admits that this is a form of reductionism, in that it uncovers the basic and essential ingredients of reality to which others submit.<sup>141</sup> He claims the reductionism serves to illuminate the scriptures. However, others like Reid argue that in practice it does not. This is because passages that don’t explicitly fit the main KOG storyline get ignored which severely reduces ‘both the scope and color of biblical witness.’<sup>142</sup> This criticism is worth further consideration and will be addressed in the subsequent chapter.

### **Section Six: Three issues arising from this analysis**

Goldsworthy’s approach and the rationale behind it are well thought through and have a significant biblical basis. Goldsworthy admirably aims to be faithful to letting the scriptures speak and has many wise insights. However, three issues have arisen that need to be explored further. Firstly, does Goldsworthy’s Christ centre mute the OT voice and its details? We have seen that Goldsworthy works on a macro scale with themes. How then does he deal with details? Why are they there and what role should they play in interpretation? Secondly, is Goldsworthy’s understanding of the prophets sufficient? In his schema, prophets serve to validate types, but does this de-historicize them? How does he treat the prophets’ original historical contexts? Thirdly, does the use of a central theme reduce the scope and color of biblical witness, as Reid suggests it does? Does it create a canon within a canon? Where does scriptural unity come from? The next chapter will engage with each of these questions.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>141</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 86.

<sup>142</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 356.

## Chapter three: Three potential issues of Goldsworthy's macro structure

Chapter two raised three issues that potentially stifle our ability to hear Scripture speak. Each one of these will now be weighed against the evidence in Goldsworthy's work. Relevant recommendations will be rendered where needed.

### Issue one: Does the Christ centre mute the OT details?

#### *Ia. Hearing the OT speak*

We have seen Goldsworthy's macro typological structure allows the interpreter to read Christ in every text. We have also seen that Reid claims this leads to predictable sermons. Predictability may not be a bad thing if it is faithfully preaching Christ consistently. However, it could also be a symptom of a deeper problem. That is, flattening out the unique nuances of different texts into one monotonous message in a manner that mutes certain parts of Scripture; particularly the Old Testament. In this section we explore if Goldsworthy is in fact 'predictable' and if so, in what sense?

This is particularly pertinent since we have seen that Goldsworthy works on a macro level. This is as a response to his concern that details lead to 'allegorizing', thus in his view, working on the macro scale allows for a typology that is cleanly dissected from allegory. The result is that the details are not important in interpretation. In fact, they are seen as dangerous and problematic. This leads us to ask, why then does the OT have such details? What function do they possess?

Underneath these questions lies the current debate about hearing the 'original voice' of the OT in all its complexity and depth. Bartholomew argues that when Christological hermeneutics are imposed on the OT it restricts 'its voice from being heard on its own terms'.<sup>143</sup> That is, one sees Christ instead of dealing in depth with the OT material, especially in terms of the details of the original text. In response, scholars such as Childs, Seitz and Goldingay have argued that the OT must have a 'discrete' voice, apart from the NT. Otherwise the NT will mute it. Goldingay argues that it is ironic that scholars like Goldsworthy argue this Christ-centre comes naturally from a high view of scripture, because

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<sup>143</sup> Craig G. Bartholomew, 'Listening for God's Address: A Mere Trinitarian Hermeneutic for the Old Testament' in *Hearing the Old Testament* (ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 12.

he believes that it does precisely the opposite; it strips the OT of its authority. For example, in a somewhat unsettling accusation, Goldingay says evangelicals are 'formally committed to accepting the authority of the First Testament' in theory but not in practice, meaning that,

'Its understanding of the church and of Israel is not significantly influenced by the First Testament's understanding of Israel as the people of God; its praise and prayer are not significantly influenced by the Bible's own manual of praise and prayer, the Psalms...; its understanding of redemption is not significantly influenced by that of a book such as Exodus (which invented the idea). It avoids the thrust of these by hermeneutical devices such as typology, which makes the First Testament mean something different from what its authors thought it meant, or by the theory of progressive revelation, which makes it possible for the New Testament to be treated as effectively superseding the First Testament, which has the form of authority but not the reality.'<sup>144</sup>

In fact, Goldingay purposely begins his three 800+ page OT theologies with a specific series of 'I do not' statements regarding how he will treat Christ in his theology.<sup>145</sup> These include, not speaking about the OT as a witness to Christ but its witness to YHWH; not focusing on how the OT prophesies and predicts Jesus or how what is concealed in the OT is revealed in the NT, foreshadows it or is succeeded by it.<sup>146</sup> This stands in stark contrast to much of the language Goldsworthy uses. Furthermore, Goldingay argues that calling the OT 'Old' is derogatory, and it should be 'First'.<sup>147</sup>

Goldingay's emphasis on protecting the original is well worth grappling with. However, is upholding the OT's authority as simple as giving it a discrete voice? This can undermine the interdependence between the testaments. This is where Goldingay's view of 'first' and 'last' testaments and his avoidance to look at foreshadowing of Christ in the OT is unhelpful. The relationship between testaments becomes purely chronological. For example, Goldingay likens the New Testament to the movie *The Bourne Legacy*. That is, 'it added to the earlier Bourne movies, but this does not mean the earlier movies needed a fourth in the sequence.'<sup>148</sup> This does not show the interdependence between testaments and ignores the biblical language of 'old' and 'new' (e.g. Jer 31:31-34; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25, 2 Cor 3:6, 14; 5:17; Heb 8:8, 9:15, 12:24).<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> John Goldingay, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation: Old Testament Answers* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2003), 104.

<sup>145</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology. Volume 1, Israel's Gospel*, (Downers Grove Ill: InterVarsity, 2003), 26-27.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>147</sup> John Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 2.

<sup>148</sup> John Goldingay, 'Do we need the New Testament?', *SCJ* 16/2 (September 1, 2015), 237.

<sup>149</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Models for Interpretation of Scripture', *RTR* 55/3 (September 1, 1996), 154.



This survey has shown a tension. That is, on one hand Christ centred approaches may flatten the testaments out by seeing Christ in everything and muting the OT voice. Yet on the other hand, upholding the discrete OT voice can also flatten out the relationship between the testaments in seeing them as just chronologically 'first' and 'second', not as developing a relationship of the 'old' and 'new' in fulfillment. Both tend to mute the OT voice in different ways. So, how do we maintain both the interdependence and the discreteness simultaneously? This will allow scripture to speak faithfully.

A Christotelic approach offers a way forward. This differs from a Christocentric approach. While Christocentric and Christotelic share similarities, they are not synonymous terms. The similarity they share is that they are both Christological readings since both are anchored in some way to Christ. However, they are also different.

We have seen in Goldsworthy's Christocentric readings, Christ is the direct typological fulfillment of every passage. These passages are embedded in major themes and traced through the three-epoch typological structure. This holds the danger of flattening out the OT details.

In contrast, a Christotelic approach sees the OT as whole leading to Christ. The text as a whole points to Christ, not necessarily every individual passage. Here one reads the OT and then re-reads it with the end (Christ) in mind. That is, the interpreter looks at the message to the original audience carefully and then re-reads it with a Christian perspective. The analogy has been used of a novel or story such as *the Sixth Sense* that depends on some retrospective knowledge to fully understand certain elements.<sup>150</sup>

Goldingay gives a helpful illustration that highlights the difference between Christotelic and Christocentric approaches. He likened it to taking a train trip from London to Edinburgh. One could look out the window at each station and claim that they saw Edinburgh, since that is the destination to which they are heading. Alternatively, they could look out the window and see how they are progressing closer to Edinburgh by taking note of the places there were travelling through.<sup>151</sup> Thus Christocentric approaches may be just travelling through the OT seeing Christ everywhere but not taking note of the details around them, where a Christotelic approach knows where they are heading, but takes in the contours of the journey at the same time.

The advantage of this approach is that it addresses both the issues raised above. It does not flatten the relationship by downplaying the interdependence of the testament. But

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<sup>150</sup> Don Collett, 'Reading forward: The Old Testament in Retrospective Stance', *ProEccl* 24/2 (2016), 180.

<sup>151</sup> John Goldingay, comments during a panel discussion on the theme 'Christ in/and the Old Testament' for the 'Theological Hermeneutics of Christian Scripture' section of the Society of Biblical Literature, Annual Congress, San Diego, 2007. Goldingay's comments were conveyed to me by delegate, George Athas, who was in attendance at the panel discussion.

the biggest advantage for our purposes is that, at the same time it upholds the original details and allows them to 'breathe'. They become important to the journey. Why is this important? The concern comes from the assumption that all scripture is important and that God doesn't spill ink unnecessarily. The details are there for the edification of the church and knowledge of salvation and thus are important to uphold in interpretation.

We now return to our original question: in practice, does Goldsworthy's Christological approach mute the OT details? To answer this, we will examine a selection of his OT sermons asking how the details are treated and how Christ is seen in relation to these details. Later we will return to consider if a Christotelic approach would be superior.

#### *1b. Assessment of OT sermons*

Sermons provide a clear example of how a preacher moves from a passage to application. It is a concrete expression of one's hermeneutic. A range of OT books and genres were chosen to assess, including law, wisdom, narrative and psalms.

##### *Sermon 1: Numbers 10:1-9<sup>152</sup>*

Goldsworthy's treatment of Numbers 10:1-9 is illuminating because it is a periphery passage in his schema. Goldsworthy notes people's struggle with preaching from Numbers due to its lack of order and admits that he never preached on it. He makes a light (and perhaps ominous) joke about first being fearful of the task, but upon finding a biblical theology of 'trumpet playing' he gained confidence.

He spends a few minutes looking at both the historical and literary context and places it clearly in the larger context. And then he says we must survey the content briefly (approximately 6 minutes of a 25-minute sermon). This is where he will find our main evidence of his treatment of the details. He walks through the passage breaking it up into four sections (vv.1-2, 3-7, 8, 9-10) and examines the Hebrew (only the words and their wider use, not syntax and grammar). He looks at the details of the different types of trumpets, their tonal qualities and varying uses. Out of the examination of these details, he summarizes several main themes from the passage.

Goldsworthy says each theme would be easy enough to trace to the NT, but he wants to trace them specifically with reference to trumpets. Faithful to his stated method he uses the remaining 12 minutes (approximately half the sermon) mining the three epochs for references

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<sup>152</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'The Trumpet Shall Sound – Numbers 10:1-9), chapel sermon delivered 03/10/1997 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1495>

and their related themes. Vast arrays of passages are included in the survey (These include; Exodus 19; Leviticus; 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles; various psalms; Isaiah 18; Jeremiah 24; Zechariah 9; Joel 2; Matthew; 1 Thessalonians 4; Hebrews 12; and Revelation). He then ponders how we would apply the old desert ritual today and explores five systematic conclusions. These include, how the salvation of Israel foreshadowed our salvation in Christ and how we are summoned at the mountain to step out in faith and like them we are led by our warrior king (Christ).

In reflection, we see that Goldsworthy covers an enormous amount of biblical material for one sermon. He does systematically examine the passage, albeit only about one fifth of his time. These details do inform the themes that he chooses to examine, but there are so many themes, they tend to be overwhelmed and lost in the vast survey around it. While it uses exegesis, it is definitely a sermon heavy with biblical theology.

#### *Sermon 2: 1 Kings 8<sup>153</sup>*

If Numbers 10 is a periphery passage of Goldsworthy's schema, then 1 Kings 8 is the opposite. It is the high point of the historical epoch and key turning point. How are the details treated in such a key passage?

Goldsworthy begins by explicitly placing this passage as the high point of the OT, which fits with his schema. He looks at the sacrifices and links this to the NT where Jesus is the only sufficient sacrifice. He then refers to the cloud of the Lord that fills the temple (v.10). This leads to a short biblical theology of the glory of the Lord through the three epochs (using Ezekiel and John 1). From verses 14-16 he explores the wider covenantal background. Thus he picks up three key themes (sacrifice, glory, temple) and provides short biblical theologies on each. The details of the passage are not dealt with further.

Then he moves on to Solomon's prayer that takes up the bulk of the sermon. He breaks it into three systematic topics. These are, the basis of prayer (vv.23-24), the source of prayer (vv.25-30) and the circumstances of prayer (v.31 onwards). Upon ending this survey he notes Jesus is the true temple. He then moves explicitly to the NT through the traditional tripartite offices of Solomon as the priest, prophet and king and how Jesus fulfills these offices.

So how are the details treated? Admittedly he is dealing with 66 verses so we would not expect a great deal of detail. However, there is no exploration of character development, genre analysis or grammar. The sermon is dominated by numerous biblical theologies and a

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<sup>153</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'The Dedication of the Temple and Solomon's Prayer – 1 Kings 8', Chapel sermon delivered 22/08/2000 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1533>.

systematic focus. As with his previous sermon, it has multiple themes and ideas in it, is heavy with content, and the application is quite abstract.

*Sermon three: Proverbs 10*<sup>154</sup>

This next sermon moves away from the narrative genre to wisdom literature. The sermon begins by grappling with a method to approach the large collection of aphorisms in this chapter. Goldsworthy spends a few minutes systematically working through the first five verses making brief comments. After this he explains, while there is no more time to keep working through them this way, these verses have served to highlight the main theme, namely, the contrast of righteousness and wickedness (synonyms for wise and foolishness). This is not only key in Proverbs 10, but also the rest of the book. He then briefly lists the results of foolish or wise living from chapters 10-11.

It is at this point he turns to look at 'righteousness' more systematically. The underpinning assumption is that there is an order in the universe and thus righteousness is not just right conduct but also living well in the order of the world.

He notes that this righteousness is not just a task, but also a gift. How can we show this? He turns to a BT of wise man that uses the three epochs. The historical epoch looks at Solomon as the archetype of wise man (and ironically as a fool). The prophetic epoch examines Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 32. Lastly, the fulfillment epoch examines Christ as our wisdom (Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 1). Again, he ends with a collection of systematic repercussions, which include the beginning of new creation through the covenantal promises, the priority of wisdom as a gift then task, and that this should affect every relationship.

Again, the sermon is light on details and heavy on systematics and biblical theology. The way he grapples with works and grace in a 'practical' book like Proverbs is important since it keeps the biblical context in view. However, some of the links he makes seem slightly arbitrary.

*Sermon four: Psalm 136*<sup>155</sup>

For our last sermon, a psalm has been chosen. Goldsworthy spends the first half of the sermon dealing with two interlocking topics: (1) how history is tied up with praise and worship; and (2) how **הַיְיָ** is tied to history. That is, history shows us what covenant

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<sup>154</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Proverbs 10', chapel sermon delivered 03/04/1998 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1507>.

<sup>155</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Psalm 136', sermon delivered on 10/01/2016 at the 9am service. Part of the Summer Psalms Series at St Johns Wishart, QLD. Cited, Nov 18, 2016. Online: <http://www.stjohnswishart.com.au/sermons/psalm-136/>.

faithfulness is. Goldsworthy deals with the literary repetition of *יְהוָה* in the passage and shows genre sensitivity.

After this he turns to application and uses Luke 24 to show that all the OT was about Jesus. So how is this psalm about Jesus? He says the main themes of creation, redemption and the power of God to deal with his enemies are the easy links to Christ. This is surprising since he has not looked at these themes specifically in context of the psalm yet. He goes to a variety of NT passages such as John 1:14, tracing these three themes through Christ systematically. The final application addresses corporate worship from the Prayer Book that uses psalms like these to retell God's deeds in Christ as part of Christian worship. In terms of details, he focuses on the use of *יְהוָה* but not the salvation history events specifically. However, the application comes out of the latter that weakens his argument.

#### *Analysis and conclusions*

These sermons do provide examples of Goldsworthy dealing with specific details of the text. However, most of the time they are relatively superficial and don't explore the impact of this on the original audience. He takes care to logically derive the themes for application from these details in the passage (although not always), but on some occasions these seem arbitrary. Additionally, although he uses a clear structure (he often uses a certain number of points under each sub-heading), each sermon contained multiple themes, which makes them very content heavy. Many interlocking passages are explored and often a wide range of biblical material is used in conjunction with the passage to explain it. The enormous breadth of material can blur one's vision of the details. It's like everything speeds up, instead of slowing down to appreciate where we are in the Scriptures.

Thus we can conclude that Goldsworthy's Christocentric approach tends to downplay the details in his preaching. What modifications would help this? To answer this, we will explore how the NT interprets the OT.

#### *1c. Does the NT interpret the OT Christocentrically?*

How does the NT view its relationship to the OT? Does every passage use OT details to go to Christ or does this just lead to arbitrary readings and muting of details? Goldsworthy believes the NT always interprets the OT Christocentrically. The key NT evidence he gives is Mark 1:15; Luke 24:26-27, 44-46; John 5:39-40, 46; Acts 13:32-33; Romans 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians

2:2; 10:1-13; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; and Hebrews 1-2, with a particular emphasis on the Luke, John and Timothy passages of which he concentrates his analysis on.<sup>156</sup>

Without too much trouble Reid demonstrates that Goldsworthy overstates the exegetical evidence, especially of 1 Corinthians 2:2 and John 5:39-40, 46.<sup>157</sup> However, he spends more time on Luke 24, which is 'less straightforward'.<sup>158</sup> His overall findings show that Jesus and his suffering are the climax of the OT. Yet at the same time, Jesus' hermeneutic was to read the OT showing the things that were 'concerning him' implying there are things that don't concern him (although they are part of the trajectory that has him as the goal).<sup>159</sup>

The question this raises is which 'texts' point to Jesus? The overall 'text' points to Christ, but must every smaller 'text' that is preached under this point to Christ? Reid would say, not necessarily. He further proves this point through analysis of 2 Timothy 3:15-17 saying,

'While OT Scriptures *as a whole* are able make the reader wise through faith in the Messiah Jesus, every text ... is useful for keeping the reader straight in terms of doctrine and godliness.'<sup>160</sup>

For Reid, this shows that it is scripture in the wider sense that points to Christ. Under this there can be 'non-Christological' applications. Reid's argument is slightly confusing here, because of the terminology he uses. In allowing for 'non-Christological' applications, he is in fact arguing for a Christotelic approach, which is still 'Christological' insofar as it is anchored in Christ. What Reid is arguing against is the Christocentric approach that demands all passages convey Christ typologically. This will now be highlighted by an example.

Reid does agree that OT citations in the gospels have a Christological orientation, but following Bock's analysis, he believes this Christological emphasis stops after Acts 13 and then the OT is used in a variety of ways.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, he also argues the epistles are not largely Christological and there are examples of OT passages used exemplarily or as direct moral exhortation.<sup>162</sup> Thus, he believes that there are many parts of the NT that break Goldsworthy's rules. The main examples of non-Christological interpretation that Reid gives are Paul's direct moral application of the Law in Acts 23:5 (using Exod 22:28) and 1

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<sup>156</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 321.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 321-323.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 327-8.

<sup>160</sup> (Emphasis Reid's) Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 329-330.

<sup>161</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (Sheffield: JSOT Pr, 1987), 275-277 in Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 333.

<sup>162</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 334.

Corinthians 9:9 (Deut 25:4), and also exemplary uses in James 2:14-26; 5:10-11, 17-18; Hebrews 11; and Jude 7-11.<sup>163</sup>

How do we weigh Reid's critique? In reality, to properly analyze this proposal, each individual passage must be examined—a task beyond the scope of this thesis. However, one of his examples (the use of Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:9) will be briefly addressed here and then the exemplarily passages in chapter four of this thesis. These will help us begin to sense if Reid is on the right track. So then, is Paul directly applying the OT law in 1 Corinthians 9:9?

Rosner and Ciampa situate 1 Corinthians 9 in the context of chapters 8-11, which is about fleeing idolatry.<sup>164</sup> Previously chapter 8 asked if a Christian could eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols. Paul advocates a Christian's freedom to eat it, although despite this, if it should cause his weaker brother to stray, one might not use his right to this freedom. Rights are to be set aside for the sake of the gospel. Following this, chapter 9 is not a tangent about Paul not being paid, but rather an example of how one might waive his rights for the sake of the gospel, thus illuminating chapter 8.<sup>165</sup>

1 Corinthians 9:7 gives a series of three short rhetorical questions about the nature of work in everyday life asking if there is anyone who doesn't benefit from their work. The repetitive use of the interrogative pronoun (Τίς) expects the answer 'no one'.<sup>166</sup> That is, the idea that people deserve to be paid for their work is intrinsic to our world. Then verse 8 moves the logic from speaking about everyday life (from a human perspective [κατὰ ἄνθρωπον]) to a more authoritative argument from the Law.<sup>167</sup>

The evidence from the Law is given in verse 9. This quotes Deuteronomy 25:6. In regards to its OT context, Deuteronomy 25:6 is in a section of miscellaneous laws, which mainly focus on the correct treatment of marginalized people,<sup>168</sup> such as the command for the disadvantaged to consume what they need from another's crop (Deut 24:19-22).<sup>169</sup> When Deuteronomy 25:6 is read in this context, it shows the 'wholeness of the covenant society even extends to its livestock.'<sup>170</sup>

Paul follows the quote of Deuteronomy 25:6 with a series of questions. The first two ask whom this is referring to—oxen or the reader. Verse 10 uses the explanatory γὰρ to

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 334-336.

<sup>164</sup> Roy Ciampa and Brian S Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 367.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 450.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 456.

<sup>167</sup> David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 409.

<sup>168</sup> Roy Ciampa and Brian S Rosner, '1 Corinthians' in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 719.

<sup>169</sup> Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 368-369.

<sup>170</sup> McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 368-369.

explain that it was for them. This appears to be an example of a *qal wahomer* argument (from lesser to greater), not an allegorical argument (where there is no proper relationship between ox and gospel workers).<sup>171</sup> The point is if it is reasonable to care about animals, surely humans should be cared for even more.

