

Jesus and the Old Testament

Introduction

In 1907, an evangelist by the name of Rachel Sizelove received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and for six years was ministering in Springfield, Missouri with a nucleus of believers when she made the following prophecy, "There appeared before me a beautiful, bubbling, sparkling fountain in the heart of the city of Springfield. It sprang up gradually, but irresistibly, and began to flow toward the East and toward the West, toward the North and the South, until the whole land was deluged with living water."¹ This prophecy was made one year before the "brethren met together at Hot Springs Arkansas," which later formed the General Council of the Assemblies of God; it also took another five years for the selection of Springfield as the headquarters. For the AG denomination in its early development, this served as a key prophecy for the church that was fulfilled in the years to come as the headquarters for the denomination, which was engaged in the missionary task of sending out the living water to all points of the compass, as had been indicated in the prophecy. Much later, Rachel Sizelove said this, "But when I think of the vision the Lord brought before me of the waters flowing out from Springfield I have to say surely the General Council at Springfield, Missouri, is of God."² When the building was constructed in Springfield and a fountain was constructed, this prophecy was remembered. This is an example of predictive prophecy, the meaning of which was not immediately apparent but began to take shape and concrete form in the initial years of the AG denomination.

A central feature of the Gospels records is the commitment of Jesus and the evangelists to the ways in which Jesus relates to the OT by way of fulfillment, sometimes in the form of predictive prophecy. Occasionally, Jesus makes indirect reference to the way in which He fulfills the OT predictions; more frequently, the evangelists (notably Matthew) draw direct attention to the way and ways in which Jesus fulfills OT expectation. Jesus' fulfillment of the OT not only applies to the general fact of Jesus' coming but includes concrete details:

- Jesus' birth from a virgin (Matt. 1:23; Isa. 7:14)
- Birth in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:9; Mic. 5:2)
- Flight to Egypt and exodus from Egypt (Matt. 2:14; Hos. 11:1)
- Slaughter of Bethlehem's innocent children (Matt. 2:18; Jer. 31:15)
- His healing ministry (Matt. 8:16-17; Isa. 53:4)
- The Messianic mystery
 - His works (Matt. 12:15-21; Isa. 42:1-4)
 - His teaching (Matt. 13:10-16; Isa. 6:9-10)
- Triumphal entry on a donkey (Matt. 21:15; Zech. 9:9)

¹ Rachel A. Sizelove, "A Sparkling Fountain For the Whole Earth," *Word and Work*, Vol. LVI, # 6, June, 1934, pp. 1, 11, 12. C. E. Jones, "Sizelove, Rachel Artamissie," Stanley M. Burgess, Gary McGee, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), p. 788.

² Sizelove, p. 11.

Of the 41 explicit quotations from the OT in the book of Matthew, 37 of them are introduced by some form of a fulfillment formula, with variations of the wording, "in order that it might be fulfilled" (e.g., Matt. 21:4).

The NT writers regard the fulfillment of prophecy to be an essential element in the content and proclamation of the Gospel message (I Cor. 15: 3; Acts 2:24-28). The writers did not write from themselves or record their own views or experiences, "For the prophecy did not come in an earlier period by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter. 1:21). There are some specific references in the Gospels where Jesus Himself draws such explicit links; the most explicit statement is found in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). In Matt. 11:10, Jesus affirms that the Baptist is the messenger whom God promised to send before the Messiah (Mal. 3:1). In the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, Jesus explicitly refers to the rejected stone, which becomes the head of the corner (Mk. 12:10-11; Psa. 118:22-23). In His inaugural address at the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:1-2 and affirms, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). In his veiled message to the Baptist in prison (Matt. 11:1-6; Lk. 7:18-23), Jesus answers their question about whether He was the Coming One or not, He quotes from Isaiah 35:5-6; Isaiah 29:18; Isaiah 61. Jesus believed that a premature proclamation of His healing ministry and His Messianic Mission would hinder his own witness and thus he prescribed a period of "Messianic silence" (cf. Mk. 1:44; 3:11-12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, 30). Not until the public anointing by the Bethany woman (Mk. 14:3-11) and Jesus' open confession before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mk. 14:61-62) did the "Messianic silence" come to an end.

As far as the Gospel writers are concerned, since they write at a later period when there is no longer any need for concealment of Jesus as the Messiah who fulfills OT expectation. They freely use therefore, expressions such as: "Thus it was fulfilled," "as it was said," "as the Scripture says." The Messianic silence is now made public and open in a transparent manner. The Early Church in its reflection and preaching enlarges its own understanding and is enriched as people discover how various portions of the OT find fulfillment in Jesus' life and ministry:

- Christ is the prophet like Moses whom God chose to raise up unto Israel (Acts 2:22-23; Deut. 18:15-19)
- The Church offers praise to God for Jesus the anointed King of Psa. 2:1-2 (Acts. 4:25-26)
- Jesus is identified as the "Servant of God" $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ (Acts 4:27; Isa. 61:1), "the righteous one" (Acts 7:52; Acts 22:14; Isa. 53:11)
- Christ is to be Judge of the living and dead to whom "all the prophets bear witness" (Acts 10:42-43)
- Christ has poured out the Spirit (Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:23-32)

The affirmation of the Early Church that Jesus is the promised Messiah is all the more remarkable in that the promised glories of the Messianic age, so prominent in the OT, were not yet fulfilled in the Church's time period. The prophets announced that the "glory of the Lord would cover the earth as the water covers the sea" (Hab. 2:14) but the world continued on its present course. The OT poet announced that the Lord's anointed would smash the nations and ends of the earth with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:9), but imperial Rome still exercised its military might.