In verse 11, Paul asks a final question about whether he should not reap material things, if he has sown spiritual things. This is not Platonic, but eschatological. It is not unreasonable that their investment in the new creation or age to come should result in payment in the present age. This also is a *qal wahomer* argument,<sup>172</sup> which means there is an argument from lesser to greater in verse 8 (from human logic to Law), verse 10 (from oxen to people) and verse 11 (from material to spiritual). Thus it should be seen as a highly structured and rhetorically styled argument used to establish Paul's right of payment. After this, in verse 12 Paul goes on to explain how he has not claimed this right. The persuasiveness of the argument in verses 7-11 highlights the cost of what Paul is willing to give up for the sake of the gospel. This is a powerful example for the Corinthians as they give up eating meat for the weaker brother.

So, is Deuteronomy 25 being used literally or Christologically? If we used Goldsworthy's model we would probably look at the law and how this related to Christ as fulfillment of the Law and how Christians now live for him. The passage doesn't do this. However, it is not like it plucks a law out of its context and directly applies it to us either. It is part of a persuasive, rhetorical argument that would have moved its audience to live as people who sacrifice their rights for the gospel. This ethical exhortation flows from the gospel that the beginning of the epistle outlines so clearly. So Deuteronomy is being used as part of a rich argument to motivate people to live in light of Christ. It is not strictly Christocentric, but also not apart from the gospel context either. Therefore, Paul's argument connects his gospel situation with the legal situation of Israel. While there is continuity, there is also discontinuity because the situation has changed. This shows how the law can be thread through the new Christ event without explicitly stating that the law is about Christ. Again this reflects a Christotelic approach over a Christocentric one.

Returning to Reid, we see 1 Corinthians 9:9 is Christological (seen in its Christotelic usage), even if it is not Christocentric. It fits with Reid's idea of the wider text pointing to Christ, but not individual texts. However, when Reid argues it is direct application he seems to suggest it is devoid of this Christotelic context. Without other evidence that bears more

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<sup>171</sup> Instone-Brewer, 'Paul's Literal Interpretation of 'Do Not Muzzle the Ox' in *Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. by Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2002) 147.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 147.



weight, 1 Corinthians 9:9 is hardly a green light to begin to apply OT passages directly to congregations in sermons without considering the difference Christ makes. Reid does not give many other examples of direct application in the NT and this example raises questions more than gives answers. Again, 1 Corinthians 9:9 is about Jesus and how to live for him in response, but only in the larger context which reflects a Christotelic approach. This would help with some of the difficulties found in Goldsworthy's preaching and also be more faithful to the way the NT acts. For this we return to the concept of a Christotelic approach.

#### *1.d. Christocentric versus Christotelic approaches*

Block writes that while on the surface a Christocentric approach seems edifying 'it is exegetically fraudulent to try and extract from every biblical text some truth about Christ.'<sup>173</sup> Reid successfully showed us that more fluidity is needed. Yet we must retain the Christ focus in the overall text, not every text. Without Jesus, it's not a Christian message.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, for Block,

We would improve our hermeneutic if we interpreted the Old Testament Christotellically rather than Christocentrically. While it is hermeneutically irresponsible to say that all Old Testament texts have a Christocentric meaning or point to Christ, it is true that all play a significant role in God's great redemptive plan that leads to and climaxes in Christ. This means that as a Christian interpreter my wrestling with an Old Testament text must begin with trying to grasp the sense the original readers / hearers should have got, and authoritative preaching of that text depends upon having grasped that intended sense first.<sup>175</sup>

The benefit is that this will protect the authorial intent and original context. It also protects the OT details.

At this point it should be noted that there has been some controversy around particular Christotelic approaches. For example, Peter Enns' Christotelic approach has invited some heated responses.<sup>176</sup> However those like Beale, who take issue with aspects of Enns' work still like his use of Christotelic over Christocentric. This is because it doesn't read Christ into

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<sup>173</sup> Daniel Block, 'Daniel Block on Christ-centered Hermeneutics' in *Christ Centered Preaching and Teaching* (ed. by Ed Stetzer, Nashville; LifeWay Press, 2013), 6.

<sup>174</sup> Ed Stetzer, 'Introduction by Ed Stetzer' in *Christ Centered Preaching and Teaching* (ed. by Ed Stetzer, Nashville; LifeWay Press, 2013), 3.

<sup>175</sup> Daniel Block, 'Daniel Block on Christ-centered Hermeneutics', 6.

<sup>176</sup> See Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) and 'Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in its First-Century Interpretive Environment' in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 167-218.

every passage but sees him as the goal of the OT.<sup>177</sup> Thus there is general agreement with at least this point.

It is this general approach we are talking about here; one that upholds original details. For example, if we return to Goldsworthy's sermon on Psalm 136, we can acknowledge that he picked up on the fact that *hesed* is 'notoriously untranslatable'. He shows us 'that which in *hesed* 'defies all translation'... is in fact translated in a most spectacular way in this whole psalm.'<sup>178</sup> Goldsworthy also picked up on three main sections of creation, redemption and defeating enemies. However, he doesn't explore the OT context of these. Without these, our understanding of *hesed* would be less complete. For example, the 'redemption' section focuses largely on the Red Sea, which highlights 'the effort Yhwh put into delivering and thus the extraordinary nature of the event itself'.<sup>179</sup> Goldingay notes how small details like the absence of the pronominal suffixes on hand and arm emphasizes this.<sup>180</sup> Yhwh miraculously and fantastically saved Israel. Details such as this are important to understanding God's faithfulness and some of them (not necessarily this one) should be integrated into a sermon before turning to Christ.

However, one more question must be addressed before we move on. Originally we said that Goldsworthy moves away from the details for a purpose. That is, to avoid allegory. Does a shift in emphasis to a Christotelic approach in order to rescue the 'details' mean we are opening up to uncontrolled allegory? The previous chapter addressed how the dichotomy between typology and allegory is overstated. The issue is how allegory or figurative interpretation is rooted in the original passage. A Christotelic approach will let details speak in context and also the application will be controlled by the passage's telos in Christ. This should prevent the interpreter from importing arbitrary meanings into the details.

In conclusion, we have found that in practice, Goldsworthy's emphasis on a Christ-centre can mute some OT details. We proposed that we maintain the focus on Christ but view it as *Christotelic* rather than *Christocentric* in order to protect the 'details' and also prevent any 'predictability' that undermines OT authority.

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<sup>177</sup> Gregory K Beale, 'Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns Book, Inspiration and incarnation', *Them.*, 32/1 (2006), 19.

<sup>178</sup> Jean-Claude Margot, 'And his love eternal,' *The Bible Translator* 25/2 (1974), 217.

<sup>179</sup> John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 3: Psalms 90-150* (Baker, ed. Tremper Longman III, Grand Rapids: MI, Baker, 2008), 593.

<sup>180</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 3*, 593.

## Issue two: Does the epoch structure de-historicize prophecy?

We have seen that the rationale for Goldsworthy's macro typological epochs is to prevent allegory. His approach moves away from 'details' and functions on a macro, thematic level across three epochs. The use of three epochs is a unique signature of the Robinson-Hebert method. Goldsworthy defines epochs as simply 'significant periods in salvation history'.<sup>181</sup> This notion of 'history' is a special, canonical history that God is behind. It looks at the events recorded in Scripture and gives them an internal structure.

At first glance, splitting the historical and prophetic into two separate epochs appears to de-historicize the prophets. If Goldsworthy believes that allegory lacks historicity, then is he ironically falling into the trap he is trying to avoid? Also, could it be possible that he simply moves allegory from the micro level (details) to the macro level (theme)?

To answer this, we return to our discussion on allegory in the previous chapter. Here we discovered the issue was less about what is 'historical' and more about how figural interpretation connects to the details of the passage. This information will direct our examination. We will consider how his view of prophecy is connected to the literal sense of the text.

### 2a. Goldsworthy's view of prophecy

For Goldsworthy, prophecy has an important function. It confirms 'types' by recapitulating main themes from the historical epoch.<sup>182</sup> However, it also develops our knowledge of these types. It is not mere repetition but recasting them with a new expected permanence or lasting glory added to it.<sup>183</sup> Thus the prophetic epoch shows or proves which are legitimate types that will lead to Christ without falling into the trap of allegorizing details.

For Goldsworthy, the prophets in the prophetic epoch lived after the schism when 'the history of Israel ceases to contribute positively to the revelation of the Kingdom.'<sup>184</sup> In context, this statement is showing that the prophets are not beginning something new, but recapitulating what came before. Goldsworthy writes,

The crucial point is this: *nothing happens after Solomon in the history of Israel to improve the glorious pattern of the revealed kingdom and the way of salvation.* Prophetic eschatology does not add to the pattern; rather it removes all blemishes to that pattern.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 111.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>184</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 91.

<sup>185</sup> (Goldsworthy's emphasis) Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 148.

However, this raises questions. Is there no new history of Israel after the schism? What about the exile for example? This is a theologically significant event. Is it de-historicized?

Also, what implication does this have for the prophets who came prior to the schism (that is, are placed in Goldsworthy's historical epoch)? For Goldsworthy, the activity of the non-writing or former prophets (those in the historical epoch) is quite different from the writing prophets (those in the prophetic epoch). In essence, they had a different emphasis in their message. That is, the 'old order' prophets (e.g. Moses, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah) were watchdogs of the Sinai covenant that had a 'here-and-now-concern' working out the covenant implications in the historical epoch.<sup>186</sup> On the other hand, in the writing prophets, 'it is possible to discern a distinct development in emphasis particularly in the prophetic view of eschatology or the end time.'<sup>187</sup> One focuses on the present and the other, the future. Goldsworthy notes that the difference between the two types of prophets should not be overstated (both prophets looked at both present and future). However, the theological function of the epochs inherently emphasizes it. Also, these are two very different views of prophecy, which makes it difficult to derive what exactly his definition of prophecy is. He doesn't clearly show how they might be connected.

Generally speaking because of this division Goldsworthy show little interest in the 'here-and-now-concern' of the writing prophets. For example, in his book on preaching he devotes a chapter to how to preach from OT prophets.<sup>188</sup> He gives five examples, including Isaiah 2:1-4.<sup>189</sup> He picks up on the messianic and eschatological elements of the prophecy and uses the theme of temple and restoring Zion to move to Jesus as the true temple. But what did this mean to the original listeners who had lived in Israel's golden age but were now watching Assyria grow in power? How did they feel about the dark, ominous clouds of judgment gathering on the horizon? Isaiah 2:5 (which Goldsworthy leaves out of his analysis) shows us that this vision of the future was meant to change the way the original audience lived.<sup>190</sup> Who would they trust as they entered the uncertain future before them? Who was really their king? Goldsworthy does not touch on this. For him, it is primarily about how Jesus is the temple and the gentiles will be gathered in through his work on the cross to a new Mount Zion (which is not the Holy Land, but Jesus).<sup>191</sup> Jesus is a far more glorious reality than what came before and Isaiah confirmed the historical temple was not the final reality; real hope

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<sup>186</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 93.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>188</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 167-182.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>190</sup> Barry Webb, *The message of Isaiah* (BST, ed. Alec Motyer, Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 46.

<sup>191</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 174-175.

lay in the future. This passage confirms and recasts the Davidic dynasty and the temple as types that eschatologically point to Jesus. It is unlikely the original audience would have understood this prophecy like this even if they did perceive its eschatological elements. So, is this connected enough to the literal meaning of the passage? This will be further considered.

To summarize, we will attempt to derive Goldsworthy's definition of prophecy from this survey. Since we are focusing on prophecy in the second epoch, we will not include Goldsworthy's concept of calling people back to the covenant because he doesn't emphasize this function in the writing prophets. Thus for Goldsworthy, prophecy is primarily a confirmation of previous historical types and eschatological development and projection of them into the NT.

We need to measure Goldsworthy's view of prophecy against other definitions of prophecy and ask if it is valid, particularly in regards to their view of immediate value to the audience. To do this we will ask two questions:

- (1) Is this 'history-prophecy' division legitimate?
- (2) Is prophecy primarily eschatological?

We will now seek to address both of these questions.

#### *2b. Is the history – prophecy division legitimate?*

We have seen the epochs emphasize a division between history and prophets. What does this say about Goldsworthy's definition of history? Goldsworthy's view of history roughly reflects the English arrangement of the OT, where 'history' is a distinct category that is roughly synonymous with narrative. Alternatively, in the traditional Hebrew division of 'Law-Prophets-Writings', narrative is found in each section alongside another main genre.<sup>192</sup>

Seitz has recently expressed concern about the theological repercussions of these English divisions. To him, this mutes the connection that the Hebrew Bible emphasizes between *the Law and the Prophets*, and their foundational role in Scripture. While his concern is not 'to argue that the Hebrew order is somehow "purer" or insist that a tripartite structure become the newest publishing craze for English Bibles', he wants the implications to be 'simply understood'.<sup>193</sup>

For Seitz, the prophets have a close internal cohesion.<sup>194</sup> He examines the close associations that exist between the twelve Minor Prophets, concluding,

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<sup>192</sup> R. T. Beckwith, 'The Canon of Scripture' in *NDBT* (ed. Desmond T. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Leicester: InterVarsity Pr, 2000), 31.

<sup>193</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 46.

<sup>194</sup> Seitz, *The Goodly Fellowship*, 77-104.

The point to be stressed is that the hard work of creating a twelve-book prophetic achievement, such as we find in the Latter Prophets, is also happening in loose association with the History and the Three, such that a coherent prophetic corpus is emerging. The final editing of Malachi (“Remember the teaching of my servant Moses”[4:4]) is clearly meant to be an inclusion, reaching back to Moses and the Torah.<sup>195</sup>

This coherent prophetic collection can be contrasted to the Writings. These do exhibit a loose association but this association is not with one another, but with the Law and Prophets.<sup>196</sup> This strong connection between ‘Law and Prophets’ as an authoritative collection became a core that went on to profoundly affect the NT canon. He says, ‘To speak of canon in these terms is to speak of Scripture’s inner nerve: the word of God going forth to specific and ancient contexts but, because it is God’s word, containing the seeds for later hearing, application and fulfillment.’<sup>197</sup> As a result, the prophets lie at the heart of OT formation; he even likens them to apostles in NT (and also the gospels to Pentateuch and writings to Revelation and Hebrews).<sup>198</sup>

We return to Goldsworthy’s break up of history and prophecy. If we take history as synonymous with narrative and separate it from prophetic literature, we can see something is lost. Prophetic literature becomes more periphery and less tied up with the original historical context. Also, narrative outside the Abraham-to-Solomon timeline loses its historical value. Now we turn to consider Goldsworthy’s view of prophecy where we will further explore the impact of this division.

### *2c. Is Goldsworthy’s eschatological definition of prophecy sufficient?*

As we have seen above, through the ‘historical-prophetic’ division, Goldsworthy believes writing prophets function to primarily confirm previous historical types and develop them eschatologically and project them into the NT.

Goldingay laments when people emphasize the ‘foretelling’ or eschatological aspects of prophecy. He argues that they are prone to treating prophecy like the ‘mystic meg’ phenomenon (British astrologer).<sup>199</sup> This reduces OT prophets to people who merely impress or reassure people by predicting the future. Using the example of Ezekiel he says,

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>199</sup> Goldingay, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation*, 304.

These prophecies were part of his ministry to the people in exile about 590 BC. He wanted *them* to hear God's message to *them*; he did not want to push it onto some other epoch. Nor can any other generation like our own steal it from them.<sup>200</sup>

This is an important point. If prophecy cannot be understood as meaningful to the original audience's immediate situation (not purely forward looking), it empties the OT recipients of a meaningful interaction with God. Goldsworthy's structure tends to overlook this as a function of the writing prophets of his prophetic epoch.

Yet, despite this important clarification, Goldingay does not rule out that prophecy is forward looking. In *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* he makes a helpful distinction between 'meaning' and 'significance' as a way to protect the original meaning but also show it has future value too.<sup>201</sup> He writes:

In the interpretation of Scripture, one can make a useful distinction between meaning and significance. When God inspired prophetic Scripture, it had a God-given *meaning* for the prophet and for the people whom the prophet addressed, and the written version had a meaning for the writer and for the people who originally read the prophetic scroll. The presupposition of preserving the scroll is that it could have further *significance* for people who read it later.<sup>202</sup>

He uses the example of Isaiah 7:14 saying that in Isaiah's day no one would have thought this was messianic, but later on 'Matthew's eyes popped when he noted that prophecy'.<sup>203</sup> He protects the meaning by saying it is stable and frozen in time, but significance can keep being found in later contexts.<sup>204</sup> We have seen a Christotelic approach is an approach that reads (meaning) and then re-reads with its *telos* in mind (significance). This meaning-significance distinction fits nicely with this. With a Christ centred approach we move directly to significance without fully considering meaning. The problem with this is that the meaning should inform the significance. Goldingay writes:

The implication of the New Testament's use of Isaiah is not that the text has a further meaning other than the one it had for the prophets... It does not have a deeper meaning or a spiritual meaning or a fuller meaning; it just has a meaning. But it does have vast potential for further significance when read in different contexts.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>201</sup> John Goldingay, *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>205</sup> Goldingay, *The theology of the Book of Isaiah*, 36.

The OT 'meaning' must be maintained in the NT 'significance'. How exactly this happens is a topic that divides many. Lawrence succinctly summarizes that the basic problem dividing prophetic interpretation is, 'When, where, and how a prophecy is fulfilled.'<sup>206</sup>

In *Three views of the New Testament Use of the Old*, three scholars (Kaiser, Bock and Enns) present three different approaches to answering this conundrum. Firstly, Kaiser works hard to protect a single meaning by proposing a very literal and direct connection between prophecy and fulfillment. For him, in order to protect Scripture's authority, the OT author must have known exactly what he was saying (even if he didn't know the time it would be fulfilled) because otherwise the rules of language and exegesis would be stretched in a way that opens up for eisegesis to occur.<sup>207</sup> This is useful as the meaning is retained, however, Kaiser is unable to see that the meaning can be retained while at the same time having new significance in a new context. Kaiser's view flattens out any sense of escalation and distinction between the testaments and he fails to see the difference Jesus makes in prophecy.

The second view comes from Bock. Bock also protects a single meaning for the sake of the OT's authority, but is happy for this to take on a new dimension of significance in new contexts.<sup>208</sup> He believes texts have two contexts (theological-canonical and historical-exegetical) which both bear on interpretation.<sup>209</sup> The historical-exegetical protects the original meaning and theological-canonical explores how progressive revelation will yield fresh realizations from the original message.<sup>210</sup> The meaning isn't changing because any 'freshness' from progress in revelation is in line with the original meaning.<sup>211</sup> He explains, 'My thesis will be that the meanings are connected and fundamentally one, but not always exactly the same. This is why I often refer to this approach as the historical contexts view.'<sup>212</sup> This allows us (unlike with Kaiser) to see the difference Jesus makes through fulfillment.<sup>213</sup>

The last of the three views comes from Peter Enns. He is less concerned for the meaning to remain the same as the original message or to uphold that the OT prophets knew what they were writing.<sup>214</sup> Essentially the NT *reinterprets* the OT, although it shares the same

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<sup>206</sup> Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 53-54.

<sup>207</sup> Walter Kaiser et al., *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathon Lunde; Counterpoints: Exploring theology; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 51.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-107.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-116.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.



gospel goal.<sup>215</sup> He uses the term *Christotelic* to describe this process. Diversity in Scripture finds unity in Christ.<sup>216</sup> Enns prefers Christotelic over Christ-centred because,

It asks not so much, “How does this OT passage, episode, figure, etc., *lead* to Christ?” To read the OT “Christotelicly” is to read it *already knowing* that Christ is somehow the *end (telos)* to which the OT story is heading; in other words, to read the OT in light of the exclamation point of the history of revelation, the death and resurrection of Christ. Revisiting our analogy of reading a novel, it is like reading a story and finally grasping the significance of the climax, and then going back and reading the story in light of the end. It is to ask, “How do earlier elements of the dramatic movement of this book relate to where the book as a whole is going?”<sup>217</sup>

Enns’ belief that the NT *reinterprets* the OT does not protect the original meaning enough. As Goldingay says, the original meaning doesn’t change its just the significance that develops.<sup>218</sup> This probably is an outworking of Enns’ emphasis on Second Temple literature. Although this is a helpful interpretative tool, Enns’ overemphasizes it as part of the text’s humanity and ‘humiliation’, which overstates how different the NT is from the OT.<sup>219</sup> However, this aside, Enns’ approach does usefully link the idea of re-reading as a process that yields later ‘significances’ in Christ.

From this survey, how can a passage maintain its meaning and yield further significances? Two useful tools can be gleaned:

- (1) Bock’s use of the two contexts (historical-exegetical and theological-canonical) usefully explains how the use of progressive revelation yields new ‘significances’ while maintaining the original meaning.
- (2) Enns’ Christotelic approach explains how these two contexts relate. The first reading looks at historical-exegetical and the second, theological-canonical, asking how the endpoint (Christ) yields fresh significances of the original.

Thus we will now consider Goldsworthy’s definition of prophecy in light of these discoveries. We have already seen in the previous section that Goldsworthy’s approach is Christocentric and the result of this is that he unhelpfully imports ‘significance’ into the ‘meaning’, but we must also address the topic of progressive revelation in contrast to typology. Goldsworthy’s definition of prophecy is primarily based on typology, not progressive revelation. It is about confirming types and recasting them forward. But Bock’s and Enns’ definitions of prophecy are

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<sup>215</sup> C. Everett Berry, ‘Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament’, *CTR* 6/2 (2009), 102.

<sup>216</sup> Kaiser et al., *Three View*, 177.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>218</sup> Goldingay, *The theology of the book of Isaiah*, 36.

<sup>219</sup> Kaiser et al., *Three Views*, 202-204.

underpinned by progressive revelation rather than typology. This hints that perhaps the overemphasis on eschatology in Goldsworthy's definition of prophecy comes from its macro typological roots.

Goldingay believes typology effectively 'castrates' the First Testament.<sup>220</sup> This is an overstatement. Typology depends on a right understanding of the original meaning because of the close interdependent relationship between type and antitype. Like a mold and figurine both are intimately interdependent and indispensable to understanding each other, so the OT meaning of the type is indispensable to any NT significance drawn from this. The details of the type should be what the anti-type derives its significance from. Thus in this sense, we can agree with Goldsworthy who says, 'God is not playing games with Israel for the sake of who comes afterward. His promises are true for them, and the way of salvation is made plain.'<sup>221</sup> Typology is not the problem per se. However, reducing prophecy to a new category of 'confirming types' is a problem. This is because it makes it difficult to deal with the original meaning in the historical context of the prophet. The historical context is important because all prophecy was spoken into a particular context where 'to be understood it must be seen against that background.'<sup>222</sup> Since prophecy deals with historical circumstances, if these are ignored we undermine the very genre of prophecy as God's words to his people in a certain time and place. Seeing the main overarching category as progressive revelation, not typology and dropping the 'historical-prophetic' divisions would prevent this.

Let us return to the example of Isaiah 2:1-5 to show this. It tells of the nations streaming to the temple to worship God. Israel had been living in the glory days of prosperity, becoming complacent and comfortable in their wealth.<sup>223</sup> But tensions grew as Assyria cultivated growing power. In 722BC the northern kingdom would fall and then Assyria would move towards a terrified southern kingdom. Judah would be delivered after a close call only to fall to Babylon a century later.<sup>224</sup> Isaiah's ministry comes at the beginning of dark times for Judah. There were times of uncertainty. Times where they would question what God was doing, if he was powerful and if he would keep his promises.

Isaiah 2:1- 4:6 is a section that addresses the problems with Israel.<sup>225</sup> It is permeated with judgment. However, it ends and begins with a note of hope.<sup>226</sup> This stark contrast shows

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<sup>220</sup> Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*, 66.

<sup>221</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 161.

<sup>222</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, *From the Mouth of God: Trusting, Reading and Applying the Bible*, (Edinburgh; The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014), 106.

<sup>223</sup> David Jackman, *Teaching Isaiah* (England: Proclamation Trust Media, 2010), 23.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>225</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, (ed. R.K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 61.

the reversal to restoration can 'only be by divine intervention in redemptive grace. Only Yahweh can change the harlot into the faithful city.'<sup>227</sup>

Yhwh's sovereignty as the only true God is shown in the passage. Mountains were common religious symbols and place of many idolatrous practices.<sup>228</sup> In verse 2, we learn Yhwh's house will rise above all these. Yhwh's mountain prevails above all others showing the *exclusivity* of worshipping him.<sup>229</sup> He alone is God. Yet worship is also *inclusive* as the nations stream in.<sup>230</sup> Worship of Yhwh is also transformative and causes peace among nations. It is a glorious picture of the power of worshipping Yhwh. This is followed by the exhortation to walk in Lord's way. As Jackman says, 'Who would not respond positively to the exhortation of 2:5?'<sup>231</sup>

The reality that faced the original audience was uncertainty and fear. What would this mean to them? For Isaiah, religion 'was never an escape from reality but the source from which he drew the strength he needed to face it squarely.'<sup>232</sup> It was calling them to 'leave their foolish rebellion and embrace their calling to God. This truth is no less applicable to the Church today than it was to Israel then.'<sup>233</sup>

For Goldsworthy, this passage shows Jesus will be the true restored temple who gathers the Gentiles.<sup>234</sup> He briefly addresses the literary context of chapter one and the wiser book.<sup>235</sup> Then he links Zion eschatology back to the type of the Temple and Davidic king.<sup>236</sup> However, he does not explore what it would have meant to the original audience. Without this, there are a number of nuances we miss. For example, we don't feel the weight of human rebellion or that God is in power even when it seems hopeless. Even though Goldsworthy's interpretation is not wrong, it doesn't capture the whole original meaning. We said legitimate figural interpretation links to the literal sense, including the details. Goldsworthy's approach does begin to do this, but only loosely.

Again, removal of the history-prophet divide and using progressive history instead of typology alone would offer more fluidity to see the original context. However, we must ask if it would be too fluid? Again figural interpretation needs restraints. Our research has shown that these restraints are being grounded in the details of the passage, its place in progressive

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>227</sup> Jackman, *Teaching Isaiah*, 69.

<sup>228</sup> Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah* (ed. J. A. Motyer; BST; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 45.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>231</sup> Jackman, *Teaching Isaiah*, 69.

<sup>232</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 46.

<sup>233</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 119.

<sup>234</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 174-175.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 174.

salvific history and its Christotelic goal. This is what protects it, rather than using prophecy to confirm types.

Therefore, we have seen in prophecy meaning and significance come together through progressive salvific history rather than a three-stage typological structure. To explore this further we will look at Hebrews as a test case. The question we want to address is how it primarily understands fulfillment and if this fits with our preliminary findings.

Hebrews has been chosen due to its wide and varied use of the OT and also how it explores Christological interpretation.<sup>237</sup> In fact, Bray even suggests that it,

gives us a systematic and comprehensive study of biblical interpretation, and must be regarded as the first essay on hermeneutics to have been written within a Judeo-Christian framework.<sup>238</sup>

Hebrews gives insight into early hermeneutics, but more than this, is a deeply pastoral book. Guthrie writes, 'For more than any other NT book, Hebrews, from beginning to end, *preaches* the OT.'<sup>239</sup> It seeks to apply the OT to new concrete situations, something that Goldsworthy also seeks to do through his typology. This helps to make it a useful point of comparison. Then after this test case, we can return to our original question; is Goldsworthy's view of prophecy sufficient?

#### *Test case: The book of Hebrews*

In Hebrews 13:22 the author refers to the book as a 'word of exhortation'. This same phrase is used in Acts 13:15 to refer to a synagogue homily. Like a sermon, the book frequently alternates between exposition and exhortation based on scriptural explications.<sup>240</sup> However, while much of the book reads like a sermon it ends like a letter with concluding exhortations and greetings. This has made defining its genre as difficult, but there is no reason why it could not have been a sermon read aloud as a letter.<sup>241</sup>

The sermon appears to be aimed primarily at a Jewish context with the dual purpose of (1) preventing them falling back to pre-Christian Jewish state that distorts its Christian distinction; and (2) also encouraging them to persevere in faith.<sup>242</sup> The way it seeks to achieve

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<sup>237</sup> George H. Guthrie 'Hebrews' in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 923.

<sup>238</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 71.

<sup>239</sup> Guthrie, 'Hebrews', 923.

<sup>240</sup> David Peterson, 'God and Scripture in Hebrews' in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 118.

<sup>241</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (The New Testament Library: Grand Rapids, Baker, 1984), p11.

<sup>242</sup> Paul Ellingworth, 'Hebrews' in *NDBT* (ed. Brian S. Rosner and Desmond T. Alexander; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Pr, 2000), 338.

this is by explaining how to rightly understand their Jewish roots in light of Christ. In this sense it is Christotelic. It seeks to explain how to think about the OT in light of the Christ-event. Large portions of the OT are used in a variety of ways to explore this. These will now be explored.

The first most significant thing to note about the way Hebrews uses the OT is that it treats it as authoritative Scripture, not just something that has been superseded. This is particularly evident in the way in which citations are introduced. Unlike other NT books that use the 'as it is written' formula, quotations are uniquely attributed to 'falling from the lips of God'.<sup>243</sup> Most are introduced by λέγω, with 23 quotes attributed God, 4 to Christ and 4 to the Holy Spirit.<sup>244</sup> Further the present is used (e.g. Heb 3:7, 8:8) to show there is

no distinction between the word written and the word spoken, and he treats the words of the human authors as the words of God. In this way the writer expresses his belief in the divine inspiration of the Old Testament documents and in God's intention to continue speaking through them to his people.<sup>245</sup>

Thus the OT's authority, inspiration and ongoing importance for the present audience are emphasized.

In terms of material, there is no doubt that a wide variety of OT material is used in many different ways. It is difficult to provide the exact number of OT references due to difficulties in identifying the differences between quotes and allusions, and also because of the sheer amount references repeated throughout the book. However, roughly speaking, Guthrie counts, 'thirty-seven quotations, forty allusions, nineteen cases when OT material is summarized, and thirteen where an OT name or topic is referred to without reference to a specific context.'<sup>246</sup> The main point is that there is a lot.

These references are mainly drawn from the Psalms and the Pentateuch. They are used in a variety of ways. For example, the string of pearls method in Hebrews 1:5-14 and the exemplar list in chapter 11 are used to accumulate evidence in an overwhelming manner. At other times, the author uses long running expositions (Psalm 95) or arguments that turn on tiny details, like the word 'new' from Jeremiah 31 quoted in Hebrews 8:13.<sup>247</sup> The author also uses some passages more centrally than others. George Caird has argued that Hebrews has four main sections and each has a corresponding OT passage at its core (Psalm 8, 95, 110; Jeremiah 31). He believes all other quotes are ancillary to these, which control the

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<sup>243</sup> Guthrie, 'Hebrews', 921.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 921.

<sup>245</sup> Peterson, 'God and Scripture in Hebrews', 121.

<sup>246</sup> Guthrie, 'Hebrews', 919.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 923.

argument.<sup>248</sup> Lane adds Habakkuk 2:3-4 and Proverbs 3:11-12 as key verses for the exhortation section at the end.<sup>249</sup> These passages are often exegeted at length and drive the logic of the overall argument.

Yet even more than this overall use of key passages, Peterson perceives the OT works at an even higher macro level. In an article he wrote as a tribute to Robinson, he attempts to look at how Robinson's BT overview might be found in Hebrews.<sup>250</sup> He looks for the 'broad sweep of biblical revelation and the different stages in God's redemptive plan' hoping to find a deeper theological substructure.<sup>251</sup> To do this he follows the lead from Longenecker who observes that the writer of Hebrews drew mainly from the Pentateuch for the basic structure of his argument.<sup>252</sup> Peterson's method is to look at the main BT themes in the Pentateuch and how they play out through the book. These themes are creation and God's purposes in Christ, the central role of humanity in God's purposes, the Sabbath rest of God, the promise to Abraham and the patriarchs, the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant. After tracing these four main themes, he establishes the deeper theological substructure he was seeking. He says, 'Broadly speaking, Hebrews moves as the Old Testament does, from creation to new creation, via the pathway of covenant and redemption.'<sup>253</sup> Many of the themes at this macro level are in line with Goldsworthy's hermeneutic. That is, creation is foundational and then redemption is traced through covenants. However, Hebrews focuses on the Pentateuch where the Mosaic covenant plays a more crucial role than in Goldsworthy's hermeneutic.

Importantly we see the macro structure is important in the argument of Hebrews. It is fascinating to watch it move through the OT progressively from creation to exodus to priesthood etc. However, Hebrews is also very interested in the details. We will turn to some of those closer details now and examine how some key OT passages are treated beginning with the book's introduction.

Hebrews 1:1-4 is a key section for understanding the whole book and its view of the relationships between Testaments. 'In the past God spoke in many and various ways' (expressed by adverbs Πολυμερῶς, πολυτρόπως [Heb 1:1]). This OT diversity is met in contrast with the definitive speaking by his Son who draws together these various messages.

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<sup>248</sup> George B. Caird, 'Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews', *CJT* 5/1 (January 1959): 44-51 in Peterson, 'God and Scripture in Hebrews', 119.

<sup>249</sup> William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word Bks, 1991), cxiv-cxv in Peterson, 'God and Scripture in Hebrews', 119.

<sup>250</sup> David Peterson, 'Biblical Theology and the Argument of Hebrews' in *In the Fullness of Time: Biblical Studies in Honour of Archbishop Donald Robinson* (ed. D. G. Peterson and John Pryor; Homebush West: Lancer, 1992), 220.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>252</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 167 in Peterson, 'Biblical Theology and the Argument of Hebrews', 220.

<sup>253</sup> Peterson, 'Biblical Theology and the Argument of Hebrews', 232.

We see Christ is the one who can hold the diverse voices of the OT together (which fits with a Christotelic approach). Goldingay thinks many misread this saying the prophets were incomplete. Rather it is saying God is continuing to speak the same message.<sup>254</sup> It is true that the OT meaning is stable but the NT significance is now being drawn out. In fact, it is the seven clauses found in verses 2b-4 that modify 'the Son' and tell us about this significance. These clauses pick up on the main Christological themes of the book such as creation, inheritance, priesthood and glorification. This highly structured introduction establishes an escalation in the majesty of the Son from the OT before it. Yet, the description of the Son is closely bound to OT themes such as sacrifice and creation, which shows how dependent on the OT the Son's speaking is. Jensen says,

As the letter to the Hebrews reminds us, however, the Son who is this last great Word of God is understood only through the categories of the old covenant. There is discontinuity, but there is continuity; there is disjunction, but there is harmony; there is diversity, but there is unity. For the same God is Lord both of the old and the new, and he has provided the pattern and the promises of the old the very language and copies of the new: 'The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves' (Heb 10:1).<sup>255</sup>

After this, the first main section of the book (Heb 1:5-2:18) further establishes Hebrews' foundational Christology. Before the reader sees what Christ has done, one has to know who he is.<sup>256</sup> Chapter one shows his divinity and chapter two his humanity. This is explored by contrasting him to the angels. Bauckham says, 'In his exaltation he is not one of the angels, but divine. In his incarnation he is not one of the angels, but human, as he had come to help humans, not, as 2:16 points out, angels.'<sup>257</sup> Thus angels are used comparatively to show the Son of God as human and divine.

Following the seven Christological descriptions of the introduction comes seven OT quotes to establish his divinity. Again, the number of completeness is used to carefully craft the argument.<sup>258</sup> This time they are used as a string of pearls where there are three pairs connected by verbal analogy (*gezerah shavah*) and a climactic verse. Each pair relates (although

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<sup>254</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology. Volume 3, Israel's Life* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Pr, 2009), 833.

<sup>255</sup> Peter Jensen, 'Preaching the Whole Bible: Preaching and Biblical Theology' in *When God's Voice is Heard: the Power of Preaching* (ed. by Christopher Green and David Jackman, Leicester, England: InterVarsity Pr, 1995), 72.

<sup>256</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 74.

<sup>257</sup> Richard Bauckham, 'Monotheism and Christology in Hebrews I' in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (ed. Loren T Stuckenbruck and Wendy Sproston North; London: T&T Clark Intl, 2004), 171.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

not always obviously) to Christ's messianic rule.<sup>259</sup> All this overwhelms one with the superiority of Christ. It is important to note that the book begins with emphasizing Christ and his superiority.

In chapter two the OT is used differently. That is, in contrast to a string of passages, there is one key passage (Psalm 8). This is used to establish Christ's humanity. We must ask if the author's Christological use of the passage reinvents a new meaning or mutes the OT voice. In its OT context, Psalm 8:3-8 expresses wonder at how God deals with humanity and verses 5-8 allude to Genesis 1:26-28 where humanity is commissioned to rule over creation. This task brings great dignity to humanity and in the psalm. It is clear that the commission remains for humanity to rule as kings over creation.<sup>260</sup> The psalm's use in Hebrews suggests that the Adamic kingship and commission is fulfilled in Christ. Jesus ruled creation perfectly through the incarnation, suffering and resurrection (Heb 2:9) meaning that he bought many sons to glory in perfection (2:10). His representative role is on view throughout the chapter (e.g. 2:10, 14, 17). Thus there is re-creation through salvation in Christ and his perfect rule. Here we see the new significance Christ draws out of Psalm 8. However, this is not in a way that distorts the original voice or makes it an empty interaction with those before Jesus. Thus, Peterson says, 'Such an interpretation does not ignore the anthropological significance of the psalmist's words but shows how humanity benefits from the achievement of Christ as representative Man.'<sup>261</sup>

The next main section (ch. 3-4) contains an extended exposition on Psalm 95, after which, the key turning points of 4:14-16 and 10:19-25 hem in the main two sections of the book, namely, chapters 5-7 about Jesus as high priest and 8:1-10:18 about his sacrificial work as high priest.<sup>262</sup> Chapter 7 establishes a typological correspondence, surprisingly not between Aaron and Jesus, but Melchizedek and Jesus. Bray writes that 'What appears on the surface to be a rather curious digression into an obscure event in the life of Abraham is in fact central to the whole argument of the epistle, because on it depend both the nature of Christ's priesthood and consequent abolition of Levitical tradition.'<sup>263</sup> Chapter 7:11-28 then provides extensive exegetical focus on each of the key phrases in the sections key verse (Psalm 110:4). In particular, it looks at the eternal nature of his rule and how God promised Jesus' priesthood. Here we see the author does use typology to establish a core argument to the book. However, this is done in surprising ways that seems to focus on details more than large themes. The only OT references to Melchizedek are in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110.

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<sup>259</sup> Guthrie, 'Hebrews', 929.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 944-945.

<sup>261</sup> Peterson, 'Biblical Theology and the Argument of Hebrews', 223.

<sup>262</sup> George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis*, (Biblical Studies Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1994), 102-104.

<sup>263</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 75.



After establishing him as high priest who fulfills OT priesthood, the author moves on to look at his work as high priest (8-10:18). The key OT passage used in this section is Jeremiah 31, which clearly establishes Jesus high priestly work in a new covenant. The section begins with Hebrews 8:5 saying the old way serves as a copy (ὑποδείγματι) and shadow (σκιᾷ) of the new, where the old tabernacle based on a pattern (τύπον). The language and concept is typological and also eschatological. This kind of inaugurated eschatology is found throughout Hebrews. For example, it is found in its telic perfection language (τελειόω) and the unshakable kingdom of chapter 12 (vv.22-28).

Then after Hebrews 8:5 which established the typological relationship, verse 6 uses three comparative adjectives to show that the movement between covenants is not just eschatological, it involves escalation. The use of the comparative is not only found in 8:6 but permeates throughout the entire book. For example, Jesus is superior to angels (1:4) and Moses (3:3), guarantor of a superior covenant (7:22), serves at a greater tabernacle (9:11) and offers a superior sacrifice (9:14). Also, chapter 10 is an extended argument contrasting repetitive nature of the old covenant sacrifices to Jesus' 'once-and-for-all', perfectly effective sacrifice. Is this a low view of the law and OT? This needs to be held in its typological context where types allow us to understand Christ, giving them great dignity, not degrading them. Never does the author say the old system was bad or ineffective for those who lived under it, rather that its fullest expression is in Christ. This concept is one that challenges Goldingay's reticence to call the First and Second Testaments as old and new.<sup>264</sup> 'Old' is not derogatory, but theological. To see the testaments as purely sequential, without escalation or fulfillment does not do justice to Hebrews. There is definitely a strong sense of progression.

The final section focuses on exhortations.<sup>265</sup> After the long Christological exposition, the writer wants them to live in light of this. However, it is not only the final section of the book that is hortatory. The warning passages scattered throughout the book serve the same function. Often they come directly after a Christological exposition (e.g. 2:1-4; 5:11-6:20; 10:26-39). The intensity of these warnings have caused much philosophical debate about assurance and if one can fall away. Considering assurance is a theme in the letter (both key turning sections talk about our confidence to approach God) it would seem strange to then downplay this. Rather, these passages seek to drive home the implications of what Christ has done and the disaster it would be for the readers to turn back to a Christ-less Judaism. Athas writes,

<sup>264</sup> Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*, 2.

<sup>265</sup> Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews*, (Tyndale: Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1983), 64.

this means that the epistle to the Hebrews (that is, to Jews!) addresses what it means for a Jew not to believe in Jesus, which is vastly different to what it means for a Gentile not to believe in Jesus. Hebrews is a treatise urging first century Jews to attain the goal of their ethno-historical faith in Christ. As such, it does not discuss falling *away* from Christian faith, so much as falling *short* of Christian faith – a different matter altogether to the one which Gentile Christians often discuss today when studying Hebrews.<sup>266</sup>

Thus these passages serve to show the importance of Christ and are given as God's provision for the recipients to persevere in faith in him. This is something they are not to be complacent about, but also, not something that competes with assurance. But most importantly for our investigation, it also shows that the Christological interpretation of the OT is seen as relevant and to be applied to its audience. As Childs says, 'The author regards the scriptures, not as some past tradition, but the actual voice of God addressing his present hearers.'<sup>267</sup>

Stepping back, what can we say about the Hebrew's hermeneutic? It has been disputed if it is primarily typological or not. Osborne notes how some have linked Hebrew's hermeneutic 'with Alexandria and a Philo-type exegesis, often with Apollos as the author. Others have seen it in the *peshet* style of Qumran. However, the general consensus today is that it utilizes a Jewish typology'.<sup>268</sup> In our analysis we have found a number of typological elements such as an eschatological framework, use of comparatives for escalation and focus on fulfillment in Christ. Typology is used in key sections of the argument, although sometimes it focuses on typology of more periphery details (e.g. Melchizedek rather than the wider priesthood).

Yet in addition to the use of typology, the OT use is rich and varied. Overall, we work through the macro story of the OT yet stopping frequently to delve into the details of a passage at length (eg. Heb 7:11-28 expounds Ps 110:4). Sometimes lists are used to accumulate evidence, sometimes passages are used that first seem quite peripheral to the main OT structure. Typology is important but not the only way the OT is interpreted.

We must also consider how Christ is seen to fulfill the OT. Christ is not read into every detail. For example, chapters 3-4 seem to set up a correspondence between Israel and the book's Jewish recipients. However, overall, the book is thoroughly about Christ. He is the subject matter of the key sections and argument. Broadly speaking, every detail and imperative hinges on Christ's work, but in a way that the details can breathe. This again, fits with a Christotelic approach more than a Christocentric one.

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<sup>266</sup> George Athas, 'Reflections on Scripture Using the Distinction between Jews and Gentiles as an Exegetical Key' in *Donald Robinson: Selected works. Appreciation* (ed. Peter G. Bolt and Mark D Thompson, Camperdown: Australian Church Record, 2008), 127.