Isaiah had promised, "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age" (Isa. 60:15). Similarly, Isaiah said, "Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river and the wealth of the Gentiles like an overflowing stream" (Isa. 66:12). But where can such majesty and prosperity be found in the carpenter's son? Isaiah also prophesied that the violent aspects of nature itself would be transformed into peaceful relations, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them (Isa. 11:6ff.). All of these promises go unfulfilled; yet this is no real problem for the Early Church for it consciously witnesses to Jesus as the fulfillment of OT prophetic hope. For Jesus and for the writers of the New Testament, including the Gospel writers, Jesus fulfilled the OT hope in His person, His words and His works. It appears that the Jews were banking upon their Jewish hope, expressed through the apocalyptic writers of a new heaven and new earth. However, their outlook was anthropocentric, as they looked for Israel's happiness, joy, bliss and resolution.³ By way of contrast, the outlook of Jesus and the writers of the NT is theocentric; they affirm God's way in the midst of human history and look forward to the consummation of that purpose that has been fulfilled in Jesus. Their perspective included a fulfillment within history and a final consummation outside of human history. The manifestation of divine glory had occurred in Jesus (Jn. 1:14) but the final manifestation of the glory of God was still to come. Thus Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the "down-payment of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14). If it is possible to be simplistic, the Jews were looking for a consummation in earthly terms that would transform their current status. The early Christians witnessed to a real fulfillment of God's eternal Kingdom person in the person of Jesus—but a purpose that would include God's eschatological goal. Their outlook included both history and eschatology.

A word of caution is needed in terms of our particular attitude towards the Jews for their rejection of Jesus. Let us pretend for a moment that there was neither a New Testament nor the person of Jesus and that we were left with the Old Testament alone for the expectation of the Messianic person and the glory of the Messianic Age. If we were to look solely at the OT expectation, we would not come up with the person of Jesus whom we find in the Gospels. With the OT alone, we would be unable to envision the Messiah who is a carpenter, turned itinerant preacher, a man who gathered a small nucleus around himself, a healer and exorcist—who experienced rejection by his own people and the shameful death of a crucifixion. According to Deut. 21:22, the individual is put to death before he is hung on a tree. He is put on the tree apparently to show that he is dead and accursed by God (Deut. 21:23). Take for example, the idea of a resurrection on the third day. The OT never explicitly says that the Messiah would die and be raised up on the third day with a transformed existence.

The very fact that the OT is obscure is indeed a powerful witness to the truth of the NT; from a logical point of view, we would expect more one-to-one correspondence between the expected Messiah of the OT and the fulfillment in Jesus. Liberal critics have argued that the Early Church read all kinds of events back into the Gospel records in order to give the appearance of fulfilled Scripture. They content that the Early Church

³ Cf. Apocalyptic works of IV Ezra and II Baruch that reflect this triumphalism at various points.

believed that every prediction about the Messiah would be fulfilled, and thereby the Church invented narratives that would explicitly serve their purpose.

To counter this argument, one may say that if the early Christian community was intent on inventing links between the OT and Jesus, no doubt the community would have started with the OT picture of a conquering Messiah, a portrait of Jesus far different from that which we have in the Gospel records.

What we find is that the Gospel writers possess three things that interact with each other in a dynamic way: 1) the Old Testament, 2) the person and ministry of Jesus, 3) the Holy Spirit. The experience of the early Christians with Jesus coupled with the interpreting person of the Holy Spirit gave them the clue to understanding and interpreting the Old Testament. For example, look at the matter of the resurrection on the third day; the OT provides a couple of texts that are used in the NT:

For thou dost not give me up to Sheol,
Or let thy godly one see the pit.
Thou dost show me the path of life
In thy presence there is fulness of joy,
In thy right hand are pleasures for evermore (Psa. 16:10-11a)
And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah;
And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17)
For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish,
So will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
(Matt. 12:39-40)

No Jew, living in the first century, unaware of the person of Jesus, would conclude from these texts that there is an expectation of a Messianic person that would be raised from the dead three days after the crucifixion. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon looks at the Jesus event of the resurrection and in conjunction with the inspiring work of the Holy Spirit sees a link that is to be drawn from the Old Testament in Acts 2:25-28). His experience of the Risen Lord, coupled with the powerful activity of the Holy Spirit enables him to see the link with the OT:

For David says concerning him,
'I saw the Lord always before me,
for He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken,
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.
For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades,
Nor let thy Holy One see corruption.
Thou hast made known to me the ways of life,
Thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence. (Acts 2:25-28)