<sup>267</sup> Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 311.

<sup>268</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Pr, 1991), 340.

Also, the teleological language seen in the perfection theme of the book lends itself better to speaking about being Christotelic instead of centred. Koester says, “‘Completion’ is a fitting way to speak about the outcome of God’s purposes, since words based on the root *tel-* have to do with reaching a goal. Hebrews identifies the *telos* with the outcome of God’s work’.<sup>269</sup> In Hebrews, Jesus is perfected as humanity’s representative (2:10), perfecting Jewish believers through his once-and-for-all sacrifice (10:14). This telic language refers to the ‘overcoming or supplanting of an imperfect state of things by one that is free’ or bringing to an end or goal.<sup>270</sup> In Hebrews, Christ’s work has a strong eschatological focus where it does not overwhelm the diversity that comes before him but is the end destination drawing out implications of the OT. He is not ‘a novel development of Israel’s faith, but rather as the telic cause who drives the entire course of Israel’s faith and experience.’<sup>271</sup>

In view of this analysis we return to our original question about whether the book of Hebrews uses typology like Goldsworthy does. There are both similarities and differences. For example, both have a high view of Christ. However, Hebrews takes a more Christotelic approach in comparison to Goldsworthy’s Christocentric one. Also, both use typology. However, Hebrews uses the OT in a variety of ways. The underlying structure in Hebrews follows the story of the OT. It is more underpinned by progressive revelation, than typology. Also in terms of prophecy, there is no obvious historical-prophetic divide. It does not use prophecy to confirm types and it is concerned for the original meaning of prophecies (e.g. Psalm 8). This detours from Goldsworthy’s definition.

We return to our original question: Is all prophecy typological? The answer from Hebrews is no. It is underpinned by progressive revelation. It uses typology, but not always.

#### *2d. Typology versus progressive revelation*

This section examined if the epoch structure de-historicizes the prophets. It discovered the history-prophetic epochal divide is not one that promotes historicity. It also found that Goldsworthy’s definition of prophecy had some shortcomings. It was suggested that these would be easily enough to correct with a series of shifting emphases. Again, the superiority of a Christotelic approach to Christocentric one was highlighted. Also, the hermeneutic would benefit from dropping the epoch division of history and prophecy and shifting from typology as the underpinning structure to simply using progressive revelation.

<sup>269</sup> Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 122.

<sup>270</sup> ‘τελειόω’ in Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Pr., 1957), 817.

<sup>271</sup> Athas, ‘Reflections on Scripture Using the Distinction between Jews and Gentiles as an Exegetical Key’, 128.

### **Issue three: Does a central theme lead to unity or singularity?**

The final issue raised in our survey of Goldsworthy's hermeneutic was if his central KOG theme leads to unity or singularity. The aim of hermeneutics is to hear Scripture speak, but if it creates a canon in a canon, it only hears a selective portion of that voice. Is Goldsworthy's structure reductionistic in this way?

#### *3a. Goldsworthy's view of unity*

For Goldsworthy, ultimate unity is found in Christ. He argues for this in two main ways. These are:

- 1) Christ is the hermeneutical key (he embodies the hermeneutical process and also fulfills scripture);
- 2) The incarnation analogy.

Both these will now be explored.

Firstly, Goldsworthy looks at the process of hermeneutics to show unity comes through Christ. He examines the three key hermeneutical areas (author, text and receiver) and fleshes out a biblical account into each. The rationale to this is to engage with modern hermeneutics while at the same time keeping Scripture central, not reason. This is because Goldsworthy believes modern hermeneutics largely deals with questions that don't arise from direct treatment in Scripture.<sup>272</sup> In contrast he wants to let Scripture set the agenda.

He defines key presuppositions under each of the three areas. Under author, he looks at God—that is, his existence, nature and how he reveals himself.<sup>273</sup> It is interesting to note that he doesn't address human authorship here. Goldsworthy seems uninterested in the human elements of the text, which links back to the lack of attention he gives to textual details and the original setting of prophecy above. The second area is text, in which he looks at Scripture—that is, areas such as biblical authority, inspiration and unity. The third area is receivers. For this he looks at the readers in terms of epistemology, sin and the role of the Spirit.<sup>274</sup>

However, there is one thing that holds all three of these areas together, and that is, Christ. Goldsworthy is concerned to show how Christ fulfills each of these three areas. He is communicator (God), message (word incarnate) and receiver (true human).<sup>275</sup> Therefore, he is the hermeneutical key. He is the hermeneutical key because he embodies every part of the

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<sup>272</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred*, 84.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

hermeneutical process. He also is the fulfillment of Scripture. We have examined the details of this in the previous section. Thus Christ is central to the unity of scripture.

Goldsworthy also uses the incarnational analogy to further develop this idea of unity in Christ. Through this, Goldsworthy links Christ and Scripture as both being the divine-human Word of God.<sup>276</sup> In fact, he uses of the analogy throughout his works. For example, he directly applies Christological heresies to hermeneutical approaches. He says allegorical readings are Docetic, Antiochene readings tend towards Nestorianism, Enlightenment liberalism exhibits Ebionite tendencies, and Quietism is evangelical Doceticism.<sup>277</sup> Thus we see that interpretation is deeply bound up with understanding properly the unity and distinction in Christ's being as the God-man.

However, although his intention is right, as noted above, in practice Goldsworthy doesn't focus on human authorship. The evidence we have found so far is that he doesn't utilize textual details or historical context of the prophets. This shows in practice, he has not treated scripture as 'fully human', which is also Docetic. However, despite shortcomings in practice, we need to ask if in theory the incarnational analogy is useful.

All analogies inherently have limitations and Goldsworthy acknowledges that there are places the analogy breaks down. For example, we worship Jesus as God, but we do not worship the Bible.<sup>278</sup> Despite this, he does extensively use the analogy without referring to the impact that these limitations might have. As a result, Reid believes he stretches the analogy beyond its limits.<sup>279</sup>

The limits of this analogy have been debated. Therefore, some have been tentative in how they use it. For example, in *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* Packer used the incarnational analogy to respond to scholars such as Hebert and Fuller. They emphasize the human nature of the Bible and separate the two natures by looking for God's words in the human words.<sup>280</sup> In response, Packer cautiously takes up the incarnational analogy to uphold both natures. However, he says it can only be a 'limited' analogy at best.<sup>281</sup> He is happy to say Scripture has both divine qualities and human ones. However, he is reticent with how far the analogy should be taken after that.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 100, 129, 168.

<sup>278</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 63.

<sup>279</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 306.

<sup>280</sup> James I. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 82-84.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 83.

Peter Enns is less tentative in his use of the analogy in *Inspiration and Incarnation*. He uses it to argue that the doctrine of inspiration can coexist with the human elements of Scripture.<sup>283</sup> He also admits there are limitations, although he doesn't seem concerned about explaining what they are.<sup>284</sup> This opens up to ambiguity. For example, in Beale's review, his concern is that we might import the parts we find problematic in Scripture into Christ's humanity.<sup>285</sup> Also, Beale thinks he needs to be more explicit about the differences. Christ is one person with two natures; Scripture is two persons with one nature (the one scriptural speech act).<sup>286</sup> In response, Enns says just because there are differences doesn't mean the analogy, which is valid and ancient, must be done away with altogether.<sup>287</sup> Enns is correct. As previously noted, all analogies by definition are limited. A perfect analogy would no longer be an analogy but the thing it was pointing to. So the limits of an analogy are not necessarily good reasons to discard it. However, this survey shows us that defining the limits and identifying when they have been breached is important.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to better articulate these limits, but we have seen that the use of the incarnational analogy is complex. It does not mean it's not valid, but that it would be unwise to use it for the heavy theological lifting of an argument without further clarification. In the case of Goldsworthy this serves to weaken his structure.

So far we have seen that Goldsworthy argues that unity comes from Christ. This is because Christ is the fulfillment of Scripture, the hermeneutical key and the incarnation proves it. However, for Goldsworthy, we have to go further than this in our pursuit of unity. In contrast to Childs, he believes that unity is not primarily canonical.<sup>288</sup> For him, unity is in the content. This is important. Where Childs is happy to hear differing voices within the overall canon, for Goldsworthy the content must come together clearly as one story. Furthermore, that story needs to be articulated. And for Goldsworthy, he articulates this through the Kingdom of God (see chapter 2).

There have been numerous concerns raised about this approach. For example, Reid has questioned if he gives enough exegetical evidence for his KOG theme.<sup>289</sup> While Klink and Lockett argue that *According to Plan* offers historical grammatical evidence through the entire

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<sup>283</sup> Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>285</sup> Gregory K. Beale, 'Myth, History, and Inspiration: A Review Article of Inspiration and Incarnation by Peter Enns', *JETS* 49/2 (June 2006), 299.

<sup>286</sup> Beale attributes this idea to Henri Blocher who suggested it to him in, Beale, 'Myth, History, and Inspiration', 299.

<sup>287</sup> Peter Enns, 'Response to G. K. Beale's Review Article of Inspiration and Incarnation' *JETS* 49/2 (June 2006), 323-324.

<sup>288</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 101.

<sup>289</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 359.

canon, it does lack in-depth exegetical work that would support his case.<sup>290</sup> Even Goldsworthy admits the theme is provisional and should be scrutinized by exegetical evidence in the hermeneutical spiral, something we will address in the next chapter.<sup>291</sup> Despite admitting this he uses it and promotes it widely through his works in a way that does not appear provisional. We must now assess if this KOG theme is reductionistic.

### *3.b Is there evidence that the KOG is reductionistic?*

There have been several candidates put forward as potentially being muted by Goldsworthy's KOG theme. These include, exile, restoration, creation, wisdom and even atonement. If this is true Goldsworthy's structure will effectively create a canon in a canon. There is not enough room to analyze all of these potential candidates here; therefore, just one will be examined. That is, the exile and restoration and the potential effect that this has on how atonement is presented.

An example of someone who believes the exile is muted is Fortescue. He writes that the lack of precision in the epoch title 'historical' effectually,

appears to under-emphasise and ahistoricise the exilic and post-exilic periods by placing them under the rubric of Prophetic Eschatology. These are clearly significant periods in the life of Israel and encompass a significant New Testament motif (see I Peter *passim*).<sup>292</sup>

In his works, Goldsworthy does not ignore exile and restoration, but the question is, how exactly it is treated? In *According to Plan*, there is a chapter on the exile (19) and the restoration (21), which he does treat as historical realities.<sup>293</sup> However, there is a difference in how he treats it as compared to the material in the historical epoch. Namely he does not focus on how these historical realities will be recapitulated by the prophets. In fact, the restoration functions almost entirely to prove the historical nation is no longer the KOG.<sup>294</sup> Thus it drives the reader forward to look for a greater fulfillment.

He also addresses the exile and return in *Christ Centred Biblical Theology*. He traces them through each epoch, concluding the theme of 'exile' begins as early as Gen 3 (also not part of the historical epoch) and punctuates many parts of the narrative.<sup>295</sup> He also talks about how prophets reflect on exile as a result of sin and how a return from exile is necessary for the integrity of the Abrahamic covenant, but again, not how it is a type to be escalated in the

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<sup>290</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 56.

<sup>291</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 86-87.

<sup>292</sup> Fortescue, *These Are the Scriptures*, 20.

<sup>293</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>295</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 130.

prophets and later fulfilled in Christ.<sup>296</sup> This means he doesn't make very many typological links between them and the NT. For example, he does not pick up on how Jesus experienced exile on the cross with the cry of dereliction (Matt 27:46) and how this exile brought reconciliation (2 Cor 5:21).<sup>297</sup>

Another issue is that ignoring the historical reality of the exile has the potential to downplay elements of the doctrine of sin and judgment. Asking how Goldsworthy defines sin can test this. He sees sin primarily in terms of questioning God's word (through which he rules) and disruption of the relationships of the created order.<sup>298</sup> The Law tends not to play a significant role in his BT or the concept of sin as law breaking. This may be due to his concern of protecting the gospel by placing the Sinaitic covenant (that appears to promote 'salvation by works') under the rubric of the Abrahamic covenant of grace.<sup>299</sup> Reid also notes a lack of focus on the sacrificial system within this.<sup>300</sup> Thus his view of sin might not be as fully developed as the whole of Scripture portrays it.

A further effect related to this lack of judgment for sin could be an apparent lack of atonement in his schema. Goldsworthy understands the importance of the atonement and says evangelicals are right to emphasize it. Yet, despite this, he feels this has been done at the expense of the resurrection.<sup>301</sup> This comment fits with his KOG theme, which consistently emphasizes the resurrection as the high point of Scripture. For example, he says,

The resurrection is the ultimate demonstration of Christology and God's hermeneutical reference point.<sup>302</sup>

In response, Yarbrough's concern is that the cross should be central somehow to the matrix, but it isn't.<sup>303</sup> Why is this the case? Reid suspects a number of possible reasons, such as the messianic emphasis of the KOG and also the lack of Genesis 1-11 (especially 2-3).<sup>304</sup> It does seem highly probable that the emphasis on David as the final event of the OT, after which, he believes that nothing historically new happens, would fit with this observation. This offers a clear line from his climactic messianic rule to Christ's resurrection vindication and exaltation, while at the same time downplaying the depravity of sin and problem of judgment that is emphasized in the exile and from which desperate need arises to be resolved at the cross.

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 131, 147.

<sup>297</sup> I. M. Duguid, 'Exile' in *NDBT* (ed. Desmond T. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Leicester: InterVarsity Pr, 2000), 478.

<sup>298</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 61-63.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>300</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 265.

<sup>301</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 57.

<sup>302</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred*, 64. Also see, Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 6.

<sup>303</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, 'The Practice and Promise of Biblical Theology: A Response to Hamilton and Goldsworthy' *SBJT* 12/4 (December 1, 2008), 84-85.

<sup>304</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 311.



The result is that the cross becomes disconnected from the resurrection. Treat has noted that, generally speaking, BT has been dominated by the theme of the kingdom (and resurrection), where ST (Systematic Theology) had addressed atonement. He wants to try to find biblical ways to bridge this gap.<sup>305</sup> For example, he suggests Genesis 1-2 presents the pattern of creation to be ‘*God’s reign through his servant-kings over creation*’.<sup>306</sup> This has allowed him to explore the topics of victory through sacrifice and righteous suffering throughout the OT and into the NT in a way that connects atonement with the resurrection. It would be worthwhile considering how these insights could be engrafted into Goldsworthy’s structure. KOG focuses more on kingship and less on servant-hood.

What conclusions can be made? The lack of exile, restoration and atonement are sidelined to some extent by the general emphases found by tracing the KOG through the three-epoch schema. This has significant theological implications. Therefore, we have shown that Goldsworthy’s KOG theme is reductionistic and essentially mutes a portion of scripture’s voice. The next logical question to ask is if this applies to *all* themes or not. Are all themes inherently reductionistic?

### 3.c Can a central theme provide canonical unity?

The use of a single centre is a major area of disagreement.<sup>307</sup> There is disagreement on what the central theme should be (and many different ones have been proposed). There is also methodological disagreement concerning if it is an appropriate way to express unity anyway. Many now opt for multi-thematic or multiplex approach as a more nuanced way to avoid the reductionism of a *centre*.<sup>308</sup> However, while a centre might elevate some biblical texts over others, the alternative problem in some multi-thematic approaches the author doesn’t show how different themes relate to one another thus undermining Scripture’s unity.<sup>309</sup> Some examples of contrasting approaches will highlight this debate.

One example is Greidanus’ multiplex approach. He knows all themes and approaches are not ‘of the same rank’ and so we must describe their relationships.<sup>310</sup> However in *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, there is little discussion on how his ‘seven paths’ relate to one

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<sup>305</sup> Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 27.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>307</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 365.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>309</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, ‘The Present and Future of Biblical Theology’, *Them.* 37/3 (November 2012), 445-464.

<sup>310</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 70.

another.<sup>311</sup> Goldsworthy says, Greidanus' roads are all incontrovertible and easily demonstrated from Scripture, but he wants to go further to show unity between them and principles behind them.<sup>312</sup> Peterson compares Greidanus with Goldsworthy. He says Greidanus' approach is more complex and eclectic, while Goldsworthy can be reductionistic. However, he thinks Greidanus is too harsh on typology and concludes by saying, 'As I have tested the various options suggested by Greidnaus, I have found myself finally guided by the gospel-driven approach of Goldsworthy.'<sup>313</sup> Perhaps a centre is easier to use in practice, but does this make it right? The tension is that one side is reductionistic and one side lacks unity.

Another example is seen in Köstenberger's survey of recent evangelical biblical theologies. In this article he explores the strengths and weaknesses of a centre, central theme or themes or story as organizing principle.<sup>314</sup> Out of these he speaks most positively about a story or metanarrative approach. One example of this approach is Beale's *A New Testament Biblical Theology*.<sup>315</sup> He sees Beale's approach as very promising, believing it minimizes the problems of reductionism by having a wider central storyline that is more nuanced.<sup>316</sup> However, even here, he thinks Beale is in danger of ignoring parts of scripture that do not fit his main storyline. This makes it doubtful that an approach can be found that upholds unity but also isn't reductionistic.

It seems like a stalemate. Seeing this, Goldingay says its time the whole quest for a centre was 'deemed a failure'.<sup>317</sup> He throws out the whole debate and changes the game altogether. The alternative he advocates is one that needs lots of starting points and foci to illuminate all aspects of Scripture.<sup>318</sup> He wants to protect Scripture's diversity, which is what he wrote his thesis on.<sup>319</sup> For him, diversity allows the richness of Scripture to be seen like a living reality. He uses the analogy of a person 'who needs to be understood from different angles and in different roles if that person is to be understood at all.'<sup>320</sup> For him, single

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred Biblical Theology*, 105.

<sup>313</sup> David Peterson, *Christ and his People in the Book of Isaiah* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 19.

<sup>314</sup> Köstenberger, 'The Present and Future of Biblical Theology'.

<sup>315</sup> Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

<sup>316</sup> Köstenberger, 'The Present and Future of Biblical Theology', 458.

<sup>317</sup> John Goldingay, 'Diversity and Unity in Old Testament Theology' VT 34/2 (1984), 153.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>319</sup> His dissertation was revised and published as John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987).

<sup>320</sup> John Goldingay, *Models for Scripture*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994), 18.

approaches don't take diversity seriously or the way Scripture communicates.<sup>321</sup> He argues that his narrative approach is superior as it allows Scriptures diverse voice to be heard.<sup>322</sup>

Goldingay's approach is very fluid. It doesn't like approaching the text systematically in the name of protecting diversity. However, without some form of a systematic approach we cannot properly talk about God. Bray rightly points out that 'We cannot write a book about the biblical doctrine of God if the Bible contains only impressions of the divine'.<sup>323</sup> This concept will be further explored in chapter four.

In light of this, Timothy Ward is more nuanced in the way he addresses diversity. For him, the polyphonic voices of Scripture don't need to disable ST since,

Theologians should not be attempting to write the theology that puts an end to the writing of theology by somehow saying everything but they nevertheless rightly attempt to give a certain kind of expression to the meta-narrative that is partially but adequately grasped in our limited comprehension of Scripture's polyphonic account of God's single act of salvation in Christ.<sup>324</sup>

For Ward, there is diversity, but not a diversity that stops us speaking meaningfully and truthfully about God. This is because the polyphonic voices meet together at a crucial point. That is, in God's act of salvation in Christ. Here is where the unity lies that enables Scripture to meaningfully speak. In fact, he argues that the polyphonic voices combine and serve to sharpen our picture of Him that then stops us creating God in our own image.<sup>325</sup> That is, from this multifaceted diversity emerges a clearer, unified picture of Christ. Jensen also writes,

The whole gospel of Christ is made up by the diversity of the Bible; the diversity of the Bible is summed up in the gospel of Christ. To be selective in our preaching is to diminish Christ; our aim is to proclaim the whole Christ in the whole Bible.<sup>326</sup>

Thus to see all Scripture's diverse voices leading to Christ is how we are to understand to fullness of the gospel. Thus, ultimately, unity comes from Christ. He is the one who pulls the diverse strands together.

A further useful point is raised by Bolt in regards to this. He wants to abandon the term 'diversity' since it almost immediately implies irreconcilable differences and separate corners

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<sup>321</sup> Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*, 1.

<sup>322</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology. Volume 2, Israel's Faith*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2006), 13.

<sup>323</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 42.

<sup>324</sup> Timothy Ward, 'The Diversity and Sufficiency of Scripture' in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. Paul Helm and Carl Trueman; Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 217.

<sup>325</sup> Ward, 'The Diversity and Sufficiency of Scripture', 218.

<sup>326</sup> Jensen, 'Preaching the Whole Bible', 64.

where ‘never the twain shall meet’.<sup>327</sup> Instead he argues it should be replaced by *complexity*, which doesn’t imply disunity but various members in one organic whole.<sup>328</sup>

Christ is what unites Scripture in all its complexity. To choose one theme in the place of this is to ask too much of this literary tool. Christ can hold all the diversity in a manner that a single theme cannot. This is not to diminish the great value thematic reading can have to help in interpretation. However, we can conclude that one theme cannot be the sole control to all interpretation. The idea that this is then throwing unity in the ‘too-hard’ basket is false logic<sup>329</sup>, since unity is still found in Christ.

Reflecting on Goldsworthy, we have seen that he finds unity primarily in Christ, but then is convicted to go further. That is, to flesh this out with the specific salvation history content (KOG theme). He is right to see that Christ is the one who draws together the complex strands of Scripture, but proving unity comes from the KOG theme is less convincing. Undoubtedly the KOG is a powerful way to tell Scripture’s story and to show Christ as the fulfillment of *many* important themes. But there is a lack of evidence to show that it is the *only* theme and representing it to be the only theme is troubling. Here unity shifts to singularity that mutes some polyphonic voices of scripture.

#### **Section four: Conclusions**

This chapter has examined three issues that rose from a survey of Goldsworthy’s hermeneutic. The main conclusions found were:

- (1) OT details matter for interpretation. Christotelic approaches allow for these details to breathe more than Christocentric approaches allow.
- (2) The move to the macro-typology as a way to protect historicity, ironically de-historicizes sections of Scripture. By using progressive revelation as an overall umbrella instead of typology, the original historical context is better protected. Also, it is better not to primarily define prophecy in terms of its capacity to confirm types and it would be beneficial to drop the epochal divide in the OT.
- (3) Finding unity in Christ upholds unity in a less problematic way than using a central theme.

In each issue that was raised, it was found that some modifications would be beneficial. However, all three of the issues identified are symptoms of a wider issue. That is, they are out-workings of using a macro structure. Here the interpreter comes to the text with a well-

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<sup>327</sup> Peter Bolt, ‘Lecture 05: The God of the Scriptures: The Complex Unity of the Bible’ (MTC BT course, 2010, Unpublished), 5.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>329</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 109.

formed system and imposes it upon the text. Will this lead to exegesis or eisegesis? Will it hear Scripture speak or distort it? These three issues have shown that there are inherent dangers in macro structures that may lead to muting Scripture or misrepresenting it. For our final chapter we step back and ask if the core problem is the system itself. Is this what really needs modifying? Are macro structures valid forms of interpretation?

## Chapter four: Are macro structures valid interpretative methods?

The previous chapter examined three issues and suggested Goldsworthy's approach would benefit from shifting some emphases under each of these. Each issue addressed was primarily caused by the macro approach. Therefore, it is logical to ask if a macro approach is inherently bad since it is the root problem.

Goldsworthy's macro structure has attracted a variety of critiques. Surveying these briefly will orientate us to the issues at hand. Firstly, on the rather unforgiving end of the spectrum, Anderson claims that Goldsworthy imposes a system which 'does not arise from within the Bible; it is imposed on the text from outside, being supplied by an abstract theological system which controls everything.'<sup>330</sup> It is difficult to reconcile Anderson's view that his system 'does not arise from within the Bible' with the extensive work Goldsworthy gives to show that it does. It would be useful if he engaged with this. However, the gravity of his negativity does make one consider if macro structures have a place in hermeneutics at all.

Fortescue is milder in his critique.<sup>331</sup> His concern is the extent to which the structure controls the text and he suggests modifications to counteract this.<sup>332</sup> He argues that Webb's approach outlined in his *Five Festal Garments* would offer a useful corrective. Here Webb begins his three steps process to interpretation with firstly reading each book and allowing it 'to set its own agenda, unconstrained by questions beyond the horizon of its final shape.'<sup>333</sup> Fortescue argues this would restore greater exegetical priority in his work.

The last critique worth noting is Shead's, since his conclusions are slightly different.<sup>334</sup> He recognizes that Goldsworthy takes a 'top down' approach and while this has dangers he does not suggest that 'top down' approaches are inherently bad. Like Fortescue, Shead argues that firm exegetical foundations are crucial. However, he argues that Goldsworthy's work does have exegetical foundations, arguing that Goldsworthy 'would be the first to point out that his edifice must rest on exegetical foundations. This is no lip service: he (together with Don Carson) served as a consulting editor to *NDBT*.'<sup>335</sup> *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*,

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<sup>330</sup> Francis I. Andersen, 'Gospel and Kingdom', *Journal of Christian Education* 76 (1983), 56-58.

<sup>331</sup> Fortescue, *These Are the Scriptures*, 17.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>333</sup> Barry G. Webb, *Five Festal Garments: Christian Reflections on the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther* (NSBT; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 16.

<sup>334</sup> Shead, 'Bottom up and Top down', *The Briefing*, 277 (2001), 14.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

which Shead is referring to, devotes a large portion of its work to exegetical analysis before moving towards synthesis in the last section.<sup>336</sup>

This short survey begins to raise some of the key questions for macro structures. That is, are macro structures inherently bad or is the real issue how macro structures relate to exegesis? And secondly, how successful then is Goldsworthy at using exegesis in his structure? This is what we turn our attention to now.

### **Section One: Should macro approaches be used? If so, how?**

The idea that we should do away with macro structures altogether is flawed. It is simply not possible for any person to approach scripture as a *tabula rasa*, devoid of any propositional framework. It is not possible, but also not necessarily desirable. In fact, one of the useful things Goldsworthy explores in his work is how presuppositions about the nature of Scripture shape the BT that results.<sup>337</sup> This can be negative, but also positive. For example, those of the BTM who perceived Scripture more in terms of being merely a human book tend not to read it prescriptively or with faith commitments. Then there are those who view it as primarily narrative, having tendencies towards the dehistoricization of biblical events or subjectivism.<sup>338</sup> Yet in contrast, for Goldsworthy, evangelical presuppositions illuminate Scripture. He defines these as those that arise from Scripture; not alien philosophies imposed onto it.<sup>339</sup>

However, how do we know that Goldsworthy's presuppositions arise from Scripture? James Barr believes that, despite thinking otherwise, even evangelicals use alien philosophies in a similar way to liberals. He says the great irony is that evangelicals commit 'the very sin of which they accuse liberal scholars. That is giving a human construction more authority than Scripture.'<sup>340</sup> For him, conservative evangelicals' 'self-enclosing' theology means they impose a philosophical position on Scripture, which they are prevented from recognizing.<sup>341</sup> This theology means that if something doesn't fit their strong view of Scripture they force it to fit or find ways of reading it figuratively. Thus, ironically, in trying to let God speak, they actually mute him. Goldingay reflects upon this saying,

I continue to be frightened by James Barr's critique in *Fundamentalism* that our commitment to Scripture is merely a badge that we wear; the Bible is our supreme religious symbol. That may actually make it more difficult for us to read Scripture

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<sup>336</sup> T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, *NDBT* (Leicester: InterVarsity Pr, 2000).

<sup>337</sup> See 'Part II: Challenges to Evangelical hermeneutics' in Goldsworthy *Gospel-centred*, 87-180.

<sup>338</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 484.

<sup>339</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel Centred*, 87-90

<sup>340</sup> Andrew Shead, 'Bottom up and Top down', 14.

<sup>341</sup> James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, (second ed.; London: SCM Press, 1981), 341.

accurately, because we know we are committed to agreeing with what we find in it. We are therefore in ongoing danger of having to make it mean what we can accept.<sup>342</sup>

So how can we be sure a set of propositions really arose from the text, or if they are still alien concerns creating a self-enclosed theology? Returning to Shead's critique above, if they truly arise from Scripture then there will be a strong 'bottom up' or exegetical foundation to the 'top down' elements. Therefore, a better understanding of the relationship between systematic theology (ST), BT and exegesis will enable us to discover how a 'top down' approach can be biblically sound with propositions that properly arise from the text and avoid the criticisms of Barr.

When considering interpretation, some like Vos argue for a linear process beginning with exegesis.<sup>343</sup> However, we have seen above that we come to the text with propositions of some kind, which shows that a linear 'exegesis-BT-ST' approach is oversimplified. However, this does not mean this order isn't protecting an important priority. Rather, it shows a relationship of decreasing authority. For Rosner, since BT is the fruit of the exegesis of the authoritative text, it has a priority over systematics.<sup>344</sup> That is, the further one moves away from exegesis, the further they move from God's word in its purer form, opening up to more fallibility. Therefore, Rosner highlights how it is important to be careful how theology is read into exegesis. In fact, if one part of Scripture is read too quickly in light of ST then the Bible's theology can be flattened out.<sup>345</sup> Analyzing the concept of theological exegesis will enable us to consider this problem further.

The *Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (TIS) movement advocates theological exegesis. Although TIS is a diverse movement, generally speaking, it upholds using the rule of faith in interpretation. Treier defines this as 'a trinitarian summary of the structure of the Bible's story that is reflected in creeds such as the Apostles' and Nicene.'<sup>346</sup> Treier argues Christian beliefs are seen as productive for interpretation and exegesis needs to be read in light of doctrine.<sup>347</sup>

Carson is uncomfortable with this emphasis. He knows that ST is fruitful for exegesis. To show this he uses the example of Peterson's work, *Possessed by God*,<sup>348</sup> as a positive

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<sup>342</sup> Goldingay, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation*, 108.

<sup>343</sup> Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 55.

<sup>344</sup> Brian S. Rosner 'Biblical Theology' in *NDBT* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Leicester: England, 2000), 3.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>346</sup> Daniel Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 34.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>348</sup> David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (ed. D. A. Carson; NSBT; Leicester: Apollos, 1995).



example of how ST and exegesis can be used recursively.<sup>349</sup> In this work, Peterson laments how every growth category is lumped under sanctification when the biblical evidence doesn't allow it. He uses exegetical data to challenge traditional views of sanctification that had been unfairly read into exegesis to create a new set of propositions to read scripture with. However, while this provides a good example of the recursive relationship, for Carson, there should be limits in how it works. To explain this Carson refers to a forthcoming paper by Graeme Cole that outlines four levels of interpretation.<sup>350</sup> These are: (1) exegesis; (2) understanding the text in the whole of BT; (3) theological structures that bear on the text; and (4) modifying texts by larger hermeneutical proposals. Carson says traditionally people primarily operated on level 1 and 2, but TIS often operate on level 3 and 4. He gives the example of the Brazos commentary series that he believes operate mainly on level 3 and 4 while giving the impression they are operating on 1 and 2. This is the reason that, in his opinion, they are largely unsatisfying to read. He says, 'One should indulge in level 4 only with the greatest caution, and only after the writer has done a lot of work on the first three levels.'<sup>351</sup>

This brings us back to the question of authority from above. More work must be done at level 1 and 2 (in the text) before the use of larger systematic structures, which are derivative of the text. Structure must be firmly grounded in the authoritative word, not something alien imposed on it. Thus while the process is recursive, there is still priority at the exegetical end, even if it is not a simple linear process.

Is this view of theological exegesis too negative? How should we understand the role of ST? There is a current trend of a low view of ST in interpretation today. It is argued that God did not reveal himself through ST, so therefore, it is purely a human construct. For example, in his critique of TIS, Goldingay argues they are 'always inclined to come down to the elucidation of our already-determined Christian doctrines (and lifestyles) by Scripture, either accidentally (von Rad) or deliberately (Childs, Watson).' <sup>352</sup> Therefore in his *Old Testament Theology* Goldingay purposely does not begin with any a priori theology<sup>353</sup> but rather uses narrative which is more 'open-ended, allusive, and capable of embracing questions and ambiguity.'<sup>354</sup> In fact, he concludes, 'If systematic theology did not exist, it might seem unwise to invent it, or at

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<sup>349</sup> Carson, 'Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But...' in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives* (ed. Allen R. Michael; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 195.

<sup>350</sup> Graham A Cole, 'Constructing Doctrine', unpublished paper emailed to me via George Athas in Carson, 'Theological Interpretation', 206. Note: the paper shows Cole has slightly modified his approach since Carson quoted it, although he says these differences are superficial.

<sup>351</sup> Carson, 'Theological Interpretation', 207.

<sup>352</sup> Goldingay, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation*, 155.

<sup>353</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology. Volume 1*, 19.

<sup>354</sup> Goldingay, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation*, 154.

least unwise to begin the devising of grand schemes that are bound to skew our reading of Scripture and from which postmodernity delivers us.’<sup>355</sup> Goldingay retreats to narrative theology. Others retreat to biblical theology, because ‘God didn’t reveal himself to us in a systematic theology, but through history.’<sup>356</sup>

However, while there are dangers we still need ST. BT is not enough on its own because ST is what takes implicit biblical truths and applies them explicitly in the present. Trueman even argues that we need to protect ST from BT.<sup>357</sup> He argues that while BT aims to put the word at the centre, it ‘is inadequate in and by itself for the theological task of defending and articulating the faith’.<sup>358</sup> Therefore, ST is important since it allows the exegetical and BT implicit data of Scripture to be transferred in into organized and categorized propositions that enable one to speak about God meaningfully. It should not move beyond what is written but speaking about it in an orderly way.

Therefore, the task we are left with is to figure out how these systematic propositions might be read in to the text in a way that doesn’t override the particulars of the text. Again, this highlights the priority exegesis has. It must be a slow-process taking note of the specific nuances and historical situation of the passage. But even so, ST cannot be denigrated because it enables the implicit truths of BT and exegesis to be spoken explicitly as meaningful God-talk. So how can exegesis, BT and ST talk to one another in a productive way that protects exegesis?

Exegesis, BT and ST are interdependent. Goldsworthy suggests that the way they interact is through the ‘hermeneutical spiral’.<sup>359</sup> The concept of the hermeneutical spiral has its roots in Schleiermacher and is described by Reid as,

the circularity associated with the hermeneutical process as one that happens in a continual dialectic between an individual text and the whole to which it belongs. To understand the whole, detailed attention must be given to the details and particulars. On the other hand, the details and particulars cannot be understood without reference to the whole to which it belongs. There must be a delicate balance between both individual text and the whole to which it belongs.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>356</sup> Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 91.

<sup>357</sup> To read the debate on this topic between Trueman and Goldsworthy see, Trueman, ‘A Revolutionary Balancing Act’, and Graeme Goldsworthy, ‘Ontology and Biblical Theology: A Response to Carl Trueman’s Editorial: A Revolutionary Balancing Act’ *Them.* 28/1 (2002): 37-45.

<sup>358</sup> Trueman, ‘A Revolutionary Balancing Act’, 4.

<sup>359</sup> Goldsworthy, ‘Ontology and Biblical Theology’, 45.

<sup>360</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 209.

For Reid, the key is the ongoing interaction between the whole and parts moving from exegesis to BT to ST and back again. Here we find that interpretation is not linear, but circular which fits well with our observations above. As one grows in knowledge of the different parts, they sharpen one's knowledge in interpretation. However, in light of the survey above, we also have to emphasize that this is done in a manner that protects exegesis.

The aim of this recursive process is not just moving around in circles, but to sharpen the process as you go. Interpretation is a process. Goldsworthy picks up the nature of interpretation being a process and explains it leads to refining presuppositions (and critically engaging with alien philosophies that lead to false beliefs).<sup>361</sup> In fact, for Goldsworthy, this process of discerning propositions is tied to our process of renewal or sanctification. Unfortunately, he seems to use the terms 'renewal' and 'sanctification' interchangeably throughout his works which is unhelpful, since in light of Peterson's work mentioned above (*Possessed by God*) it is debatable if sanctification is progressive. However, the language of renewal is not synonymous with this and it is a more appropriate term for progress in the Christian life. The point is, hearing scripture speak is a process worked out in the believer. It does have a subjective element to it.

This subjectivity means that it is important that the interpreter develops as a 'renaissance person' who is able to engage in exegesis, biblical theology, dogma, church history and philosophy.<sup>362</sup> Goldsworthy similarly calls people to be polymaths.<sup>363</sup> This is in contrast to the specialization and division promoted by historical criticism.

While this is good and right, the call to be polymaths also means that skillful interpretation requires extensive knowledge. Gottwald shows the full repercussions of such an idea, saying that,

a proper beginning point for a theology of the Hebrew Bible is to take account of everything that the Bible says about God, everything that God says, and everything that people say to God. This would be to follow radically and faithfully the course of the text (...) Unless and until this is done, however, theological criticism will continue to build very selectively on narrow bases of God-talk.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred*, 17.

<sup>362</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 384.

<sup>363</sup> Goldsworthy, 'The Ontological and Systematic Roots of Biblical Theology,' *RTR* 62/3 (2003), 163.

<sup>364</sup> Norman K. Gottwald, 'Literary Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Retrospect and Prospect' in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text* (ed. Vincent L. Tollers and John Maier; Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ Pr, 1990), 39, taken from, John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology. Volume 2, Israel's Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 17.

Upon considering the magnitude of such a task, it is easy to despair. The idea that one must master every specialization is beyond human capacity. And the hermeneutical spiral will be affected by their limitations.

Seeing interpretation as a subjective process can lead to despair. However, the complexity of interpretation is only a problem in the absence of a robust doctrine of clarity of Scripture. We can affirm that God is able and willing to communicate clearly and his revelation is a divine gift to us.<sup>365</sup> In terms of salvation, Scripture is clear and sufficient for all – polymath or not. However, this doesn't mean we might exhaust all the knowledge of God. Working hard at reading Scripture, as polymaths will help refine our propositions.

To summarize, we return to our original question of evaluating macro approaches. We have seen that propositions are unavoidable, so we must use them. We sought to find a way to ensure that these propositions are truly Biblical and not alien to the text. The key to this is to use the hermeneutical spiral. This allows exegesis to inform our propositions. However, we must specify further. The spiral must be used in a way that protects exegesis and gives it priority. A systematic framework should be constantly shaped by exegesis. The text does not change, but our ST framework will.

Now we turn to consider Goldsworthy's practice. We need to ask, what role do propositions play in his work. What is the place of exegesis? And furthermore, does he use the hermeneutical spiral? Goldsworthy does argue that the spiral should cause reconsideration and potential modification of presuppositions originally brought to the text.<sup>366</sup> Thus the question here is not if he believes in the use of the hermeneutical spiral, but rather if in fact he does use it in practice. Is his ST modified by exegesis through the spiral?

## **Section two: Assessment of propositional use and the hermeneutical spiral in Goldsworthy's work**

Clearly Goldsworthy uses a macro or 'top heavy' approach - that is, one that begins with and is heavily controlled by his presuppositions. Before we ask if he uses the hermeneutical spiral, we need to explore the specific role of presuppositions in his work.

In Reid's dissertation, he analyses the place of presuppositions in Goldsworthy's works and concludes that there is a development in his practice that leads to exegesis being relegated as the last step on the hermeneutical process behind dogmatics and presuppositions. Reid proves this through a survey of Goldsworthy's work. He notes that originally Goldsworthy

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<sup>365</sup> Mark D. Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word: The Clarity of Scripture* (ed. D. A. Carson; NSBT; Downers Grove: Apollos, 2006), 165.

<sup>366</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', *SBJT* 12/4 (2008): 20-34, 9.

adopted Vos' view that BT is a branch of exegetical theology where BT is seen as a step to ST, ensuring an exegetical priority.<sup>367</sup> This pattern is reflected in *Gospel and Kingdom*. However, by the 1980s Goldsworthy was emphasizing the role of presuppositions and by 1986 rejected the idea of beginning interpretation with exegesis as 'simplistic.'<sup>368</sup> Reid argues that from this time onwards Goldsworthy reverses the original order that had began with an exegetical basis to now be *conversion – dogmatic presuppositions – BT – exegesis*.<sup>369</sup> However, these presuppositions become much more than faith commitment but a fully developed ST.<sup>370</sup> For Reid, although ST is important, it ends up controlling the process which causes him to place Goldsworthy in the realm of theological exegesis.<sup>371</sup> If this were true, it would open him up to some of the criticisms that have been laid against the TIS movement that was introduced in chapter one.

Reid's comprehensive analysis is illuminating. However, there are a few small notes worth adding to his survey. Firstly, in a book review in 1979, Goldsworthy argues for a high view of presuppositions and that beginning with exegesis alone is too simplistic.<sup>372</sup> This was published two years before *Gospel and Kingdom*, where Reid says Goldsworthy's view was in line with Vos. In fact, it is highly probable that the final view presented by Reid was probably more consistent throughout his career than Reid's survey makes out. While Goldsworthy does speak about Vos' view in the AFES notes, these were written at a more popular level and therefore could be oversimplifying his view for the sake of clarity (and the same with *Gospel and Kingdom* which is also non-technical).<sup>373</sup> The point is, while Reid's analysis is right in showing that he holds a reversed pattern from Vos (exegesis-BT-ST) this view is one that Goldsworthy always seems to have had. Therefore, rather than focusing here on its development, we will look now at the key arguments that consistently arise to show his commitment to a top-down approach.

Goldsworthy gives a clear rationale for this priority. It contains two reasons – the first is epistemic and the second, theological.<sup>374</sup> In terms of epistemology, for Goldsworthy, humanism distorts truth. That is, the idea that man is in control of gaining knowledge and is the 'judge of what is or is not true.'<sup>375</sup> Therefore, right interpretation depends on conversion where the Spirit renews one's mind through Christ. Right interpretation must begin with some idea about

<sup>367</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 355.

<sup>368</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Thus Says the Lord', 37.

<sup>369</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 357.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>372</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Understanding the Old Testament', *RTR* 38/2 (May 1, 1979): 57.

<sup>373</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *AFES course: Study notes for Old Testament – An introduction to Biblical theology* (Newtown: Moore Theological College and the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students. n.d), 5.

<sup>374</sup> These two reasons are first clearly stated in *Thus says the Lord* then also chapter 7 of *Preaching the Whole Bible*.

<sup>375</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 39.

Jesus as Lord, which is a systematic truth (therefore we start with ST). However, as Reid pointed out, sometimes it is confusing to know if he is speaking simply about conversion and basic Christian presuppositions or more developed dogmatics. Sometimes they are treated separately and sometimes synonymously.<sup>376</sup>

The second reason is theological. That is, Jesus claimed Scripture had to be interpreted by himself. We must read passages in light of him to understand them. Thus Jesus is the 'hermeneutical principle and exegetical norm' of whom, 'Exegesis is a derivative'.<sup>377</sup> Both these epistemic and theological reasons are stated consistently through his works.

Goldsworthy spends his energy protecting the priority of presuppositions rather than exegesis. While his description of the exegetical process in chapter 2 of *According to Plan* is fairly comprehensive,<sup>378</sup> the nature of exegesis is not a topic treated at length—certainly not in the same way presuppositions are. However, Goldsworthy still advocates for interdependence between exegesis and ST.<sup>379</sup>

This priority of presuppositions is also consistently reflected in the practice of his work. For example, in his work *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*, he asks in chapter one where he should start. He gives a simple definition of prayer, and then spends time over the next four chapters exploring systematic questions that arise from this definition (e.g. the reality of why prayer is possible or what enables prayer).<sup>380</sup> Then he begins his biblical theology half way through the book.