In a similar way, there is a reference to the thirty shillings for the betrayal, which is cited in Matt. 27:9-10, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." The text is from Zech. 11:12ff. (not from Jeremiah) and originally related to the treatment of the OT prophet by the prophet's contemporaries. There is no conceivable way that an OT person could read the text and see in them a prophecy of Judas' upcoming betrayal of Jesus for thirty shillings of silver. However, the preachers and writers of the Early Church are guided by the actual Jesus event, here by

the betrayal, and in concert with the Holy Spirit, reinterpret the OT event in the light of the Jesus story. In the time of the OT prophets, the purpose of God was spoken of in veiled language, but it was not until the coming of the Son that this secret was fully revealed (ἐφανερώθη—Rom. 16:25-26). The true interpretation of the future could not be known fully in the period of anticipation; God's purpose is known when salvation history is unfolded.⁴

When we reflect upon Jesus and the Evangelists in their attitude and use of the Old Testament, they operate on the presupposition of the basic unity of the Old Testament in that God speaks to His people whether the books are the prophets (major & minor), psalms, poetry, wisdom material, blessings and cursings, genealogy or historical narrative. The whole of the OT with all of its diversity is the Word of God, expressing the unified purpose of God, also anticipating the Messiah and Messianic Age. Thus, the NT writers draw clear links between the OT and its fulfillment. For example, Paul deals with the responsibility of proper financial compensation for the missionary in I Cor. 9:9-10:

For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak to us entirely for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope of a share in the crop?

In this passage, by an a fortiori argument,⁵ Paul asks his readers, "Given the fact that the Old Testament contains no explicit commandment concerning the need to pay the preachers or missionaries, can the text of Deut. 25:4 be construed to mean that the people of God have no responsibility for insuring their financial provision?" Paul's rhetorical answer is clear, "Of course not—they do have a responsibility." Here are people who treat their oxen decently and humanely because their oxen work for their well being. In a similar way, the people of God are to assume responsibility for those who work for their spiritual welfare. Paul works his way to the basic and underlying principle that transcends the letter of the scriptural injunction of feeding the working cattle. We tend to object to a type of arbitrary exegesis, wherein one moves from the argument of feeding oxen to sense a fulfillment in a prescribed payment of a preacher. However, Paul is able to do this because of the oneness of Scripture and the divine author that stands behind His Word.

The notion of fulfillment in the life of Jesus is built upon the implied necessity and divine will in that there is a vital and necessary connection between the OT and His own person and work. In this regard, Jesus frequently uses the impersonal verb "it is necessary" (δεῖ), which is often translated by the form "must." The "must" is in reality a "divine must/necessity" and is necessarily bound up with the intrinsic dynamic of the Divine Word:

- *It is necessary* for the Son of Man to suffer many things . . . (Matt. 16:21)
- *It is necessary* for Elijah to come first (Mk. 17:10; Mk. 9:11)
- *It is necessary* for wars to come as part of the part of the predicted time of affliction—labor pains (Matt. 24:6; Mk. 13:7; Lk. 21:9)

⁴ Cf. I Cor. 2:7-8; Eph. 3:5.

⁵ Another example of the a fortiori argument is found in Matt. 6:30, "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?"

- *It is necessary* for the Gospel to be proclaimed prior to the Parousia (Mk. 13:10)

Whatever God speaks must necessarily come to pass. This idea is vitally related to the Hebrew understanding of the divine word, which is a vital dynamic in human history, that assumes a life and vitality on its own once it is uttered: "Is not my word like a fire and like a hammer that breaks rocks into pieces" (Jer. 23:28-29); "So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it?" (Isa. 55:11). The prophetic and divine word is the means by which the promised event is made real. In I Peter 1:25, the same idea is expressed, "The Word of the Lord abides forever" (μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), which is a clear reference to Isa. 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever." Jesus Christ is the one who initiates the divine revelation. His life is governed by the divine revelation and will and serves as a living reality through the ages. This is not the "necessity/must" of Greek "fate", but the purpose of God who desires to establish personal relationships with individuals. The divine purpose is an eternal one; God's promises and warnings will reach their appropriate resolution and will be dependent upon the human response of people who are either ready to receive the divine promise or will reject the promise and thereby become objects of divine wrath.

Predictive Prophecy

Divine promises or divine threats, proclaimed through the prophets, which are fulfilled in the course of human history present themselves as predictive prophecies. Through the will of God, certain events are prophesied in the near or distant future. Thus, for example, the statement about the virgin conception in Matt. 1:23 ("young woman" *almah* in Hebrew, "young woman [whether married or unmarried], "virgin" παρθένος in LXX), is regarded as a promise that is fulfilled in the virginal conception of Jesus. Surely, Matthew does not mean that the prophecy that was originally given to Ahaz as a judgmental sign, was not initially concerned with the fate of Syria and Ephraim. However, when God makes a promise, His revelation is sure and He reveals that His purpose is not exclusively historical. Because of the Jesus event, the evangelist sees the purpose of God that ultimately points to the age of the Messiah. He reaches for the real purpose of God behind the historical prediction. By way of further illustration, Mark makes a summary statement that Jesus frequently spoke in parables (Mk. 4:34), while Matthew adds the statement that Jesus was fulfilling the message of Psa. 78:2, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 13:34-35). Originally, the saying in the Psalm was an utterance of Asaph, a worship leader in ancient Israel, summoning the people of God to worship, "Give ear O my people to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us" (Psa. 78:1-2). However, as Matthew renders the Psalm, he interprets it as a prophecy of what Jesus is to do, "indeed He said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet . . ." (Matt. 13:34-35).