Another shorter example is in chapter 4 of *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* that contains a biblical theology of the preached word.<sup>381</sup> He begins with systematic truths about Jesus and the gospel (Rom 1:16; John 1:1-14; 14:6) and then presents his biblical theology in light of this before returning to Jesus as speaker, word spoken, proclaimer and obedient hearer. Clearly in theory and practice ST dominates the start of the interpretative process. In fact, this pattern is so established he consistently uses it in most, if not all, his works.

Let us summarize the findings of this survey. The evidence shows Goldsworthy has maintained a 'top down' approach throughout his career. The positive aspect of this emphasis is that it acknowledges that no person comes to the text as a *tabula rasa*. Uncritically ignoring

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<sup>376</sup> Goldsworthy connects dogmatics and a set of presuppositions as synonymous in, Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 60.

<sup>377</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Thus Says the Lord', 33.

<sup>378</sup> Chapter 2 in Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 29-36.

<sup>379</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology as the Heartbeat of Effective Ministry' in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (ed. Scott Hafemann; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Pr, 2002), 281.

<sup>380</sup> Goldsworthy, *Prayer*, 15-16.

<sup>381</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 31-45.

this can unwittingly lead to eisegesis. However, we have also seen that while this is a valid observation, it is also dangerous if the hermeneutical spiral is not used. So now we turn to ask if Goldsworthy does use this spiral in his work.

The method used to measure this will be to survey three of Goldsworthy's works and assess the role of the hermeneutical spiral in them. What criteria will be used to examine this? Firstly, there should be detailed exegetical work, which takes a priority (although not necessarily a chronological priority) and larger part of the overall interpretative process. That is, to use Goldsworthy's own terminology 'the process of getting out of a text what it actually says in its original setting.'<sup>382</sup> We are looking for evidence of textual criticism to establish the text, engaging with various critical disciplines such as literary, form or redaction criticism, establishing the meaning of the text through grammatico-historical exegesis and how the Bible became recognized as authoritative (canonics).<sup>383</sup> Secondly, if evidence is found of Goldsworthy using ST or presuppositions in interpretation, we will look for evidence of caution and restraint in this process. Thirdly, we will look for evidence of exegesis modifying presuppositions in light of exegetical work.

It must be noted that the selection of the three works to survey was not straightforward. Goldsworthy has written few exegetical works. The ones that exhibit the most exegetical ability (see criteria above) are his dissertation, which exegetes five psalms, and his Proverbs commentary (although this is non-technical). The third example looks at his discussion of preaching Christ from different genres in *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. While this is focusing on interpretation, it does give access into the different ways he seeks to find application from various texts.

#### *Dissertation: Empirical wisdom in relation to salvation-history in the psalms*

Goldsworthy's Ph.D relies on substantial exegetical work for its conclusions. He explores the relationship between empirical wisdom and salvation history (SH), which many see as separate traditions. Goldsworthy is interested to examine if there are links between them. The method he applies is to identify key wisdom psalms that also have salvific historical elements within them.<sup>384</sup> He believes this method will provide the most obvious examples of where both materials are combined in order to analyze *how* the writers combine them theologically.

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<sup>382</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, 32.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 33-44.

<sup>384</sup> Goldsworthy, *Empirical Wisdom in Relation to Salvation-History in the Psalms* (dissertation presented to the faculty of Union Theological Seminary, 1973), 49-54.

In terms of the exegetical work on the psalms, Goldsworthy engages with textual and redaction criticism, critically with a variety of secondary sources and also shows extensive interaction with Hebrew. He also shows competent interaction with genre, literary devices, themes and words but the main focus is on intertextuality. This is primarily achieved through word analysis where he establishes the relationships of certain phrases or words with the wider wisdom tradition. This often moves him outside the immediate text.

However, it should be noted that in the context of such a work, it is not verse-by-verse analysis, since he is arguing a certain thesis, not acting as a commentary. Rather, his approach is to firstly establish the text and then identify the wisdom elements in the psalms (except for 128, 133 and 25 where he begins with structure, since these are already widely established as wisdom psalms). Then he moves onto assessment (or structure for the first two). This process does not systematically examine overall logic and syntax in the psalm chronologically. Again, it is not a verse-by-verse commentary, yet more detailed textual analysis would better support his conclusions.

Does this data then modify his hypothesis (that SH and the wisdom tradition are linked)? He does allow his findings to dictate results. In fact, to conclude he admits, 'Turning to the results of the exegetical studies of the five psalms selected for this investigation we discover no great consistency in the way in which empirical wisdom and salvation-history have been amalgamated.'<sup>385</sup> He is happy to allow the evidence to speak for itself. However, he still is able to draw several (well evidenced) conclusions from the exegetical evidence. For example, links through Yahwistic presuppositions (e.g. the fear of Yahweh) and through the Davidic kingdom and Solomon who connects wisdom into SH.<sup>386</sup>

So does the hermeneutical spiral function? As mentioned there are limitations to be able to answer this due to the nature of the work, but he certainly does engage sound exegesis and allow that to set the agenda of his conclusions. This is evidence that he is able to use the spiral. His thesis was written in 1973, which was early in his career. Does this trend continue in his works?

#### *Proverbs: The Tree of life (Reading the Bible Today series)*

Twenty years later, in 1993, Goldsworthy published his first commentary. It is on Proverbs in the non-technical *Reading the Bible Today Series*. This series aims to be accessible to the theologically untrained which immediately flags that it will not show any overt significant

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 151.



interaction with original languages, scholarship or criticism. To some extent, this limits our ability to assess the function of the hermeneutical spiral, however, it is still insightful.

Goldsworthy outlines his rationale in the introduction. He contemplates if he should use the 'normal' exegetical or a thematic approach. The exegetical would not 'open up Proverbs' without lots of technical detail.<sup>387</sup> The thematic obscures the way the book is put together as a whole.<sup>388</sup> Therefore he chooses a third 'superior' option of 'concentrating on the sections of the book while at the same time providing essential verse-by-verse commentary of the whole.'<sup>389</sup> At first this combination approach feels slightly negative about exegesis, but admittedly Proverbs is notoriously difficult to structure and it is not unusual to opt for thematic approaches to try and interpret it, so the use of both cannot be necessarily taken as a bad exegetical decision. Goldsworthy chooses nine representative passages. In these he analyses both the 'original meaning' and 'Christian significance'.<sup>390</sup> That is, exegesis and also application through BT. Other sections just contain very brief exegetical notes that he admits should not be read alone (as you would a detailed commentary) but in the context of the whole book.

In the key passages, he firstly looks at 'Description'—that is, genre and context. Then he looks at the 'Text,' including brief non-technical notes on words, historical details and some brief syntax. The third section, 'Function,' looks at the meaning of the passage of as a whole and overall contribution to the message of proverbs. The final section is 'Testimony to Christ.' Overall this process shows logical interpretative progression and exegetical emphasis.

We will now interact with an example of this process using Chapter 5:1-23. In 'Description,' Goldsworthy outlines the structure (three main units) and its relationship to surrounding context.<sup>391</sup> He also comments on its use of parallelism, although this is the only genre specific comment in the section.<sup>392</sup> In 'Text,' every comment explains or rewords phrases and metaphors.<sup>393</sup> The exception is one grammatical comment on the Hebrew, a link to Song of Song and comment of overall theme of retribution.<sup>394</sup> Overall there are limited notes on syntax, grammar and genre with a dominant focus on words and themes. More interaction with the former would strengthen his exegesis.

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<sup>387</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Proverbs, The Tree of Life* (ed. Paul Barnett; Reading the Bible Today Series; Sydney South: Aquila Press, 1993), viii.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-67.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

The 'Function' section does not look at the passages' contribution to Proverbs, but rather to the OT in general. He focuses on the creational rather than covenantal context.<sup>395</sup> That is, marriage is built in creation as the place for sexual relations and sexual immorality is breaking that order (sin is defined as breaking the order).<sup>396</sup> These comments focus on the OT as whole and are largely unlinked to specific exegetical evidence in the passage.

Finally, in 'Testimony to Christ,' Goldsworthy takes the link to sin as breaking God's order and says wisdom speaks against this. Then he moves to the covenantal context saying it presupposes a 'true Israel, a righteous and wise people of God.'<sup>397</sup> Then he explicitly says Christian application must go through Christ to stop legalism.<sup>398</sup> To go through Christ he takes the path of the true Israelite, noting that while Jesus was not married he expressed the perfect sexuality that was intended for Israel, explaining, 'This is part of what it means for Christ to be our wisdom (see 1 Cor 1:30).'<sup>399</sup> Only now can we move to application. That is, to strive for perfection because we are raised with Christ.

There are two things to note here. Firstly, the application doesn't explicitly mention sexual immorality, which is the unique contribution of this passage. Rather it looks at general themes. This is an example of flattening theology out through BT. That is, we lose the distinctive details about sexual immorality in the passage when we move through Christ. We shift from talking about sexual immorality to sin in general.

Secondly, Goldsworthy takes several large leaps in his logic: from creation to covenant to Christ as Israelite, perfect sexual example and our wisdom, and then application. Here, as with other 'Testimony to Christ' sections, he uses typological links (other examples include Jesus as Davidic king, wise man and restorer of the new creation). Following the progression in his logic here is largely dependent on the first four chapters of the book that outline wisdom systematically. In fact, these chapters explain the application more than the exegesis from Proverbs 5. Again, this is evidence that the exegesis doesn't carry the bulk of the argument, but BT. So does the hermeneutical spiral function? There is evidence of exegesis but this has a limited contribution to application and is flattened out by BT and ST emphasis.

#### *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*

Published in 2000, the second half of this book examines how to preach BT in the different genres of scripture. The book is not strictly about exegesis in general, but focuses on

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 68.

one specific exegetical aspect, namely, genre.<sup>400</sup> Goldsworthy defines literary genres as 'vehicles for theological truth'.<sup>401</sup> For him, the aim is to find the BT in the genres. For our purposes here we want to find evidence that the exegesis or genre analysis informs the 'BT links' found.

One example he uses is of Ruth as a historical narrative genre. He comments, 'So much for the story, but where are the biblical-theological links to salvation history?'<sup>402</sup> He is eager to move from genre to BT and while he does see the importance of telling the story, for Goldsworthy, the story alone is not a sermon.<sup>403</sup> But does the story still inform the content of the sermon? His analysis is specific to Ruth. It is sensitive to the way the characters are portrayed, to narrative details and their emphases. For example, Goldsworthy's main emphasis when talking about Ruth, the book repeatedly stresses that she is a Moabite, which foreshadows the ingathering of every nation, tribe and tongue into God's people.<sup>404</sup> Here application is informed by the narrative details. However, in Webb's commentary on Ruth he writes that the main themes of each chapter are God 's invitation to return to him, his kindness and rest (especially to outsiders), and redemption.<sup>405</sup> While this overlaps with the ingathering of the nations, many of the main themes are not addressed in Goldsworthy's search for BT links. This is an example of BT concerns being read into exegesis, not the other way around.

Another example is seen in his example of Leviticus 11.<sup>406</sup> Here Goldsworthy explains that it takes some work to understand legal genres and their relationship to grace. Additionally, he queries if we should preach this at all considering Acts 10:15 announces there are no longer clean and unclean foods? He knows the passage does testify to Christ and argues it should be seen in the context of Leviticus 11-16, which is all about 'clean-unclean and holy-profane'.<sup>407</sup> This explores the concept of holiness, which 'is a helpful antidote to the popular

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<sup>400</sup> It should be noted that Goldsworthy says that '*Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* was not intended to be and could not be, a handbook on the practicalities of how to preach from each of the various genres. That would require perhaps a follow-up volume' in Graeme Goldsworthy, 'More on preaching and Biblical theology from Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Briefing* 280, (2002):11. However, for our purposes it will still show if the details of the passages of varied genres inform the application he chooses.

<sup>401</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 135.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-146.

<sup>405</sup> Barry G. Webb, *Judges and Ruth: God in Chaos*, (Preaching the word, ed. Kent Hughes, Illinois: Crossway, 2015), 247-278.

<sup>406</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 161.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

notion that the meaning of the word “holy” is self-evident.’<sup>408</sup> Again, the specifics of the passage do inform the application.

What does this tell us about his use of the hermeneutical spiral? Goldsworthy acknowledges different genres and engages with them in different ways. His emphasis is on finding BT links but the basic passage details inform these links. Although sometimes there is evidence of him reading BT concerns into the text.

#### *General observations from the rest of his work*

We have looked at three works in detail. Now we will briefly survey his work in general. *According to Plan* shows Goldsworthy can articulate the process of exegesis clearly. However, the lack of in depth exegesis in most of his work is something worth noting. Of course, an argument from silence is not sufficient, but it is reasonable to ask why if he thinks exegesis is important he has not used more in-depth exegetical analysis to explore some of his key assertions, such as the centrality of the kingdom of God.

When Reid surveys his sermons he concludes that he enters the spiral through dogmatics and not in a way that seem provisional.<sup>409</sup> In fact, he says, he can locate texts well in their literary context but rarely moves through its ‘plain sense’ systematically in a genre sensitive manner.<sup>410</sup> He adds, ‘Although a sermon is not really the place to raise such matters, there is no significant indication that matters such as grammar, figures of speech, word studies, and the like have been pursued in any great depth.’<sup>411</sup> Instead he finds themes and moves to preaching on BT in a way that sometimes overwhelms the original.<sup>412</sup>

Our analysis of his sermons in chapter 3.1 held similar findings. For example, when his sermon on Psalm 136 was analyzed, Goldsworthy dealt with some literary aspects of מְסֻדָּה and its repetition through the psalm but didn’t use the details of the events in the psalm to specifically nuance this meaning.

#### *Conclusions*

In conclusion, we will now return to the original three criteria outlined to measure the extent to which the hermeneutical spiral functions in his hermeneutic. Firstly, is there an exegetical priority that underpins Goldsworthy’s work? That is, does the text speak from its original setting and does he employ a variety of tools to do this (e.g. various criticisms and

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>409</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 231.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 293.

gramatico-historical exegesis)? Overall he demonstrates exegetical competency, although his conclusions in his Proverbs commentary were not always explicitly exegetically grounded. However, his exegesis generally focuses on words, themes and inter-textual links rather than syntax, grammar or structure. Also, although he is good at placing the text in its historical context, there are not many examples of him explaining the meaning of the passage to the original audience. His exegesis is generally fairly basic and lacks details. This means, that while positively it does inform his application, it would benefit from being deepened especially in some areas (e.g. syntax and structure).

Secondly, does Goldsworthy use ST cautiously? Overall, ST and BT take up the bulk of his work. Admittedly this is understandable since he writes about BT. In this sense, it is acceptable that it takes up the bulk of his writing. However, this can be contrasted to Shead's biblical theological work *A Mouth Full of Fire*.<sup>413</sup> In this, Shead deals with the complexity of the relationship between theology, biblical theology and exegesis, but is unashamed of dedicating a large proportion of time to biblical exegesis.<sup>414</sup> Even though his book is in a biblical theological series (NSBT) the bulk of his work is careful, ordered and in-depth exegesis. This is because he argues theologians 'often extract ideas from Scripture and leave behind the messy incidentals of persons, places and times so as to construct well-organized general truths.'<sup>415</sup> He shows that it is possible to write about biblical theology and still spend the bulk of one's time in careful exegesis. It is very clear how Shead's biblical theological evidence derives from his exegesis, something that is less clear in Goldsworthy's work. He tends to extract ideas neatly without maintaining the 'messiness' that Shead protects.<sup>416</sup>

Finally, was there any evidence that exegesis modifies presuppositions? In his dissertation, he allows the exegetical evidence to shape his thesis. Also, we see genre is taken to account in *Preaching the whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (only basically though). However, outside of this it is difficult to find direct examples and also examples of his overall structure being shaped or changing over time.

We have shown that using a framework of well-considered presuppositions is not problematic per se. In fact, the benefits of this challenge the postmodern low view of ST. However, within any framework the hermeneutical spiral is indispensable. Furthermore, this should be combined with firm exegetical foundations. Goldsworthy's work does show evidence of using the hermeneutical spiral. However, it would benefit from deeper engagement

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<sup>413</sup> Andrew G. Shead, *A Mouth Full of Fire: The word of God in the words of Jeremiah*, (NSBT; Nottingham, Apollos, 2012).

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 22.

with the spiral. In particular paying more attention to more details in the parts (exegesis) and how they inform the whole (BT and ST) to balance out the emphasis on how the whole informs the parts.

### **Section three: Are there benefits of macro approaches? Preaching Grace**

So far this chapter has concentrated on managing the dangers of macro approaches. However, we have not explicitly analyzed potential benefits of macro systems. Here we will focus on how keeping texts firmly in the overall macro structure of God's salvific work it allows the interpreter to 'preach grace.' Goldsworthy argues that 'Good exegesis of a limited text without its wider context' turns 'the text into law without any visible grace.'<sup>417</sup> He argues that his method stops fragmentation that leads to moralization.

If this is true, then it must be included in a critique of his work. This is because, firstly, it would counteract some of the criticisms laid out against his work and macro schemas. Secondly, it would offer many Bible teachers a valuable tool for preaching and teaching. Many preachers today are seeking ways to preach grace.<sup>418</sup> For example, Keller's recent and popular work, *Preaching*, says,

Every time you expound a Bible text, you are not finished unless you demonstrate how it shows us that we cannot save ourselves and that only Jesus can... we must preach the gospel every time and not just settle for general inspiration or moralizing.'<sup>419</sup>

Since this is seen as desirable, in this last section we will examine if Goldsworthy's macro approach is in fact a good way to facilitate preaching grace.

To do this, firstly, we need to explore Goldsworthy's definition of moralization since he believes this prevents preaching grace. Next we will look at how exactly his macro approach protects the objective work of God and the benefits of this for doctrine and maturity. Lastly, we will ask if under this high view of God's work, Goldsworthy has a high enough view of the moral or subjective. In particular, we must address if moralization and preaching grace are exclusive of each other or if there is a deeper relationship between the two. Lastly, we will look at the type of implications Goldsworthy gives in his work and assess how he preaches grace and if this is effective.

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<sup>417</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 20.

<sup>418</sup> For example, see Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (Great Britain, Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), 47-69 or Bryan Chapell, *Christ-centred Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1994), 39-40.

<sup>419</sup> Keller, *Preaching*, 48.

### 3a. Goldsworthy's treatment of moralization

It is a difficult task to describe Goldsworthy's approach to moralization because, at first glance, he appears to hold mixed views. In some instances he is very negative about them and other times he allows them.<sup>420</sup> Additionally, he explores the topic from many different angles with varying terminology. For example, 'indicative and imperative,' 'prescriptive and descriptive' and 'exemplary or character studies and salvation history.' While these terms are obviously not synonymous, they overlap and illuminate different aspects of 'moralization.' For Goldsworthy, the over-arching category that holds 'moral' readings together appears to be 'subjective interpretation'. This could be summarized as follows:

<b>Objective interpretation</b>	<b>Subjective interpretation</b>
Theocentric (God's work)	Anthropocentric (our work)
Salvation history	Exemplary / character study
Descriptive	Prescriptive
Indicative	Imperative

Therefore, to assess his work we will first look at his treatment of each of the three sub-heading relationships before looking at the overarching categories of objective and subjective interpretation. Then we can conclude how exactly he avoids moralizing passages.

#### *Salvation history (or typology) and character / exemplarily studies*

Exemplary or character studies are a subset of moralization where biblical characters serve as examples to the reader rather than their contribution to and place in salvation history.<sup>421</sup> Although Goldsworthy talks about exemplary approaches in contrast to salvific historical ones, in practice he uses his typological schema to control exemplary readings.<sup>422</sup> Characters are more important for their typological role in pointing to Christ rather than their direct example.<sup>423</sup> Additionally he argues that without going through Christ, OT characters

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<sup>420</sup> For example, in *Christ-Centred*, 30 says Goldsworthy doesn't think we need to ban character readings altogether, yet in *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 124, he says without preaching grace explicitly you fall at best into 'wishful and pietistic thinking', and at worst into 'demonic...Christ denying legalism'.

<sup>421</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 141.

<sup>422</sup> See Goldsworthy's engagement with Greidanus' 'landmark study' on the Dutch Reformed Church controversy of the 30s and 40s in *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 140-143, and also in *Christ-Centred*, 32.

<sup>423</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 31-32.

become 'mere illustrations' of NT truths.<sup>424</sup> This fundamentally misinterprets scripture and he says non-biblical material could essentially be used for the same effect.<sup>425</sup>

Despite this, Goldsworthy permits exemplary readings saying it is not a matter of choosing 'either' them 'or' typology.<sup>426</sup> Rather, he argues that his approach doesn't exclude exemplary studies, 'but rather provides the context that controls it.'<sup>427</sup> So he permits character studies when they are controlled by his macro structure.

This approach is not sufficient for critics like John McClean who reviewed *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*.<sup>428</sup> He finds the second half of the book 'problematic,' especially in terms of its lack of exemplary preaching.<sup>429</sup> Goldsworthy defends himself saying that John thinks he stops with Christological fulfillment, but that is unfair. He says that one must show how a passage is 'speaking first and foremost about Christ. Then, and only then, can it speak to us about ourselves.'<sup>430</sup> This debate gives some insight into how Goldsworthy believes the macro schema controls exemplary readings. That is, they must be Christological.

One objection to this is that several NT passages don't behave this way (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1-11, Heb 11 and Jas 5). McClean and Reid claim this is proof of the validity of non-Christological exemplary readings. Goldsworthy is aware of these passages but says we still must start with Christ.<sup>431</sup> We will return to this issue later.