Since Jesus and the Evangelists begin with the presupposition that God is the real author of the whole of the OT, it follows that prophecies of judgment and blessings can be interpreted in both a historical and a Messianic sense since God's purpose is unified. Therefore, what God says about a future historical event may also be related to His ultimate purpose of pointing to the Messiah and the accompanying Messianic Age. For example, Daniel's prophecy about the "abomination of desolation" (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) finds a fulfillment in the fearful picture of Antiochus Epiphanes IV of I Macc. 1:54; 6:7, an image which Jesus uses in the apocalyptic discourse (Matt. 24:15 par.), a theme, which is expressed in a different form in II Thess. with the Man of Sin who positions himself as an object of worship (II Thess. 2:4).⁶ Paul also uses predictive prophecy in his thinking. In Gal. 3:16, Paul reaffirms God's promise to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 13, 15; 17:71). True, this was a promise to Abraham that found a fulfillment in the birth of his miracle-son Isaac. But for Paul, the truly important reality was the promise of the Messiah's coming. The entire point of his argument points out that faith is trust in the fact that God consolidated his covenant with his solemn promise, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to seeds,' referring to one, 'And to your seed,' which is Christ." Paul uses here an impossible grammatical construction since "seed" in Hebrew and Greek as well as in English is both a singular and plural form.

Jesus and the evangelists affirm the major premise that the various witnesses from the OT spoke in the name of God and for God, and not in their own name. If this be the case, then the minor certainly holds true, that whatever God says, concerns not only a given historical situation, e.g., a judgmental word to a wicked King Ahaz, but points beyond to God's eschatological purpose with the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic Age. Thus, the entire OT applies not only to the given time period when oracles were given, but they also point ahead to the Messiah. From this standpoint, the NT writers say that all the prophets have spoken of Christ or proclaimed the message of the Messianic Age (Acts 3:24; 10:43; 13:27).

Representative Prophecy

Building upon the Hebrew notion of corporate personality or solidarity, the Gospel writers interpret the Jesus event in the light of His ability to represent the whole of the people of God in the OT. Several of the OT persons, names or personalities anticipate the coming of the incarnate Son of God. There are a number of expressions wherein we see Jesus identify Himself with three persons or groups:

A. Jesus identifies Himself with "the Lord" of the OT. Jesus regarded Himself as the Lord. In Mk. 12:35-37, Jesus quotes Psa. 110:1 as referring to Himself, "The Lord said to my lord, 'sit at my right hand.'" Jesus then asks, "David himself calls him Lord: so how is he his son?" Jesus alludes here to his significance through careful and thoughtful reflection, suggesting that the Messiah is David's Lord, and as his lord, He is preeminent and exists prior to David. Jesus challenges some misconceptions and raises the implications of the statements. In the Hebrew text, there is a distinction between /ֹדָא (adon) and הַוְיָ (YHWH), i.e., "The Lord (הַוְיָ) said to my lord" (יֹדָא, 'Sit at my right hand . . .') The LXX regularly uses the Greek term κύριος (*kyrios*) to translate

⁶ In a still different form in Rev. 13.

both terms, thus the LXX reads in Psa. 110:1, "The Lord (κύριος) said to my lord (κύριος). Thus, in the Greek speaking world of the Jewish Dispersion, the community used the term *kyrios* to refer to the "divine lord." The people of the Hebrew Bible would not make such an equation, but as the *Gospel* moved into the broader world community, OT passages that spoke of the divine name (YHWH) were applied to Jesus. For example, Paul writes to the Roman Christians:

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord (*kyrios*) will be saved (Rom. 10:13)
Whoever calls on the name of the Lord (YHWH) will be saved (Joel 2:32; 3:5 Heb).⁷

The transposition of these texts into the LXX and then into the NT reflects the fact that the writers of the NT regarded the LXX as inspired just as much as the Aramaic-speaking Jews regarded the Hebrew Bible as the Word of God. When the writers of the NT worked with the OT, they regarded the use of *kyrios* as providentially arranged, which they used to provide instruction concerning the nature and mission of Jesus.

B. Jesus uses the "I" of the Psalms and Prophets to refer to Himself. There are numerous instances in the Gospels where Jesus uses the OT language of the 1st person singular to refer to Himself. Thus, in His inaugural address at Nazareth, He begins with the language of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Isa. 61:1-2; Lk. 4:17-20). He then makes the statement that that "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Originally, the statement was made by the OT prophet about himself that he was anointed by the Spirit to speak to his people, but is now transferred in a greater way to the Messiah and the blessings that accompany the Messianic Age. In Jesus' cryptic answer to the Baptist as to whether He was the Coming One or not, Jesus refers to His activity, but in the language of the Servant Songs of Isaiah an allusion is made to other texts as well (Isa. 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:1, 61: 1-3). In a similar way, there is an important individual psalm of complaint (Psa. 22), wherein an OT poet complains of God's absence. The original referent was the individual poet in the midst of terrific suffering; however, in the crucifixion narrative, the words are transposed over to Christ's cry of being forsaken on the cross—the psalm is also expressed in some of the more specific details of the crucifixion scene. Jesus, the disciples and the early evangelists seem to interpret the personal pronoun "I" as the direct pronouncement of God or His Messianic Servant. Thus, Jesus applies the personal pronoun, "I," of the OT, to Himself as the direct pronouncement of God. The original speaker's/writer's words are spoken/written in accordance with the will of God. The same God who speaks through the OT people of God is now speaking through Jesus. In the words of the Fourth Evangelist, Jesus is identical with the Word of God that revealed itself through the OT prophets. Jesus says this in the FG, "For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me the commandment what to say and what to speak" (Jn. 12:49).⁸ The Evangelists follow Jesus' precedent in treating many of the personal words of the OT writers as typical of the coming Messiah.

C. Jesus applies to Himself the "righteous one(s)" of the OT. Jesus and the Evangelists also transfer the meaning of the "righteous one(s)" of the OT figures and

⁷ Similarly I Cor. 2:16—Isa. 40:13 (Rom. 11:34 referred to as God); Phil. 2:10ff.—Isa. 45:23 (in Rom. 14:11 referred to God); I Cor. 1:31; II Cor. 10:17—Jer. 9:22ff.

⁸ See also Jn. 7:16-18.

ideas. Thus, for example, Jesus uses the self-designation "Son of Man" (Dan. 7) that includes both an individual and corporate sense of the righteous people of God:

One like a Son of Man who comes to the Ancient of Days who is presented the dominion and authority over the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14).

Until he came to the Ancient of Days and . . . the saints of Most High . . . received the kingdom (Dan. 7:22)

Jesus not only is identified with the Righteous One, but also with the humble, poor and meek ones (*anawim*). The term refers to the low estate of the righteous one(s) who experiences the hatred of people outside the covenant community of faith. Through the course of His ministry to the *anawim* (Psa. 9:13) or *anayim* of the Suffering Servant, Jesus embodies His commitment to the poor, the marginalized members of society (socio-economic, racial, religious, gender). Several OT complaint songs are used explicitly or implicitly in the Passion narrative:

- Jesus is betrayed by His close friends (Mk. 14:18; Psa. 41:99; 55:12-14)
- Jesus expresses sorrow (Mk. 14:34; Psa. 43:5)
- His clothes are divided among His enemies (Mk. 15:24; Psa. 22:18)
- He is publicly mocked (Mk. 15:29-31; Psa. 22:7-8)
- His hands and feet are pierced (Crucifixion; Psa. 22:16)
- He thirsts (Jn. 19:28; Psa. 69:21; Psa. 22:15)
- He expresses His sense of abandonment by God (Mk. 15:34; Psa. 22:1)
- He commits His soul to God at the moment of His death (Lk. 23:46; Psa. 31:5)

Typological Prophecy

Typological prophecy deals with persons, institutions and events, which are spoken of in the OT and later serve as types of Christ, His kingdom, His ministry or His church. The term "typology" is based on the Greek word τύπος, which means "impression," "mark," "image," and is figuratively used to mean "example" or "model." The central idea is that the meaning of certain events, people or institutions were not exhausted by their immediate fulfillment. Their providential role signifies that a greater fulfillment lies in the Age to Come. For example, Israel's experience of deliverance through the Exodus was a real historical event that occurred within history wherein God delivered a people from their Egyptian oppressors and appointed a people for Himself. The typological approach looks at the event and sees that the Exodus points beyond itself to the greater redemption through Christ, of which Paul refers:

I want you to know, brethren that our fathers were all under the same cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea . . . (I Cor. 10:1).

In I Cor. 10:6, Paul says that all these things happened as "types" (τύποι) for the warning and benefit of later generations. Typological prophecy is open to reinterpretation of OT foreshadowings and thereby functions within the broader providential purpose; what is partial or shadowy under the Old Covenant is made real in the NT. Allegory assigns "deeper meanings" to biblical stories, persons and institutions; correspondingly, history is relatively unimportant. By way of contrast, typology affirms the reality of history, but looks at a broader perspective, expressing an intrinsic openness to the future. This type

of approach is based upon the distinction between two ages: the present age in which people live and the age to come, which is final, perfect and conclusive. While predictive prophecy deals with the future in a direct manner, typological prophecy looks at the future in an indirect manner.

Typology is evident in Jesus' appointment of the twelve, modeled after the twelve tribes of Israel, no doubt symbolizing the newly constituted people of God. Jesus Himself promises that His disciples who have followed Him "will also sit on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:28-30).