#### *Descriptive and prescriptive*

This refers to narrative and the dilemma of what is plain description and what is prescribing what to do. Goldsworthy often refers to this as 'the-warts-and-all' problem.<sup>432</sup> That is, the narrative has a 'brutal realism' as God works through people's weaknesses to show his grace.<sup>433</sup> This makes it unclear what is 'good, questionable, ambiguous or bad.'<sup>434</sup> Furthermore, he raises the question of what person in a text is the right person to choose to identify with. Take for example David and Goliath. We often identify with David, but why not Goliath or more realistically, the Israelite crowd who were shrinking back in fear.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel and kingdom*, 26.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>426</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 30.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>428</sup> John McClean, 'Are we preaching the Bible' in *The Briefing*, 277 (2002); 11-13.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>430</sup> Goldsworthy, 'More on preaching and Biblical theology from Graeme Goldsworthy', 11.

<sup>431</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 32.

<sup>432</sup> For example see Goldsworthy, *Gospel and kingdom*, 25.

<sup>433</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 123.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>435</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 27.



Furthermore, these issues are not exclusive to the OT. Even though the NT is the closer to our contemporary situation, how much of the apostleship is unique and how much is to be imitated?<sup>436</sup> Goldsworthy refers to the example of the ‘lively’ discussion in 1960s of how much of Acts was normative (e.g. miracles).<sup>437</sup> Thus Goldsworthy rightly shows that this is a legitimate problem for *both* testaments. Others have also noted this. For example, Seitz adopted Child’s useful phrase ‘we are not prophets or apostles’.<sup>438</sup>

For this reason, Goldsworthy, avoids turning the narrative into imperatives saying, ‘It has been wisely said that biblical description is not a prescription.’<sup>439</sup> For him, details ‘help us see the human element and the impact that certain principles can have in people’s lives, without necessarily prescribing the way the principle should be applied in our own lives.’<sup>440</sup>

Reid thinks denying the imperatival force of narrative is an example of a macro approach flattening out genre. That is, we are forced to ignore the ‘feel’ of ‘the original dynamic of the text and its imperatival force’ reducing it to theological propositions.<sup>441</sup> In view of these issues, we must investigate whether narrative is or should be imperatival. Doriani (ironically) illustrates how narrative is imperatival with a story. That is, a husband sets aside his professional aspirations to nurse his wife during a long illness. To Doriani, this is more effective than ‘a hundred imperatives about fidelity.’<sup>442</sup> Thus, stories powerfully change behavior because, by nature, ‘Humans are imitators’.<sup>443</sup> Narrative theologians rightly perceive that behavior comes from more than consulting law or rational decisions.<sup>444</sup>

Furthermore, MacIntyre writes that man is ‘essentially a story-telling animal’.<sup>445</sup> This means, the question of what he does is integrally linked to the prior question of what overall story or stories one is part of.<sup>446</sup> In fact, MacIntyre claims that the imputed characters we play are so integral to identity that we need narratives to survive. He says,

‘Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutters in their actions and in their words. Hence there is no way to give us an understanding of any

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<sup>436</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 234.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>438</sup> Christopher Seitz, *The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible* (Studies in theological interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 93-94.

<sup>439</sup> Goldsworthy, *Prayer*, 11.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>441</sup> Reid, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 370-371.

<sup>442</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2001), 161.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>445</sup> Alisdair MacIntyre, ‘Virtues, Unity of Human Life, and Tradition’, in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 101.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources.’<sup>447</sup>

Thus narratives provide effective motivation, but also the framework to understand ourselves by.

This means that Goldsworthy’s view of imperative is potentially too narrow. He sees it primarily as commands, but narrative theologians show us that this is reductionistic. Again, we will return to if his application is sufficient in later sections.

#### *Indicative and imperative*

The third way Goldsworthy tackles moralization is through the categories of ‘indicative and imperative’. For him, the indicative is the gospel, and faith and repentance are the imperative.<sup>448</sup> Imperatives must spring from the indicative. For this reason, if you move from an OT text to an imperative without bypassing the gospel indicative,

‘At best, this fails to show the genuine connection between text and hearer. At worst, it results in moralizing, distorted pietism, and even gross legalism.’<sup>449</sup>

This also applies to the NT. He gives the example of a sermon series on a NT letter (many of which begin with indicative and end in imperative) commenting that ‘Paul wasn’t anticipating a three-week gap between his exposition of the gospel and his defining of the implication of the gospel in our lives.’<sup>450</sup> For many listeners, this means the imperative will be disconnected from its indicative gospel context. Even NT imperatives need their gospel context to prevent legalism.<sup>451</sup>

Goldsworthy makes several valid and important points here. We will use Romans 6 to highlight these. Romans 6:1-14 is insightful because it gives an example of the indicative and imperative closely intertwined together.

The majority of commentators hold that Romans was written to a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.<sup>452</sup> Paul wanted these two groups to be unified for the sake of the mission of the church.<sup>453</sup> As a mixed congregation this church grappled with the relationship of grace and the place of the law and Romans 6:1 begins with an objection that, in light of grace, logically, if they sin more, grace would multiply. This wrestles with the question

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 101-102.

<sup>448</sup> Goldsworthy, ‘Biblical theology in the Local Church and Home’, 42.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>450</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 235.

<sup>451</sup> Goldsworthy, *Prayer*, 14.

<sup>452</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1996), 12.

<sup>453</sup> Ash, *Teaching Romans: Volume one*, 27-37.

of where imperatives fit with the indicative of contributing nothing to salvation. Should they abandon them, lest they make God's work less grand? Paul answers with the strong *μὴ γένοιτο*, an idiom that shows Paul's repulsion at a thought.<sup>454</sup>

This is followed by the 'indicative' section (vv. 1b-11) explaining the church's identity. The main theme repeated throughout is that they have died to sin and become alive in Christ. This has been achieved through union with Christ or being baptized into him (*εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦ*). Baptism is used in a shorthand way to refer to the conversion experience and initiation into the body of Christ.<sup>455</sup> Through this process the believer now participates with Christ in burial, death and resurrection. That is, his work becomes their own. They are saved not by their work, but by Christ's work as their representative.

After explaining their identity in Christ, as risen and sinless people, Paul then commands them in verses 12-14 not to let sin reign in their bodies. How can Paul tell them to do what Christ has already done for them? It is a call 'to "put into action" the new power over sin described in vv. 1-11'.<sup>456</sup>

This encapsulates the 'be who you are' ethic.<sup>457</sup> But more than this, it has a clear eschatological element that looks forward to the new creation. Cameron describes it as although they have a new identity, it can take a while for them to 'catch up' and inhabit this freedom.<sup>458</sup> They won't achieve this fully until the new creation fully arrives. Thus there is a forward looking or teleological element to the passage. Teleology is a concept from ancient philosophy where philosophers noted that different parts of nature were designed to serve different purposes and they acted in line with these.<sup>459</sup> For the church in Rome, their purpose is being alive to Christ and dead to sin, which is the set *telos* they are growing into. It is this natural teleology that explains how imperatives fit with the indicative reality. Imperatives show their identity and who they are in Christ's new creation.

So in summary, this example from Romans shows how the indicative flows to the imperative. If the direction were reversed, the imperative would be futile. Moo writes, 'One may as well tell a drowning person to swim to shore as tell a person who is under sin's

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<sup>454</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1996), 482.

<sup>455</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 354 -355.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>457</sup> William D. Dennison, 'Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics' *CTJ* 14, no. 1 (1979), 72.

<sup>458</sup> Andrew J. B. Cameron, *Joined-up Life: A Christian account of how ethics works*, (Nottingham, InterVarsity Press, 2001), 98.

<sup>459</sup> For example, the famous example is Aristotle, who said an acorn's *telos* is to be an oak tree. Michael Hill, 'Theology and ethics in the letter to the Romans' in *The Gospel to the nations: Perspectives on Paul's mission*, (ed. By Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson; Leicester, Apollos, 2000), 251.

mastery not to let sin reign.’<sup>460</sup> We also can confirm that idea that although the relationship is inseparable, yet we still need to maintain a distinction between them. God’s work in Jesus is not something they contributed too, just something they participate in through union with Christ. This fits with Goldsworthy’s approach.

However, one question arises. Goldsworthy defends the importance of the indicative, but never explicitly defends the importance of the imperative. What would happen in Romans 6 if there were no imperatives? The imperative shows that the future new creation has broken in and is true reality now. That is,

‘Doing the works of righteousness (imperative) is a witness and testimony by the believer to the covenant community and to the world of the actual historical death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ (indicative). The imperative describes to the believer the kingdom way of life which he has by virtue of his union with Christ.’<sup>461</sup>

It shows the historical impact of Jesus’ death in bringing something new. In the case of the church in Rome, it brought about a unified and justified group of diverse people to spread God mission. Thus while we don’t want our eschatology to be over-realized, the lack of imperatives now is a form of under-realized eschatology. It downplays the fact that through the Spirit a Christian is fundamentally changed, even if ‘the significance of this change may not be immediately obvious’.<sup>462</sup> In light of this we see that we need to uphold the imperative. Again we will return to determine if Goldsworthy focuses enough on the imperative in his work later.

### *Objective and Subjective*

The overarching category that Goldsworthy uses is objective and subjective (moral) approaches to Scripture. He rightly argues that we need BT to start with God’s works.<sup>463</sup> It is the macro schema that upholds the objective story. While Goldsworthy is obviously very positive about the objective approach, unsurprisingly he is relatively negative about subjective readings. He often refers negatively to people who come to a text asking what it says ‘about me’.<sup>464</sup> His main issue is that we need to ask what it says about Christ, not us.<sup>465</sup> We need to consider the objective story, not the subjective.

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<sup>460</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 381.

<sup>461</sup> Dennison, ‘Indicative and Imperative’, 72.

<sup>462</sup> Con Campbell, *Paul and union with Christ: An exegetical and theological Study* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 377.

<sup>463</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, ‘A Biblical-theological perspective on prayer’, *SB/T*, 10/4 (2006), 15.

<sup>464</sup> For example, Goldsworthy, ‘Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics’, 4 and ‘Biblical Theology in the Local Church and Home’, 41-42.

<sup>465</sup> Goldsworthy, ‘Biblical Theology in the Local Church and Home’, 42.

Goldsworthy argues that failing to do this can lead to a number of problems. For example, subjective readings can distort theology.<sup>466</sup> They begin with our problems and easily lead to legalism and emotional blackmail.<sup>467</sup> They open the door to self-indulgence.<sup>468</sup> This is all due to our 'cursed self-centredness' which means we can easily move from legitimate subjectivity to sinful subjectivity.<sup>469</sup> He claims that we are all legalists at heart which means moralization gives us a sense of control and fundamentally misunderstands the depravity of sin and reduces the law to 'the level of our competence.'<sup>470</sup> He even calls subjectivism a cancer that has 'threatened the very existence of true biblical religion' since Adam's rebellion.<sup>471</sup> For Goldsworthy, any focus on the human elements in Scripture is highly susceptible to distortion.

He does push back on this negativity saying a focus on our responsibility is not 'entirely misplaced.'<sup>472</sup> In fact, it may be,

'generated by a commendable conviction that the Scriptures are practical, and by a desire to live lives that are pleasing to God. Or it may be a habit born from the correct perception that the Scriptures are indeed God's way of teaching us about ourselves.'<sup>473</sup>

For him, the issue is that it is back-to-front. We have to start with what Scripture says about God.<sup>474</sup> This is the real issue, not the subjective is bad. Of course, scripture applies to us; it's just that we must go through God's objective work in Christ before moving to us. He says,

'A spiritual "big brother" of mine many years ago said to me, "If you want to get your theology right, always start with God and work down to us," Sound wisdom!'<sup>475</sup>

However, a comment should be made here. That is, after hearing that focusing on application can lead to emotional blackmail, legalism, self-indulgence, arises from sin and distorts theology - that task of application seems overwhelmingly terrifying. How do we know if we have spent enough time seeing what it says about God first? Goldsworthy does not answer this or give many examples.

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<sup>466</sup> See the example in Goldsworthy, 'A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Prayer', 17. Here Goldsworthy says moralization leads to the logic that prayer changes God.

<sup>467</sup> Goldsworthy, 'A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Prayer', 15.

<sup>468</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', 4.

<sup>469</sup> Goldsworthy, 'A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Prayer', 19

<sup>470</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 118.

<sup>471</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology in the Local Church and Home', 49.

<sup>472</sup> Goldsworthy, 'A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Prayer', 18.

<sup>473</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics', 4.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>475</sup> Goldsworthy, 'A Biblical-theological Perspective on Prayer', 15.

## Conclusions

From this survey, we can conclude a number of things about Goldsworthy's view of moral readings. He is concerned to protect Scripture's voice. He notes the many ways that moralization has the potential to distort Scripture's key message, that is, salvation by grace alone. However, he is in the business of application, so he knows that there must be a right way to apply Scripture also. This shows the complexity of keeping the whole biblical message in line with the parts. Since this is not a simple task, Goldsworthy's view of moralization is complex. For Goldsworthy, rather than things being right or wrong, it is all about right emphasis, priorities and right relationships. This is a useful place to start, but also vague.

Also, this survey also raised questions. For example, how does God's story become ours? Should every character study be Christological in light of the NT data? And lastly, how can we ever rightly talk about our subjective role in the Christian life? To begin to answer these questions we will begin by articulating clearly why exactly we need to protect the objective. Seeing what would be lost will enable us with caution to then describe the role the subjective plays, and to assess Goldsworthy's method in light of this.

### 3b. The benefits of Goldsworthy's protection of the objective

Goldsworthy rightly argues that God's work for us through salvation history establishes an ontological priority. When reflecting on the five *solas*, he says of *sola gratia* that,

Grace speaks of the priority of God's being as the source of all things and the measure of all things. In philosophical terms this is a matter of ontology. That God shows grace also demonstrates that recipients are in need of it.<sup>476</sup>

This ontological priority is contrasted to the principle of *sola fide* that shows the ontological inability of the sinner.<sup>477</sup> Since humanity cannot contribute to real salvation history, their subjective reality is dependent on the ontological reality of God. Thus the ontological has priority because it is the source of life and the subjective depends upon it.

Furthermore, this is important for the doctrine of salvation. Goldsworthy often speaks in terms of justification and sanctification or renewal (although it was previously noted that renewal is a better category for this) and protects the distinction between the two. One is Christ's unique completed work for us and one is the Spirit's unfolding work in us. Although they are related in the sense that one comes from the other, they must also be kept distinct to

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<sup>476</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centred*, 47.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-50.

prevent contributing to salvation. The gospel must have a distinction from its fruit.<sup>478</sup> This prevents the gospel from becoming blurred and assurance being eroded.<sup>479</sup>

Protecting the priority of grace is also important for real Christian growth. Goldsworthy knows maturity comes from the gospel. When we split evangelistic (gospel) sermons and 'teaching' sermons (what to do), it gives the impression that you are saved by grace but stay a Christian by works.<sup>480</sup> However, he knows that it is the gospel that both converts and grows Christians.<sup>481</sup>

In light of this, Goldsworthy's seemingly low view of the subjective makes sense. It is right to grapple with the question of whether we should talk about the subjective at all. The greatest Christian minds have struggled with the place of works in the light of grace throughout the ages. But, of course, the conviction that works are still important in the Christian life drives us to ask how we might rightly talk about the subjective within this framework of protecting all the important things above.

### *3c. Does Goldsworthy get the subjective right?*

In light of the importance of objective readings, we will now return to the questions raised from surveying Goldsworthy's approach above. Two main questions are pertinent.

Firstly, how can we rightly talk about the subjective while upholding the objective? While we have no intention of disputing that a distinction must be maintained between Christ's salvific work and our work, we will also seek a deeper connection between the two, which may be missing from Goldsworthy's approach. This will allow us to measure if Goldsworthy is positive enough about the subjective. To explore how to understand the right place of subjective moral readings we will use the example of imitation. This is because in Scripture, the topic of 'imitation' can both be objective (being conformed to the image of Christ) and subjective (imitating Christ or others). That is, Christ is the one who fundamentally changes people to be like him through his work on the cross and his resurrection, yet alongside this there are numerous commands to imitate him. Therefore, it should be fruitful to examine the relationship between the two, especially because it overlaps with the topic of exemplary interpretation.

Secondly, in light of our findings, we will return to Goldsworthy's belief that all exemplary readings must be Christological. Many NT passages seem to call the reader to imitate Paul (1 Cor 4:6; 11:1) and others (e.g. Hebrews 11). Is this evidence that imitation can

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<sup>478</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 4.

<sup>479</sup> Goldsworthy, 'Biblical theology in the Local Church and the Home', 42-45.

<sup>480</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 125.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

extend to others without being Christological? This will finally return us to McClean and Reid's argument that Goldsworthy's method is simply not how the NT acts.

### *Imitation in Scripture*

Firstly, we begin by looking at the biblical concept of imitation. Objectively, Scripture speaks about humans being conformed to Christ's image. In the first chapters of Scripture we learn that humanity was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). This is a key aspect of their anthropology.<sup>482</sup> As God's representative image bearers, they are commissioned to rule creation in a way that glorifies Him.<sup>483</sup> However, Genesis 3 changes their ability to represent God's image and rule rightly, although Genesis 9:6 makes it clear this image is still innate to humanity even post-fall.<sup>484</sup> Christ however, is the perfect image of God (Col 1:15) and exact representation of his being (Heb 1:3). He fulfilled the Adamic commission to rule perfectly and through this, part of the salvific story is told in terms of humanity being conformed to his image (Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18, Phil 3:20-21). This work is clearly done by God through Christ's resurrection where the church will be raised with him to rule in the new and perfect creation. Thus the whole body of Christ is being built up into its 'head' and becoming like him (Eph 4:12-15) for the eschatological purpose of summing all things up in Christ to bring glory to God (Eph 1:10-12). In short, Christ's work for humanity restores them as perfect image bearers who bring glory to God. Therefore, while many often think of imitation as a subjective thing we do, Goldsworthy is correct to see it first and foremost as an objective reality. Christ conforms Christians to his image. Without his work on the cross and resurrection, subjective imitation would not be possible.

However, this does not stop the Bible speaking about this subjective reality of imitation *at length*. Cameron notes that there are many NT exhortations to follow Christ, including, Romans 15:1-3, Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 2:6, 3:16, 4:17 and Hebrews 12:2-3.<sup>485</sup> These passages address specific churches in specific situations, but considering how these exhortations are repeated at length throughout the NT, it shows that there is some general truth about this that applies to the wider church. That is, they are exhorted to be like Christ.

Cameron argues that despite the issues and dangers associated with imitation, this exhortation is present for a reason. It expands our moral imagination and not so much ask us what Jesus would do, but what we would do in Jesus' life. That is, they cause us to adopt Jesus'

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<sup>482</sup> G. L. Bray, 'Image of God' in *NDBT* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Downers Grove, Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 575.

<sup>483</sup> Anthony A. Hoekama, *Created in God's Image*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 66-68.

<sup>484</sup> Hoekama, *Created in God's Image*, 15-17.

<sup>485</sup> Cameron, *Joined-up Life*, 211-212.



identity as our own.<sup>486</sup> This is in line with Goldsworthy's argument that the focus should be on us *in Christ*, not Christ *in us*. Through our union with Christ our subjective reality begins to align with the objective order that Jesus has established through his death and resurrection.

In light of these exhortations, it is important to note that being conformed into Christ's image is not purely a future event. It will be consummated at the resurrection of the dead, but it is the Spirit's present ministry that is bringing in or pointing to that new creation reality now. For example, Romans 8, a key passage about being conformed into Christ's image, talks at length about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is mentioned almost every two verses.<sup>487</sup> However, Moo rightly notes it is not so much teaching about 'the Spirit as such, but on what the Spirit does.'<sup>488</sup> That is, it gives assurance.<sup>489</sup> In this chapter there is assurance from suffering in the *present* because it shows us that the church in Rome were participating in Christ who went from suffering to glory. Suffering shows them that they we are on that same pathway to glory.<sup>490</sup> Of course Christian suffering is not salvific like Christ's but Peterson rightly says, 'We become more like Jesus when we learn to endure temptation, persecution and physical suffering, with patience and persistence, trusting in God for comfort and deliverance.'<sup>491</sup> While it is important to see the objective and subjective as separate (to stop works contributing to salvation), it is also important to see that the objective work of Christ is not just an abstract, 'out-there' reality but as something that impacts subjective experience, changing people in Christ-likeness.

In this light we should push back on Goldsworthy's negativity of the subjective role. His negativity is not unwarranted since it takes proper account of sin. However, while it upholds Christians as sinners it downplays the work of the Spirit in bringing in the new creation, even in the present. This connection through the Spirit allows us to uphold and defend the objective work of God, but also the importance of the subjective. Goldsworthy's work would benefit from more interaction with the Spirit in the present age.

#### *Are all exemplary readings Christocentric?*

The second issue we must address when considering subjective interpretation, is if imitation can extend beyond Christ to other saints. Goldsworthy sends slightly mixed messages on this. Above we saw that he argues to McClean we are only conformed to Christ (not Christ and Ruth etc.), but this seems to be in the context of salvation. Most of the time,

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>487</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 468.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., 468.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 468.

<sup>490</sup> Peterson, *Possessed By God*, 118.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 118.

he claims that it is not a matter of ‘either-or’, but rather what is primary and secondary.<sup>492</sup> To put it another way, exemplary readings are only valid if they go through Christ.<sup>493</sup> However, as we have seen, the problem with this is that, at first glance, several NT passages don’t seem to go through Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1-11; Heb 11:1-12:3; Jas 5).<sup>494</sup> Both Reid and McClean believe the NT breaks Goldsworthy’s rules and shows they are too restrictive, distorting scripture.

So, does the NT use character studies that are not Christ-centred? Although there are several examples, due to the limitations of this thesis we will only exegete Hebrews 11. We will ask if it is in fact an example of a NT passage drawing a ‘straight-line’ from the OT heroes to the readers of Hebrews. There are two reasons for choosing Hebrews 11. Firstly, it seems more frequently used for this argument than other passages. Secondly, for the same reason it was chosen in section 2 (Hebrews preaches the OT). Also, our analysis can flow out from the work already done on the book above.