From several texts dealing with the Temple we find a contrast between the literal Temple and the spiritual Temple of which Jesus speaks. Jesus compares Himself with the Temple, "Something greater than the Temple is here" (Jn. 2:19-21). Jesus' act of cursing the fig-tree, Temple (Mk. 11:15-17) leads to the equation: like fig-tree, like Temple, like old people of God—all are subject to the divine curse. With special emphasis, Jesus pronounces the Temple's destruction (Mk. 13:2, "not one stone will be left upon another"). At the trial scene, one of the accusations brought against Jesus in His trial is, "I shall destroy this Temple made with hands and in three days I shall build another without hands" (Mk. 14:58). The combination of these texts leads to the typological thrust that Jesus has replaced Jerusalem's beautiful Temple made up of those who believe in Him. The new community, which constitutes the real Temple, is juxtaposed and contrasted with the false community's pride in their physical Temple, evident in Jeremiah's day and Isaiah's day:

These [covenant keepers] I will bring to my holy mountain

And make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar;

For my house shall be called a house of prayer

For all peoples (Isa. 56:7).

Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord.' (Jer. 7:4)

Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? (Jer. 7:11).

Typology emphasizes the unity of Scripture and the history that embraces the people of both Old and New Testaments. Newer events are looked at from the perspective of the divine plan that is at work in the ages and may assist the interpreter in understanding the significance of newer events as they are compared and contrasted with the OT. Newer communities of faith are thereby enabled to discover the continued activity of God in human history over a much broader sweep of time.⁹

In II Pet. 1:18-20, the Apostle mentions the voice that he and the other two disciples heard on the Mount of Transfiguration, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure to us," "and we have gained fresh confirmation of the prophetic word" (Moffat). Peter does not say that the prophetic word is above the divine voice, but that the divine event of the Transfiguration confirms the prophetic word. Thus, through the divine declaration on the mount of Transfiguration, the divine Sonship of Jesus was revealed in a transparent manner. On the mount, it was made clear to Jesus' disciples that the prophetic passage which spoke of the Messiah as the Son of God referred to Jesus.

⁹ This counters the rigid distinctions between Israel and the Church drawn by dispensationalism.

Jesus as the Fulfillment of the OT

*Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets.
I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17)*

What are we to make of the various responses that Jesus makes to questions about the Law and the religious "traditions" in the light of His positive statement of His commitment to the Law and the Prophets? There are occasions where He reveals an apparent abrogation of the OT Law when He touches a leper and thereby incurs ritual defilement (Lev. 13-15) and yet, He also reveals a commitment to that same Law when He tells the leper to show himself to the priest for a testimony (Mk. 1:44; Lev. 14:2-32). From the text concerning the ritual washing of hands, cups, bowls, etc., it is clear that Jesus regards these as mere human traditions (Mk. 7:3ff.; Matt. 15:2ff.); the traditions of the elders, "the fence" around the Law was an addition to the Mosaic injunctions for the Pharisees sought to apply Mosaic Law to ever new situations. In this passage, Jesus exposes and accuses the Pharisees for hypocrisy; then He substantiates His accusation through their practice of Corban, wherein they violated the Mosaic commandment of honor for one's parents (cf. Mk. 7:9-13). Jesus says that His critics have assumed the posture of treating the "tradition of the elders" as more important than the Mosaic Law since they neglect the Law "in order to keep" their tradition. From the Gospel records, it is clear that Jesus generally was obedient to the Law of Moses. He is circumcised as a Jew and attends the prescribed major feasts in Jerusalem (from the FG), pays the temple-tax (Matt. 17:24-27), wears the prescribed tassel on a Rabbi's robe (Matt. 9:20; Num. 15:38-41). Did Jesus obey the Law because He believed in its eternal purpose? He does say that "till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18). Did Jesus obey the Law of the Old Covenant simply because it lay on this side of the cross and resurrection at which point the New Covenant would come into existence, thereby displacing the Old Covenant? What laws are to be obeyed and what is the intent of the Law?

It is clear that Jesus' over-riding principle is the dual love commandment, love for God (Deut. 6:5—Jewish Shema) and love for the neighbor (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28; Jn. 13:31-35). In Jn. 13:31-35, love is the hallmark, the badge of committed discipleship. In Matt. 22:40, Jesus argues that all the Law and the prophets depend upon this dual commandment. The verb, "I depend/hang" (κρεμόννυμι) is here used in a figurative way, "all the law and the prophets hang (depend) on these two commandments . . . as a door hangs on its hinges, so the whole OT hangs on these two commandments."¹⁰ These statements should be coupled with the "Golden Rule," "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the Law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).

Jesus does not seem to indicate that love is to be contrasted with Mosaic Law or the prophets. What He does affirm through His actions and words is that love is the means, application and intent of the Law. In contrast to the scribes who insisted on meticulous observance of the most minute tithing of spices (Matt. 23:23-24), Jesus insists

¹⁰ BAGD, p. 451.

upon the intent and meaning of the Law as expressive of love for God and love for others. When He defends His "unclean" table-fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners (Matt. 9:13), He does so on the basis of the divine purpose, expressed by Hosea, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hos. 6:6). Jesus does not mean that the sacrifice is done away with by mercy, but that His critics have failed to understand God's mercy in the Law, if their rigid adherence to tradition and Law prohibited them and sought to prohibit Himself from associating with the unclean "low-lives." Jesus highlights His compassion for sinners and God's commitment to them as well.

In a similar way, Jesus is critiqued in Matt. 12:7 for His disciples' activity of plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath. In response, Jesus uses the same text from Hos. 6:6 to say that God's purpose of mercy is inherent in the Sabbath commandment. Thus, His disciples are "guiltless" and are not working at cross-purposes with God. In the same paragraph, Jesus argues on the basis of the OT example of David the leader with His men who did that which was not lawful—they ate the bread of the presence (I Sam. 21:1-6) as they were fleeing from an angry King Saul. Note the following comparison:

| Jesus | David |
|---|---|
| Jesus with disciples—leader with group (Mk. 2:23) | David and those who were with him—leader with group (Mk. 2:24) |
| Pluck ears of grain on Sabbath (Mk. 2:23) | Ate bread of presence (Mk. 2:26) |
| What it is not lawful (2:24) | "which it is not lawful for any but the priests and also gave it to those who were with him? (Mk. 2:26) |

What does this comparison mean? In each instance, there is a certain relationship between the group and its leader. And because of this relationship, what holds true for the leader holds true for the group. Evidently there are certain unusual conditions which dictate a change from a normal and customary approach to life. Here, it is the physical need of hunger, which initiates action. In David's case of unusual need, normal restrictions did not apply. With the coming of Jesus as the bridegroom (Mk. 2:19) and the hunger of the disciples, the normal Sabbath regulations do not apply. Jesus as the Son of Man has authority over the Sabbath and its regulations. He is the one who sees to the intent of the merciful purpose and intent of the Law. Correspondingly His understanding and authority "spills over to His disciples" just as David's authority spilled over to his men who ate the bread of the presence. Thus, Jesus argues that the true Sabbath is obeyed when its merciful purpose is recognized and practiced in one's behavior. This is why Jesus regards that the healing of a hunch-backed woman on the Sabbath is a true fulfillment of the merciful purpose of God in giving the Sabbath (Lk. 13:16). Jesus actualizes what is inherent in the Law and does not counter-act the Mosaic Law. Jesus kept the Law with respect to its true intent and purpose.

Jesus is not merely a link in a chain of prophecies but is the final and conclusive outcome of all the OT antecedents (prediction, representation, type). The period in which the Evangelists write is the final period of God's dealing with humankind—"the last days." God will not repeat the incarnation of His prophesied Messiah as though there is a

cyclical view of human history (pagan, agricultural). Peter speaks on the Day of Pentecost, "But this is that what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And in the last days it shall be, God declares that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . ." (Acts. 2:16-17; Joel 3:1-5). In his prologue, the writer of Hebrews says so clearly that God has now spoken definitively through the Son (Heb. 1:1-3) in "these last days." The fulfillment of the OT prophetic hope gives a special significance to the time in which we live; the Christian community today lives in the last days.

Further, the Jesus-event was a public event, noted particularly by Paul in his speech to King Agrippa, "For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?" (Acts 26: 26-27). The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus is not a private event, but embraces the history of humankind with a divine claim. God foretold the event so that its actualization is proclaimed as the divine message to humanity. The decisive event, indeed the turning point of the ages has occurred, which will be climaxed by the Parousia. If the present opportunity is defied, then individuals, generations and nations will have no other prospect than judgment by the Son of God.

The Trap of Literalism

In communicating His message to humankind, God chooses human beings to be His spokespersons and writers and thereby uses the language, culture, history, thought-pattern and literary style of His prophets. Thus, prophecy may well be cast in the form of Hebrew poetry and should be interpreted within the genre of Hebrew poetry with attention given to Hebrew parallelism. In Zech. 9:9, the prophet expresses the central idea of the coming king:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 Lo, your king comes to you;
 Triumphant and victorious is he;
 Humble and riding on a donkey
 On a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The substance of the prophetic word is fulfilled in the events of Palm Sunday noted by the various Evangelists. However, it may be overly literal to maintain that a prophecy has been unfulfilled because all of the specific details have not been fulfilled. For example, Jesus refers to the destruction of the Temple, "They shall not leave in you one stone upon another" (Lk. 19:44). The truth of the matter is that some stones of the wall of the Temple are still found today in their original setting, even after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Another example can be found in Peter's speech of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, which includes "wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire and columns of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood" (Acts 2:19-20). The essential content of the prophecies are fulfilled but are not meant to be interpreted literalistically, pressing for fulfillment of the most minute details. True interpretation of prophecy is both historical and eschatological and the present readers must throw themselves into the circumstances, history, language, thought-forms of the world surrounding the prophets. While the prophetic words have an

historical aspect, there is also a radical openness towards the future, full of dynamic potential beyond the specific limitations of the given historical situations. The prophets themselves may be unaware of the fact of future meaning, interpretation and re-interpretation. Even with the language of apocalypse, there can be found no fixed apocalyptic symbolism to be found in the OT or the NT. With such a mechanistic approach of fixed symbols, prophetic interpretation would then become a kind of mental calculus, with no needed dependence upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration and interpretation.