In terms of locating Hebrews 11, it is in the latter part of the book embedded in an exhortatory section.<sup>495</sup> This section flows on from the main Christological heart of the book in chapters 5:1-10:18 about Christ fulfilling the priesthood and OT sacrificial system. In 10:26-12:29 the author turns his focus to enduring in faith.

Chapter 11 uses the OT as an *exempla list*. Like the ‘string of pearls’ in chapter 1, it is meant to accumulate large amounts of OT material in a manner that overwhelms and moves the reader.<sup>496</sup> This is attested to as a literary genre of classical antiquity that was meant for rhetoric persuasion.<sup>497</sup> The anaphoric use of the instrumental dative (Πίστει) is used 18 times in 40 verses and shows the chapters main theme is faith.<sup>498</sup> Here, as with elsewhere in Hebrews, faith is predominately associated with perseverance (4:2, 6:12, 10:36-39, 10:23).<sup>499</sup> Since it deals with a topical theme, some have argued that it is not an exemplary reading of a historical text.<sup>500</sup> Certainly the genre uses OT examples, but it is in a certain type of argument, which is important to note.

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<sup>492</sup> Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centred*, 30.

<sup>493</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, ‘The Pastor as Biblical Theologian’, in *Interpreting God’s Plan: Biblical Theology and the Pastor* (ed. R. J. Gibson; Explorations; Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 114.

<sup>494</sup> McClean, ‘Are We Preaching the Bible?’, 12.

<sup>495</sup> Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 64.

<sup>496</sup> Guthrie ‘Hebrews’, 923.

<sup>497</sup> Michael R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11: In Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Marcon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1988) 93.

<sup>498</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 561.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, 563.

<sup>500</sup> Van Dijk in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts*, (Kampen, Netherlands: J H Kok, 1970), 116.

Verses 1-2 define faith. The two words used, ὑπόστασις and ἔλεγχος, can have a *subjective* or *objective* sense.<sup>501</sup> Köster examines the use of ὑπόστασις in Hebrews and also its Greek usage elsewhere concluding that the subjective sense in 'untenable'.<sup>502</sup> Likewise, ἔλεγχος could be subjective (conviction) but since it complements ὑπόστασις it must be understood objectively as 'proof' or 'demonstration'.<sup>503</sup> The CSB translation upholds this objective sense with the translation, 'Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen'. The main idea is that even from verse one there is an emphasis on the objective over subjective that we generally find with exemplary readings.

Under this objective reality the various heroes' faith is 'attested to'. ἐμαρτυρήθησαν uses the passive voice showing that it is God who commends them.<sup>504</sup> Who are the heroes that God commends as witnesses? The passage covers a vast range of salvation history. The main line story of Scripture is covered from creation (key salvation history event) to the men who played key roles in covenants, particularly Abraham and Moses (Noah and David are briefly mentioned) to many other kings, judges and prophets. The list picks up pace which delivers 'a quick, stabbing verbal attack on the ears of the listeners' to show how extensive the range is that is being covered.<sup>505</sup> These figures are not simply demonstrating faith but showing how God's saving purposes worked out through them.<sup>506</sup> It is significant that the story of God's objective salvation history plays an important role in the chapter.

In light of this salvific historical focus we must ask if chapter 11 can really be understood standing alone as an exemplary reading. The transition of this chapter at the end of the chapter 10 and beginning of chapter 12 suggests that this is not the case.<sup>507</sup> Both these bookends refer to Christ, which is noteworthy because chapter 11 does not mention Jesus. Is this then evidence that chapter 11 is to be interpreted Christocentrically? To answer this, the function of each bookend will now be examined, exploring its relationship with chapter 11.

Hebrews 10:37-39 ends a warning section (10:26-39) that is meant to promote endurance. It ends with a composite quote that establishes a comparison between those who draw back and those who have faith (leading into the next section). The composite quote (Isa 26:20; Hab 2:3b-4) uses the LXX with some changes made by the author for a theological point. In particular, the definite article has been added to the present participle ἐρχόμενος

<sup>501</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 564.

<sup>502</sup> Helmut Köster, 'ὑπόστασις' in *TDOT* (ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Volume VIII; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 585-586.

<sup>503</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 329.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>505</sup> Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11*, 61.

<sup>506</sup> Peterson, 'God and Scripture in Hebrews', 134.

<sup>507</sup> Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 558.

that sharpens the messianic reading and renders it ‘the coming one’, an expression used by the early church for the Messiah.<sup>508</sup> This coming, righteous one lived by faith. Thus sitting at the top of the exempla list is Christ.

Then in chapter 12:1-2 the inferential *Τοιγαροῦν* links those who were attested to in chapter 11 to the cloud of witnesses in chapter 12. The hortatory subjunctive (*τρέχωμεν*) marks a shift in the indicative of the survey of salvation history to exhortation. This clearly demonstrates that the ‘examples’ of chapter 11 have a relevant application for the readers. So how is this indicative applied? The readers are motivated by the witnesses (like a crowd cheering a runner) but they are to fix their eyes elsewhere, that is, on Christ. He is the source (*ἀρχηγὸν*) or leader who went as a forerunner or example, but also the perfecter (*τελειωτὴν*) of faith. This links to his sacrificial work outlined in chapter 9-10 that perfects worshipers unlike the old system. Thus at the climax of the list is Jesus, the perfect example of faith but also the one whose work enables faith.<sup>509</sup> The righteous will endure by faith in him and his objective work in salvation.

The evidence from 10:37-39 and 12:1-2 is that this exemplar list can’t be understood apart from Christ and his work. Rather, it explores the repercussions of the Christological heart of the book. This explains why the survey of OT heroes in chapter 11 is punctuated by comments about how these great figures did not receive the promises (13-16, 39-40). Although they were approved, it was only later with the readers of Hebrews with ‘something better’ that they would be perfected. That is, they looked forward to Christ. Thus this passage allows the Jewish readers to be motivated by the OT saints to look to Jesus as the object of their faith.

In summary, Hebrews 11 does not present evidence that we can choose any OT story and draw a straight-line to ourselves without considering Christ. Such reasoning overstates the evidence. It doesn’t strictly adhere to Goldsworthy’s macro typological schema, but there are strong objective elements throughout, not least in the context of the book as a whole. The readers were to identify with the OT saints, but still in light of Christ as fulfillment of salvation history. Again it seems more in line with salvation history than typology and a Christotelic reading rather than a Christological one, which fits with our observations in previous chapters. However, we can conclude that Goldsworthy is right to protect the objective in exemplary readings.

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<sup>508</sup> Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 304.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

## Conclusions

In examining subjective readings we have seen that Goldsworthy does downplay the importance of the subjective and would benefit from a higher view of the Spirit's present work. A higher view of natural teleology and how the Spirit is bringing in the new creation now would enable him to have a higher view of imperatives as they submit to indicatives and protect God's work.

However, in examining a famous NT 'exemplary' reading it was shown that this does not give the interpreter permission to disconnect the subjective from the objective. This is where a macro approach is useful as it protects this connection. This shows the value of Goldsworthy's approach and challenges certain criticisms against him. In fact, in light of the importance of the objective, it would be disastrous to disregard the objective context of any subjective reading.

Thus an appropriate conclusion here is that the macro schema should be defended, although under this we must seek valid links to the subjective. Our final task is to turn to examples of Goldsworthy's practice of drawing out implications from the text. In light of the evidence above we suspect that there will be some elements lacking in his application, yet despite this we are seeking examples of how grace is preached and how 'relevant' this is.

### *3d. Assessing the 'relevance' of Goldsworthy's implications in practice*

How do we measure if an application is truly 'relevant'? Goldsworthy says, 'Relevance is relative.'<sup>510</sup> The idea of what makes a sermon 'good' changes from person to person. He says the danger with relevance is that the preacher may start with 'scratching where it itches' or felt needs.<sup>511</sup> In doing so we 'reduce the Christian message to a pragmatic one of helping us feel better'.<sup>512</sup> There are certainly dangers with being 'relevant,' but as we have seen above, application must be 'real' to show how Jesus' story changes ours through union with him. Therefore, while still being wise to the problems we must pursue relevance more than Goldsworthy licenses.

So again we ask, what then makes something relevant? There are a few common ways people talk about 'relevance'. These will be addressed below.

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<sup>510</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible*, 61.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

*Contextualization: speaks to our present context*

We have seen previously that it is good and right to stand back after exegesis and biblical theology to consider how to express biblical truths in systematic ways relevant to our time. This is simply learning faithful 'God speak' that is intelligible and understandable to our contemporaries. The danger with contextualization is that it will impose foreign concerns upon the message in a way that changes it, but as we have seen before, the use of a hermeneutical spiral and substantial exegesis can protect against this.

*Concrete: Changing behavior*

The implications of the text should cover both aspects of thinking and doing, especially since the two should be connected. For example, financial generosity should be based on knowledge of Jesus' generosity to us. Without this knowledge it easily becomes legalism but without the action it is questionable if the person has understood Jesus at all.<sup>513</sup>

*Moving: It works on the heart*

This raises the concern that the preacher is being emotionally manipulative. However, when based on true doctrine, it is right to expect Scripture to move us to feel something. Bolt says that 'brain science' informs us that 'it is quite clear that learning is not just cognitive, by way of a rational mind, and it is essential to good learning to engage the emotional mind.'<sup>514</sup> Yet it is not just science that tells us to use emotion in teaching. In *The Religious Affections*, Jonathan Edwards gives extensive evidence from Scripture that 'true religion lies much in the affections'.<sup>515</sup> Edwards' description of 'affections' is not synonymous with emotions (although they overlap) but describe one's inclination, will or heart.<sup>516</sup> It is what a person loves or what drives them. Thus a sermon should move people emotionally and interact with their loves and drives. Peterson writes, 'A faithful application of the Scriptures in congregational gatherings, through teaching, singing, praying and other ministries, will continue to move our hearts in love towards God and towards one another.'<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Keller, *Preaching*, 161.

<sup>514</sup> Peter G. Bolt, 'Touching the Emotions: Preaching the Gospels for Divine Effects' in *True Feelings: Perspectives on Emotions in Christian Life and Ministry* (ed. Michael P. Jensen: Nottingham, Intervarsity Press, 2012), 208.

<sup>515</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, (Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1746), 27.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>517</sup> David G. Peterson, 'Together with Feeling: Corporate Worship and the Emotions' in *True Feelings: Perspectives on emotions in Christian life and Ministry* (ed. Michael P. Jensen: Nottingham, Intervarsity Press, 2012), 252.

Each of these three types of ‘relevance’ are good and right. One should not shy away from good rhetoric and passion, exegesis, their audience and speaking plainly and practically to their situations. However, the argument above has outlined that the most important part of applying a text is that it preaches grace. And grace is key to preaching each of these categories well. Grace is the real answer to our modern problems and concerns.<sup>518</sup> Grace lies behind both true behavioral change and expressions of love and joy. Therefore, a sermon could be practical, passionate and address a relevant situation, but without grace, it would not be relevant at all. Yet at the same time, to preach grace in an unintelligible, abstract and purely logical way would not necessarily yield relevance either. Relevance is applying grace specifically, emotionally and practically to a listener.

We will now look at examples from Goldsworthy’s work to assess the following:

1. If and how he preaches grace
2. If he shows evidence of understanding the listeners context
3. If he is practical and concrete
4. If he tries to move people’s affections

#### *Analysis of examples of application from his work*

Two examples will be used. Firstly, we will return to the four sermons analyzed in chapter three. It was already identified that these were ‘light’ on application. We will reassess this here. Secondly we will examine *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*.

#### *Goldsworthy’s sermons*

To save repetition here, we will note up front that every one of Goldsworthy’s four sermons clearly preaches grace and clearly bases application on this grace. Under this we will now look for evidence of contextualization and practical and emotive application.

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<sup>518</sup> Keller argues that one must understand the ‘gospel’s versatility and centrality to life.’ He gives the example of how in his congregation he has people from Asian backgrounds who feel pressure from their parents to succeed, and others from an Anglo background who feel like their parents have let them down and failed them. When he preaches about ‘the one parental love you must have ... through the saving work of Jesus Christ’ he is able to address both of them. On one hand you can afford to forgive your parents if you are bitter and on the other you can let go of feeling like a failure because you have the approval of your heavenly father. Here two very different and real present problems are both solved by one Biblical solution. Keller, *Preaching*, 119-120.

#### Sermon 1: Numbers 10:1-9<sup>519</sup>

This sermon has a five-point application. Five points are not a memorable or moving way to communicate application. Each of these points focuses on thinking not behavior. There is no evidence of relating the passage to current concerns and it is not very emotive in the sense that it is quite heavy and theoretical.

#### Sermon 2: I Kings 8<sup>520</sup>

This sermon offers limited application. It offers some ways we can change our thinking to understand prayer but offers no concrete examples of current situations or behaviors that we should adopt in light of this. Again, it is not really emotive but rather, very heavy and theologically dense.

#### Sermon three: Proverbs 10<sup>521</sup>

Like the Numbers sermon, this sermon also finishes with five points of application. Again these are all intellectual and not concrete, behavioral or addressing our current context.

#### Sermon four: Psalm 136<sup>522</sup>

Like the previous sermons, this sermon does not have a hook to draw the listener in. It doesn't work at the emotions. In fact it says, worship is not 'warm fuzzies', which we saw above is part of understanding our affections. His main application revolves around praying corporate prayers from the prayer book. This is a concrete and practical example.

In conclusion, all four sermons clearly preach grace. They deal extensively with the objective background to subjective change, but then are light on relevant application. Goldsworthy is successful at preaching grace but then fails in many senses to express this in a clear, concrete and moving manner.

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<sup>519</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'The Trumpet Shall Sound – Numbers 10:1-9), chapel sermon delivered 03/10/1997 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1495>

<sup>520</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'The Dedication of the Temple and Solomon's Prayer – I Kings 8', Chapel sermon delivered 22/08/2000 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1533>

<sup>521</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Proverbs 10', chapel sermon delivered 03/04/1998 from the Moore Institutional Repository (Myrrh). Cited Nov 18, 2016. Online: <https://myrrh.library.moore.edu.au/handle/10248/1507>

<sup>522</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, 'Psalm 136', sermon delivered on 10/01/2016 at the 9am service. Part of the Summer Psalms Series at St Johns Wishart, QLD. Cited, Nov 18, 2016. Online: <http://www.stjohnswishart.com.au/sermons/psalm-136/>



### *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*

*Prayer and the Knowledge of God* provides an example of an objective based approach that protects against legalism. Many Christians find prayerlessness largely guilt inducing, and books written on the topic largely perpetuate that guilt by telling them how to fix the problem. Understanding this, Goldsworthy claims this is an example of where subjective experience must be 'interpreted by principles revealed in the word of God that are general, objective and divine'.<sup>523</sup> Otherwise prayer will be a 'legalistic burden that cannot promote godliness'.<sup>524</sup> To achieve this Goldsworthy surveys the main biblical story, tracing themes such as mediators and the temple through the three epochs in a way that shows how Christ fulfills each type.<sup>525</sup> This enables him to be our mediator, substitute and representative, who, through our union with him, is able to establish prayer between God and us.<sup>526</sup> Tracing the story shows how God's gracious work in Christ enables our subjective experience. He successfully shows that 'At root, the task of Christian living stems from the grace of God's actions for us in Christ.'<sup>527</sup> This can be contrasted to other approaches that tack grace on like an afterthought about what will happen if we fail in our prayer life rather than being a driving force to why we pray.

However, does the book then have sufficient implications flowing on from this? It is not until page 194 that Goldsworthy 'comes back to practicalities' for a small portion of the book.<sup>528</sup> However, the groundwork behind these implications is so extensive that they are compelling. They are not purely pop psychology or general wisdom, but truths with deep theological roots. Furthermore, they are very specific: addressing specific situations with which many readers would have had experience (e.g. written prayers, corporate prayers).<sup>529</sup> It uses grace to address our approach to each of these. In fact, the main relevant problem it addresses is the amount of guilt that prayerlessness yields. It does talk about specific behaviors and habits.<sup>530</sup> Also, he is passionate, pastoral and persuasive. Thus, this work is an example of relevant implications. In short, his book seems to do better than his sermons.

### *Conclusion: Are there enough implications?*

Analysis of Goldsworthy's use of implications is difficult. In one sense he gets it so right, but then often fails to really bring this into fruition. He preaches grace well but then lacks

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<sup>523</sup> Goldsworthy, *Prayer*, 182-183.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-161.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-191.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-208.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

practical, concrete and emotive application of this. This protects the objective but again, doesn't show how this is a real historical reality for people. However, this is not necessarily a fault of his structure, the macro structure could still be used but more subjective paths sought under this. His book on prayer is a prime example of this.

The problem when people accuse him of lacking implications is that it may give the impression that we should just be practical without being motivated by grace. In fact, when Goldsworthy does explore implications further, as in *Prayer and the knowledge of God*, the implications he draws out are far more powerful than the best rhetoric and moving preacher could ever achieve. This is because it actually changes people by God's grace, which is of course, the only way people can truly change.

#### **Section Four: Conclusions**

This chapter sought to address the validity of using a macro structure. This was because macro structures were the source of many issues in previous chapters. It was established that macro structures are unavoidable so there is little use arguing against their use. Rather the dangers must be managed through the hermeneutical spiral. Goldsworthy shows evidence of using the hermeneutical spiral, but would benefit from further engagement with it.

After considering the negatives, this chapter addressed benefits of using a macro structure. It was demonstrated that it allows passages to be kept in context in a way that allows clear preaching of grace. Despite finding of Goldsworthy's implications to be lacking, the gift of faithful preaching of grace from Scripture should not be undermined. This enables us to push back on the negativity to macro approaches and protect what is good about them.

## Chapter five: Final Conclusions

This thesis recognized the impact of Goldsworthy and the necessity of engaging with his biblical theological approach. It sought to assess its ability to *let Scripture speak* faithfully. To assess this, the rationale behind his work was examined. Three questions arose from this.

The first question was if Goldsworthy's Christ centre mutes the OT voice or details. This is especially relevant since he shies away from details because of their potentially negative impact on typology. In practice, Goldsworthy's sermons were found to be limited in the way they interact with details. This is tied to his Christ centred approach, which yields sermons that are very doctrinally and conceptually heavy. Christ centred approaches helpfully show the trajectory of Scripture as promise and fulfillment in Christ; however, they tend to overpower the details of the OT, undermining its authority. It was suggested that a Christotelic approach would give the details more room to breathe while still upholding the notion of fulfillment in Christ. Thus, while Goldsworthy's suspicion of details in interpretation enables one to grapple with the nature of typology, he overstates the neatness of the allegory-typology divide and in the process partly mutes the OT.

The second question that arose is if splitting the OT into two epochs de-historicized the prophets. Does it deal with the original context sufficiently when prophets are seen as primarily a way to confirm types? The technique of breaking the OT into two sections is not one that promotes historicity. This thesis does not dispute that typology is an important hermeneutical technique; rather it asked if it should be the overall umbrella concept that ties a macro structure together. Following the evidence of Hebrews, it was argued that progressive revelation is a better overall concept, since it allows the interpreter to deal more effectively with the original historical context of any given passage allowing Scripture's voice to be more clearly heard.

The third and last question was if a central theme creates a canon in a canon. This has clear implications for Scripture's ability to speak. A case study showed that Goldsworthy's schema does elevate some aspects over others and some theologically important concepts were sidelined. This raised the concept of biblical unity. It was not disputed that thematic studies are useful hermeneutical tools, but questioned if they should be the single unifying concept holding all Scripture together. It was found that unity primarily comes from Christ, not a central theme. He is the one who holds the complex strands of Scripture together in a way that all the polyphonic voices can be heard.

In each of these issues, the evidence showed that, to some extent, Goldsworthy's macro structure prevented Scripture speaking. Each mutes either the breadth or depth of

Scripture's voice in some way. Logically this leads us to ask what the underlying problem is. Is the macro structure essentially sound, but simply in need of some modification and shifting emphases? Or are macro structures inherently flawed and result in the muting of Scripture? This was the question that chapter four examined.

Firstly, chapter four sought to explain that macro structures are unavoidable, making it impossible to avoid them. We sought, then, to identify how we might use macro structures in a way that protects Scripture's voice. This happens through the use of the hermeneutical spiral. We then looked for evidence of Goldsworthy's use of this spiral, finding that it was used in a limited way. It was suggested that his work would benefit from grounding his conclusions in deeper exegetical work.

Chapter four showed that macro approaches are unavoidable and not necessarily bad. The analysis thus far seemed to address the dangers of such an approach, so to finish the chapter we sought to examine if there are any explicit benefits with such an approach. Goldsworthy's approach explicitly protects grace in interpretation. It allows preachers to protect the priority of God's work over theirs and motivate people through grace. Although some of Goldsworthy's application was shown to be lacking, at its core it is profoundly faithful to Scripture. It keeps the central message of the Bible central and protects against any fragmentation that distorts that. This aids the preacher to let Scripture speak clearly.

We now return to our question at the end of chapter three: Is it a matter of keeping Goldsworthy's approach with modifications or are macro structures inherently problematic and to be eschewed? This thesis has found that the benefits of such an approach are significant and the dangers can be managed. Thus, to answer the original question, does Goldsworthy's hermeneutical approach allow Scripture to speak? The answer is to some extent. However, with modification it could speak even more faithfully. Thus, this thesis suggests that his structure should be maintained with a shift in the following emphases:

1. from a Christocentric approach to a Christotelic approach;
2. removing the two epochs of the OT and seeing progressive revelation as the overall umbrella concept, rather than typology;
3. seeing overall unity coming through Christ rather than a single theme; and
4. more explicit exegetical engagement and more rigorous use of the hermeneutical spiral.

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