Implications

In a real way, the OT remains somewhat obscure to those who read and study the text apart from the life, experience and witness of Jesus and the Evangelists, since it is only a part of God's redemptive purpose. The Evangelists do not begin with a developed Christology or eschatology from the OT and then apply that system to the life of Jesus. The reverse is true; the Evangelists began with their experience with Jesus and His understanding of Messiahship and the Messianic Age. They did not begin with a theological theory from the OT but with their encounter with the Risen Jesus. Paul's re-orientation of his life was not a modification of his previous theological understanding. He encounters the Risen Jesus on the Damascus Road with a theological aggression that he was right in his determination to rid Judaism of this infectious Christian plague and heresy. Similarly, the confession that Peter makes at Caesarea Philippi is a theology of encounter that is subsequently interpreted in and through the course of Peter's life and ministry. The source of this confession is not human but divine (Matt. 16:17); Peter did not begin in an atomistic way with the OT, looking for proof-texts, determine their applicability to Jesus and then make the equation, Jesus is the Messiah of the OT. If Paul or Peter had begun with Rabbinic training and education and the OT, then they would have had a "ready-made" picture of the Messiah through the Judaism of the OT and inter-testamental period—a triumphant Messiah, which is not the person that Paul or Peter preach. This is why Paul says that when the Jews read the OT, they are unable to understand it correctly, "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart" (II Cor. 3:15). From Paul's perspective as a Jewish trained Rabbi, he makes an incredible statement, "For whatsoever things were previously written—were in fact written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4; see also I Cor. 9:9-10; Rom. 4:23-24). Paul says that the OT was written for the ultimate goal in view of the Christian community. Paul is saying that the OT did not come into existence primarily for the members of the Old Covenant, but for the members of the New Covenant. Although the OT does not give a perfect foreknowledge of the future, it does enable its readers to look beyond to the Messiah and the Messianic Age. No longer is the OT an exclusively Jewish book that Jewish Christians could have used prior to their conversion to Christ. It becomes the Bible of the Christians as a new Bible. The OT points to the future. For example, in II Cor. 6:2-3, Paul quotes from Isa. 49:8, "At an acceptable time I hearkened unto you, and in a day of salvation I helped you." We have examples of the Hebrew perfect tense (completed action), which are to be regarded here as prophetic perfects ("I hearkened," "I helped"). While Isaiah thought of the saving event of the return of the exiles, Paul says that the text

refers to the Messianic Age that would be marked by reconciliation of humanity with God (II Cor. 5:16-21). The divine purpose in Isaiah's day is part of the broader saving and reconciling activity of God that is embodied in the person and work of Jesus.

Christian faith is based upon historical events and persons and there is also an inseparable connection between historical events and historical persons and eschatology. Since God acts through persons and events, they represent new steps forward towards the final end. God challenges people here in this life to be properly related to God's ultimate purpose that has been made known through His people who speak forth or embody the Word of God. The vital connection of history and eschatology explains the typological nature of prophecy. The present is directly or indirectly related to the future. Even with predictive prophecy, there is a dual fulfillment, one within history and another as part of an eschatological process. A fulfilling event contains within itself the "germ" of another prophetic type as human history and nature itself strains forwards towards the eschatological consummation. For example, the threatened fates of Nineveh, Babylon, Sodom and Gomorrah are fulfilled within history, but these cities also become "typical" of what will become of those nations that defy the God of human history.

It is also important for the people of God to understand that prophecy (predictive, representative, typological) is not intended to satisfy mental curiosity about the end time events, but is meant to influence human behavior. God reveals His future plans with a desire to influence the human heart; He warns of the judgments that are in store for hostile persons and He promises untold blessings to those who respond in trust with obedience. God may even suspend or delay His threats due to the human heart. Thus, Jonah preaches a stern repentance and warning of impending judgment to the people of Nineveh. Surprisingly enough, even with a recalcitrant prophet, the people of Nineveh "repented of their sins and turned from their ways." The result? God "repented of the evil which he said He would do unto them; and he did not do it" (Jonah 3:10). In a similar way, Micah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps" (Jer. 26:18-19). However, the catastrophe did not take place—then, for Hezekiah repented and pled for Yahweh's favor. We read that "Yahweh repented of the evil which He had pronounced against them."¹¹ Destruction eventually overtook these cities which had been threatened with destruction. The delays were accorded (e.g., Lk. 13:6-9—the Parable of the Barren Fig-Tree) and a temporary postponement was allowed. This indicates that God gives needed grace, but only conditional upon a human response (Jer. 18:5-11). Humans can influence the will of God, but His will certainly hastens towards His appointed end. The historical and eschatological foundations of His word are necessary for us as the people of God; they serve as evidence that the greater things that God has promised and foreshadowed will come to pass when He brings history to its consummation.

¹¹ See also Ex. 32:4; II Sam. 24:16.